

Maine Water News

A Publication of the Maine Water Utilities Association

November 2013, Number 172

What's Old is New Again

Don Gobeil, 2013 President

Life involves a continual series of recurring events. In our personal lives, birthdays, anniversaries and doctor visits are etched into the calendar, while our work lives are punctuated with annual reports and audits, board meetings and routine operational requirements. But we also face issues that keep reappearing from time to time, whether they seemingly get resolved or not.

This thought came to me as I settled on this newsletter topic. LD 441, passed by the 126th Maine Legislature in June of this year, directs the MPUC to develop a plan to reform the regulation of consumer-owned water utilities. Certainly, this issue is quite complex and involved, and I don't intend to present a comprehensive pro/con summary of the Resolve in this space. I will mention, though, that things will be heating up quickly. The MWUA has submitted its initial comments (Docket No. 2013-00444) in advance of the PUC's scheduled early December release of its draft plan. When released, the draft plan will offer us a first glimpse of the regulatory structure they envision as they seek to comply with the Resolve directive. At that point, this process will pick up steam and undoubtedly will be the focus of our organization as we turn the page into 2014.

There is perhaps no single issue with more of a recurring history (some would say tortured history) for the MWUA as this one over the past 30 or so years. I set out to research the background of regulatory reform over the years with the hope of filling in the gaps of my knowledge on this. I believe it's beneficial when trying to determine where we are going that we understand where we've been. While not pretending to offer a complete historical review here, what I can present is a general timeline of our association's past endeavors on regulatory reform.

This condensed timeline begins with an article in this newsletter by former President David Michniewicz in 1995 where he mentioned that the debate over regulation of consumer-owned water districts began in the mid-1980's. Just prior to his article, in 1993 the PUC introduced a bill to deregulate consumer-owned water utilities. The bill died in committee. In 1994, an ad-hoc committee of the MWUA tried to broker an agreement with the PUC staff on partial deregulation. That effort failed to germinate. In 1996, the Association's PUC Liaison Committee surveyed the membership and subsequently tried another push for partial deregulation. The status quo prevailed again. All the while, it appears from the record the PUC's sentiments were squarely moving toward embracing a different regulatory model. In the 1997 PUC Annual Report, it states... *"The PUC is contemplating reducing regulatory burden/oversight by returning the regulation of consumer-owned water utilities to the local level"*.

In October of 2000, the MWUA sent out a formal survey to the membership on the idea of self-governance, which showed fairly strong support for an opt-out option, but not for a mandatory requirement to do so. LD 1333 – *'An Act To Permit Consumer-Owned Water Utilities To Exercise Local Control Regarding Matters Within The Jurisdiction Of The Public Utilities Commission'* was submitted to the 120th Maine Legislature in the spring of 2001. That bill died in committee. And ever since then, the debate over deregulation has never retreated very far from the minds of many within our association. Buried within the letters, memos and submittals of each of these past efforts is the interesting fact that most of the pro or con arguments raised over the years mirror exactly the thoughts and opinions being expressed today with the current initiative. Whether it's the uncertainty over maintaining the public and private fire protection percentages in rate structures, the possibility of increased litigation, the political component of local control, the question of

Maine Water News
is published bimonthly by

Maine Water Utilities Association
Jeffrey L. McNelly, Editor
150 Capitol Street, Suite 5
Augusta, Maine 04330
(207) 623-9511 TEL
(207) 623-9522 FAX
website: www.mwua.org

Material of interest to the water supply
profession will be considered for publication.
Copy deadline is the 15th day of month
preceding publication.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Don Gobeil

Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Wells Water District

Vice President
Alan Hitchcock

Caribou Utilities District

Kathy Moriarty
Bangor Water District

Gordon Johnson
Portland Water District

Jefferson Longfellow
Kennebec Water District

Steve Cox
Maine Water Company

Jon Ziegler
Boothbay Region Water District

Education and Operations Committee

Co-chair: Eric Gagnon
Brunswick & Topsham Water District
Co-Chair: Robbie Chadwick
E.J. Prescott Co.

Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Committee

Chair: Dan Wells
Winthrop Utilities District

Nominating Committee

Chair: John Storer
Auburn Water District

Technology Committee

Co-Chair: Matthew Zetterman
Kennebec Water District
Co-Chair: Woody Bailey
Wright-Pierce

Program Committee

Co-chair: Chris Curtis
Yarmouth Water District
Co-chair: Rick Anair
Greater Augusta Utility District

Public Awareness Committee

Co-chair: Kirsten Ness, Portland Water District

Water Resources Committee

Co-Chair: Jennifer Grant
Maine CDC Drinking Water Program
Co-chair: June Mooney
Greater Augusta Utility District

what would happen to PUC utility assessments for those utilities that don't wish to opt-out and what to do with current PUC rules (Water Main Extensions, Service Line Standards, etc.) have all been batted around for a number of years. And the purported benefits of reducing duplicative or unnecessary regulations, moving regulatory oversight closer to the local level and allowing individual utilities the ability to make decisions that work best for them are similarly longstanding wishes. The other historic footnote to this is remembering how divisive the debate was for our membership in the past. Passionate arguments were presented, sides were drawn and personalities clashed. I know that no one wants to revisit old wounds or duplicate the rancor that permeated the prior efforts as they engage the current debate, and I believe it is possible to do so.

In the present Resolve, it appears there's broad support to learn more and investigate what the framework would look like for regulatory reform. Indeed, from my perspective, this may be an instance where the spaghetti finally sticks to the wall and definitive steps are taken to transition into a new era of regulatory control. But until the PUC issues its draft plan in December, no one really knows what the plan will contain, or what direction we will head in after it arrives. It's important for all to stay on top of developments and stay involved with the process. What is clear, however, is that for the next several months our association will likely devote a considerable amount of time, effort and discussion over how to ensure that whatever materializes from this Resolve works for our membership, our communities and the customers who depend on us.

The October Meeting

The Searsport Lion's Club was the location for the October meeting and the food was wonderful, as it always is when we are at such a venue. Let us not forget the accommodating host, the Searsport Water District. Superintendent Herb Kronholm and his staff and trustees did an exemplary job of getting ready for us - he even painted the floor.

James Gillway, Sr. is the Searsport Town Manager and is also the local Representative to the Maine Legislature. He welcomed us and gave us a quick overview of his community. Senate Minority Leader Mike Thibodeau also stopped by to say hello and to encourage us to stay involved in the goings-on in Augusta.

Herb's overview of the Searsport Water District, which included a little about the genesis of the system, plus some details of all the improvements that have been made recently, drove home the point that there is always much to be done to maintain these aging systems.

Roger Crouse, of the Maine Drinking Water Program, gave us the latest news from Station 11, and Executive Director McNelly provided an update of what's happening between sessions on the legislative and regulatory fronts.

McNelly and President Don Gobeil then presented the 2014 budget and reviewed the recent revision to the dues schedule.


Nominating Committee Chair John Storer presented the committee's selections of Alan Hitchcock of Caribou Utilities District and Frank Kearney of Old Town Water District as candidates for Directors. There were no nominations from the floor. A quorum being present, the membership voted and elected Hitchcock and Kearney as Directors for three year terms, commencing in January.

McNelly then facilitated a discussion of the PUC Inquiry into Regulatory Reform Plan for Consumer-Owned Water Utilities.

The technical program focused on natural gas expansion of service territory and the impacts on water and wastewater utilities.

Speakers included Stacey Fitts of Summit Natural Gas, Tim Pelotte, the MDOT Region 2 Utility Permit Administrator, Sam Murray of Unutil and Rick Pershken of Bangor Water District. The insights and experiences these gentlemen shared provided for an informative exchange. The challenges presented by the new utility in many towns were arduous, for sure, initially. It's still not perfect but regular and frequent coordination meetings amongst all the utilities have been a great help in addressing problems and resolving issues before they happen.

All said, it was a very good meeting, on many fronts.



If it looks half-empty, give us a call.

From local, state and federal regulations to easements, financing and environmental compliance, we can provide the legal counsel that fits your needs. For more information, contact Bill Harwood or Jim Cohen.

