

Maine Water News

A Publication of the Maine Water Utilities Association

November 2012, Number 166

Five Rivers and Beyond

Jon Ziegler, 2012 President

Have you ever really belonged to a group where you actually looked forward to going to the monthly meetings? I am talking “really look forward to”, “schedule all other work around” look forward to!

For the past two plus years I have had the privilege of regularly meeting with a few of the finest water system managers in the state, whose collective water systems cover a geographical area around the Route 1 corridor from Topsham, west to Richmond and east to Nobleboro. The players include: Art Mclean representing Bowdoinham, early on Mike Broadbent and later Josh Cobb from Richmond, Alan Frasier head of Brunswick & Topsham, Trevor Hunt from Bath, Chris Cossette of Wiscasset, Scott Abbotoni at Great Salt Bay and me. Over time we have developed a close working relationship, and through this grassroots experience it appears that we may have inadvertently created a very effective and very real organization.

Two months ago we decided, using the Southern Maine Regional Water Council as an example, to look into formalizing this loose association. As did my peers, last week I pitched the concept to my trustees. I reminded my board that there is a mechanism under Title 35 that allows us to do this and the potential benefits are very real. This next step could give my district better buying power, conservation influence, a mechanism to drive real regional planning and most importantly, a voice.

“Yes Harry, (fiscally conservative, 47-year veteran trustee, rules with a velvet fist, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD!), this will cost money to explore and potentially formalize, but my gut says it will be well worth the effort”.

I got the “green light” to proceed.

Whoa, this is exciting stuff!

What do you name this beast? What are the goals and objectives? How will we govern ourselves? What will the dues look like? Can we get money from the “Money Gods” (Roger????)? What will the logo look

like? Will we have flying monkeys on the website? Will there be an open bar at the annual meeting? So many questions, so little time...

I know there are many loose associations of superintendents around the state. I even know of some where the participants actually like each other. I am of the belief, again learning from the experience in southern Maine, that at a minimum the exploration of forming a regional water council is in the best interest of every public water system, particularly those that are on the smaller side. Remember there is power in numbers.

Oh yeah, check-off task 1, we do have a name; **FIVE RIVERS REGIONAL WATER COUNCIL**. Can you name the rivers?

(Answer: Androscoggin, Kennebec, Sheepscot, Damariscotta & Cathance)



A view of Boothbay Harbor from our October Bi-monthly Meeting Location, McSeagulls

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

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The October Meeting

MWUA's October Bi-monthly meeting was held on the 11th in picturesque Boothbay Harbor. It was a gorgeous day to be there, and attendance numbers were high. The meeting started off with a warm welcome from Boothbay Harbor's Town Manager, Tom Woodin. Jon Ziegler, Boothbay Region Water District's General Manager and MWUA's President, then gave an overview of the water system which included some interesting historical facts.

Roger Crouse of the Maine Drinking Water Program then gave a regulatory update, which was followed by a legislative update presented by Jeff McNelly. John Storer, MWUA's Nominating Committee Chair, presented the nominations and held the election for the 2013 Directors. Stephen Cox of Maine Water Company and Jefferson Longfellow of Kennebec Water District have been elected to be on the Board of Directors for 2013.

Steven Hallowell of Wright-Pierce started off the technical portion of the meeting with an overview of the process Loring and Limestone went through while merging utilities. Next, Judy Wallingford gave an informative presentation on how Maine Water Company evaluates and approaches contract operations. Jon Ziegler then gave an overview of the merger he is currently finalizing between Boothbay Region Water District and the Southport water system. Last, but not least, Brian Tarbuck of Greater Augusta Utility District talked about the process Augusta completed when it was decided to consolidate water, sewer and stormwater.

Following the technical session, a delicious and hardy lunch was served, and the attendees headed out to enjoy the scenery and beautiful weather.

December Meeting to Offer Deregulation Discussion

It has been some time since we had a bimonthly meeting in Fryeburg, so it will be nice to be there again on December 13th - as we do like to visit the members on a recurring basis.

The technical program that has been chosen is really more just than a timely issue. It's a recurring venue in that it's a place we've been before and, frankly, a place some may not have chosen to revisit so soon.

In any event, the stakeholder group deliberations associated with LD 1842, An Act to Amend the Charter of the Bingham Water District have focused, in large part, on the prospect of deregulation and local control of consumer owned water utilities.

The series of meetings have defined many of the issues of importance to stakeholders. It has been decided that an investigation of deregulation is warranted. Most, if not all, recognize that if this proposal is to move forward, it needs to be a measured approach and there needs to a level of comfort that any resolution will significantly benefit customers.

The December meeting will include a synopsis of the stakeholder discussion findings and will feature speakers who will present many of the viewpoints that will need to be taken into consideration.