Verrill Dana
Attorneys at Law

Water Operator Board has Opening

The Board of Licensure of Water System Operators has an opening for a member who holds a Class III operator's license in either treatment or distribution (or both). The board consists of 9 members appointed by the Governor. Each appointment is for a 3-

year term. The responsibilities of the board are as follows.

- License persons to serve as operators of all or part of any public water system.
- Approve training contact hours for license renewal.
- Approve appropriate exams and ensure examinations at a time and place designated for the purpose of examining candidates for licensure.

Additional information, including what is required for applying to the Governor's office, can be obtained by contacting Terry Trott at the Maine CDC Drinking Water Program at 287-7485.

Maine Municipal Bond Bank
127 Community Drive, P.O. Box 2268
Augusta, ME 04338-2268
(207) 622-9386 Phone
(207) 623-5359 Fax

Making a Difference for Maine's communities.



Interim Loans • Below Market Interest Rates
• Flexible Financing Schedule

Let Us Put Our AAA Credit Rating To Work For You

December Meeting to Address Future Personnel Needs

It's no secret that the workforce in this business is an aging one – just look around. Before this current batch of managers and supervisors decides to transition to a life of picking up shells on the beach, it's important to focus on attracting, retaining and developing the staff who will be taking over the reins.



TEAM EJP

Pipeline Specialists

1-800-EJP-24HR www.ejprescott.com

WATER, SEWER, DRAIN & STORMWATER SOLUTIONS

The challenge is exacerbated by the fact that the professions who employ the types of people we need in this business are in the same boat. Whether it's electric, gas, phone or some other service provider, they are scouring the marketplace, seeking to hire the best of the best. As a rule, they are larger organizations, they have more resource to devote to this effort and they typically pay more.

However, those who have worked in the water profession for any length of time are first of all - still here. History tells us that we may very well be here until the siren call of the seashells beckon. The satisfaction derived from working in this profession is a plus in the quest to recruit and retain quality people.

The technical program in December will consider some things we can do to keep the profession on an even keel and move us forward.

Program Committee co-chair Chris Curtis, a graduate of the JETCC Management Candidate School, will relate what he gained from being a student and encourage others to think about signing up for the class or enrolling their promising staff members.

Jack Jolls, General Manager, R.I. Analytical Laboratories, Inc. has been in the business for years. One of his passions is conducting succession / management planning presentations. He has much to share; we are looking forward to a very informative session.

So, put it on your calendar: *The Nonantum Resort in Kennebunkport on December 5th.*

and Regulation, Customer Service, Administrative/Financial, and General.

The redesign and rollout are in process. Be watching for a notice informing you of the availability of this forum.

Ti SALES
Since 1963

Neptune Radio Read Meters can save money and time.

Neptune
Ford
AVK
LMI

Wilkins Back Flow Preventers,
LMI Chemical Feed Pumps
Carus Phosphate Supply,
Cultec Stormwater & Septic Chambers
Fernco Couplings, Lansas Test Balls,
Fittings for Copper Tubing & Iron Pipe
Scaletron Chemical Scales with Spill Containment
Water Works & Wastewater Tools

800-225-4616
978-443-7600 fax
www.tisales.com

Leach Engineering Consultants Joins the Tata & Howard Team

Tata & Howard, Inc., a leading innovator in water, wastewater, stormwater, and hazardous waste engineering solutions, announced today that it has acquired the assets of Leach Engineering Consultants, PA, a civil engineering consulting firm located in St. Johnsbury, VT.

Founded in 1990, Leach Engineering Consultants specializes in environmental engineering with targeted expertise in creative and cost-effective wastewater solutions. Leach also focuses on obtaining municipal, state, and federal approvals and securing grant and low interest loan funding. Additional services include treatment, land development, and site engineering; and the planning, design, and construction of municipal water, wastewater, and stormwater systems.

“Leach Engineering Consultants’ exemplary service to the northern New England water, wastewater,

A. E. Hodsdon
Consulting Engineers
10 Common Street
Waterville, Maine 04901
Tel. (207) 873-5164
Fax: (207) 872-0645

e-mail: info@aeodsdon.com
www.aehodsdon.com

Water Systems, Storage & Treatment Rate Studies
Hydrology/Hydrogeology Water Operations
Construction Administration Corrosion Control
DEP/EPA Permitting & Wetlands Hydraulic Analysis

Civil-Environmental Consultants

Discussion Forum on the Horizon

When the MWUA website was first launched, it included a discussion forum. That forum saw little usage and it was eventually phased out. The Operator Proficiency subcommittee of the Education & Operations Committee is leading an effort to reactivate that forum. There will be five topic areas to the forum, specifically:

Source/Treatment/Water Quality, Transmission and Distribution, Meters/Backflow, Technology, Legislative

and stormwater market, with key focus on delivering cost-effective and innovative solutions, fits the Tata & Howard philosophy perfectly,” said Donald J. Tata, P.E., co-founder and President of Tata & Howard, Inc. “After working with the high level of talent on Leach’s staff, it became apparent that a long term business relationship would be invaluable.”

Tata added, “Leach will provide Tata & Howard with geographic expansion into northern New England and strengthen existing client relationships.”

We've Made Your Water Our Business



We know water, and we know the water business. Let Aquastore[®] be the only tank you'll ever need!

- Decades of experience
- Over 700 installations
- Applications from potable to leachate



Statewide Aquastore, Inc. Premium Water and Wastewater Storage Tanks
6010 Drott Drive Phone: 315. 433.2782
East Syracuse, NY 13057


Gary A. Leach, P.E., founder and Chief Executive Officer of Leach Engineering Consultants, will continue to lead the Vermont office as a Vice President of Tata & Howard. “We are eager to combine our individual proficiencies and resources to serve our clients’ needs in the best way possible,” he commented. “We are very excited about being part of the Tata & Howard team and know that together we can continue to provide unprecedented solutions and service to our clients.”

Nominees Sought for Annual Recognition Awards

The association is seeking nominees for its annual awards of recognition, which are typically presented at the February meeting. The awards include the Excellence in Operations Award, the Jeff Nixon Distinguished Service Award, the Jim Doherty Excellence in Volunteerism Award, the President’s

DIRIGO

ENGINEERING



Professional Engineering for
Maine's Water and Wastewater
Industries

Responsive - Reliable - Practical

2 Dirigo Drive, Fairfield, Maine 04937 Ph: (207) 458-2401
www.dirigoengineering.com

Maine Water Works Supply Corp.



800-639-2209
Oakland, ME

781-878-8098
Rockland, MA

John Hoadley and Sons, Inc.

Award and the Sid Anthony Award of Merit.

To nominate an individual, please contact our office at 207-623-9511, email us at info@mwua.org, or [click here](#) for more information.



Unsurpassed Solutions in
the Water Environment

TATA & HOWARD

Specializing in Water Supply, Distribution,
Treatment & Asset Management

www.tataandhoward.com

February Meeting Coming Together

Mark the calendar: February 4th and 5th are the dates for the **2014 February Meeting and Trade Show**. Once again, the trade show and the professional and technical sessions will be held at the Holiday Inn By The Bay.

Helping your employees
save for their futures
is one of the best moves
you can make!

Simple

Convenient

Reliable

Low-Cost

MAINE START
The tax-deferred savings
plan from Maine Public
Employees Retirement System.

www.mainestart.org 1-800-451-9800

Losing the asset management game?

Let us show you how to win.

Your Municipal Consultant for over 30 years

ENR 500
TOP RATED FIRM
BY RANKING IT

WOODARD & CURRAN

woodardcurran.com

Serving Maine Utilities for
Over 65 Years

WRIGHT-PIERCE

Engineering a Better Environment

Offices in Portland and Topsham | www.wright-pierce.com

TDM
TRASK-DECROW MACHINERY
THE POWER BEHIND YOUR PROCESS

DOOSAN
Portable Power

Portable Equipment
Sales • Service • Rentals

1-207-799-1538 www.tdmgo.com

The Program Committee is busy finalizing session information and our cosponsors, NEWWA and MWWCA, are lining up their topics and speakers as well. A considerable amount of time and effort are spent ensuring that the topics are timely and informative. The guiding principle is: if the sessions can't be excellent, why do them?

The meeting coordinators are striving to address the variety of training opportunities that the membership wants to see. A sampling of class topics include fostering employee growth, water quality: source to tap, technology efficiencies in the work place, energy management, overworked and overwhelmed?, effective school outreach, and "ultimate piping".

New this year, the product demos will be on the trade show floor at vendor booths. Each "class" is limited to 10 so watch for the program and be sure to sign up early if you want to take advantage of that.

Exhibitor packets will be available soon and the conference brochure will be mailed soon after. Make plans now to join us in Portland for two great days of networking, professional development and fun.

Your Underground Solution

Directional Drilling
Vacuum Excavating
Natural Gas Contracting
Utility Locating
Pipe Fusing
Water & Sewer
Electrical & Telecomm.

ETTI

Enterprise Trenchless Technologies, Inc • Phone: (207) 353-5000 • www.hdd-etti.com

HOST: Norm Labbe, Superintendent, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Wells Water District

LOCATION: The Nonantum Resort*: 95 Ocean Ave, Kennebunkport, ME 04046

DIRECTIONS: Take Rte. 1 South to Arundel. Turn left onto Log Cabin Rd for 3.6 miles. Log Cabin Rd becomes North St – continue another 1.3 miles into Kennebunkport. Take right onto Spring Street into Dock Square. Go 100 yards and take a left in Dock Square at the center pillar onto Ocean Avenue. The Nonantum Resort is .7 mile on the right.

PROGRAM

****Nonantum Room Rate of \$89.00***
 If you would like to take advantage of this rate, please call The Nonantum Resort to make a reservation: (207) 967-4050

- 8:00AM – 8:30AM **Registration & Continental Breakfast**
- 8:30AM – 8:40AM **Introduction & Welcome to Kennebunkport**
Denise Clavette, Exec. Director, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Arundel Chamber of Commerce
- 8:40AM – 9:00AM **Overview of the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Wells Water District**
Norm Labbe -Superintendent Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Wells Water
- 9:00AM – 9:15AM **Regulatory Update**
Maine Drinking Water Program
- Legislative Update**
Jeffrey McNelly, Executive Director
- 9:15AM – 10:00AM **Business Meeting**
Annual Committee Reports
- 10:00AM – 10:15AM **Break**

TECHNICAL PROGRAM

- 10:15AM – 10:30AM **JETCC - Maine Management Candidate School**
Chris Curtis - Assistant Superintendent, Yarmouth Water District
- 10:30AM – 12:00PM **Knowledge Management and Succession Planning**
Jack Jolls, General Manager, R.I. Analytical Laboratories, Inc.
- 12:00PM – 12:30PM **Q & A**
- 12:30PM **Lunch**

Don Gobeil
President

Justin Richardson, Rick Anair
Program Coordinators

Registration for December 5, 2013 Bi-Monthly Meeting
PLEASE RETURN REGISTRATIONS/RESERVATIONS BY: November 27, 2013
2.0 Training Contact Hours / 2.0 DEP Credit Hours

Name(s): _____

Affiliation _____

	Member		Non-Member		Late Registration (after 11/27/13)	
	Member	Non-Member	Member	Non-Member	Member	Non-Member
<i>Water Systems serving more than 4,000 Customers</i>	_____ @ \$40 _____	_____ \$45 _____	\$45 _____	\$50 _____	\$45 _____	\$50 _____
<i>Vendors / Associate Members</i>	_____ @ \$40 _____	_____ \$45 _____	\$45 _____	\$50 _____	\$45 _____	\$50 _____
<i>Water Systems serving less than 4,000 Customers</i>	_____ @ \$30 _____	_____ \$35 _____	\$35 _____	\$40 _____	\$35 _____	\$40 _____
Total enclosed: _____						

Register online at: www.mwua.org OR mail/fax registration to:
 Maine Water Utilities Association, 150 Capitol Street, Suite 5, Augusta, ME 04330
 Tel: (207) 623-9511; Fax: (207) 623-9522

**MAINE WATER NEWS
150 CAPITOL STREET, SUITE 5
AUGUSTA, ME 04330**