Bill Harwood will highlight the statutory issues that are woven into this regulatory matrix and discuss the legal implication of deregulation.

Will deregulation have legs this time around? Perhaps it will but maybe it won't. However, all can benefit from a comprehensive discussion of the issues that need to be considered. We look forward to seeing many in Fryeburg, as we discuss this important topic.

Dig Safe Workgroup Acts on Three of Six Assignments

The Dig Safe workgroup, which met throughout the summer, voted on three issues at their October 10th meeting. The members voted to take “no action” on:

- Creating a new apportionment of the costs of membership in the damage prevention system so that members could pay a flat fee for each notification of pending excavation;
- Authorizing an operator who is not a member of the damage prevention system to be subject to administrative penalties for violations of Title 23, section 3360-A; and
- Developing a process for the commission to keep records of successful markings or excavations completed by members of the damage prevention system.

The members also voted to table until the November 1st meeting (which was postponed due to Hurricane Sandy) discussion on the remaining three issues:

- Requiring an operator who is not a member of

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the damage prevention system to maintain insurance when an excavator is working on that operator's underground facilities;

- Identifying appropriate tolerance zones for marking different types of underground facilities;
- Evaluating the need for an ongoing advisory board to provide input to the commission regarding the damage prevention system. The work group shall consider staffing requirements, membership, funding and the scope of responsibility for the advisory board.

The workgroup is also working on

recommendations, including requiring any owner or operator of underground facilities to be listed on the OKTODIG website and the development and adoption of Best Management Practice Agreements (BMPs), as alternatives to provisions of the existing Dig Safe law and /or Dig Safe rules.

The BMP initiative is one that the association has been working on with contractors and others.

The Office of Public Advocate has offered a proposal to establish a Dig Safe Advisory Board consisting of 25 members.

In addition, there is an effort to bring forth legislation that would mandate membership for water and sewage systems and municipalities.

The association is attempting to understand the financial implications of mandatory membership, particularly for those systems who would be required to become principle members of the Dig Safe system.

Upcoming Training

MWUA's Education & Operations committee has been hard at work planning training for the end of this year and 2013. A Meter Breakfast Forum has been

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prepared for November 29, December 11th and 18th in Caribou, Old Orchard Beach and Wilton, respectively. This training will consist of a water meter overview, meter sizing, reading technologies, meter replacement, and then also an overview on Badger, Neptune and Sensus products.

NEWWA and MWUA are presenting “The Fundamentals of Cross Connection Control” on November 27th, 28th, and 29th in Brewer, Augusta and Old Orchard Beach. This course will cover the basic information needed to understand the concepts and fundamental of cross connection control. It will prepare the individual for training in testing backflow prevention devices or conducting cross-connection surveys.

The committee has also been working on 2013 training that includes a safety operator forum, an operator responsibility session, sanitary survey expectations training, and an office session on customer service as well.

For more information on these training sessions, click the “Events” link found on our website, www.mwua.org. Also, keep checking our website, as we will be posting more training as information becomes available.

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The 2013 February Meeting and Trade Show

The Program Committee is again putting the finishing touches on the upcoming February Meeting and Trade Show. Like last year's show, we have New England Water Works Association as a co-sponsor as well as Maine WasteWater Control Association.

Topics to be presented by MWUA include succession planning and employee retention, pumps/VFDs, fire protection, a step by step approach to solving math problems, and critical paths to water

quality solutions. MWUA will also be offering training on GIS and SCADA, an office session and a trustee session, and also a session to help utilities deal with change. Of course the always popular "day in the life of an operator" and product demo sessions will be offered as well.

Speaking of Product Demos... **ATTENTION Associate Members!** We are currently looking for product demos for this February Meeting Session. If you are interested in participating, please email the office at info@mwua.org, or call us at (207) 623-9511.

NEWWA is offering sessions on social media, dealing with water quality changes, asset management,

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Scholarship Applications, Award Nominations, and a Photo Contest

The Public Awareness Committee is once again ready to accept scholarship applications. Do you know of a college intern in the water or wastewater profession who is pursuing a career in this profession? If you do, please encourage them to apply. MWUA offers \$1,000 scholarship(s) each year. *Applications are due November 30th.* Please check out this link for more info and to download the scholarship application: <http://www.mwua.org/about/mwua-scholarship/>.

Also, keep in mind that MWUA's annual award nominations are also due on *November 30th.* Please send your nominations to us at your earliest convenience. To view the award descriptions, please visit this link: <http://www.mwua.org/about/annual-awards/>.

The Public Awareness Committee will be holding another photo contest this year as well! The contest is meant to be fun and to recognize interesting, funny, amazing and odd people, places or things that public water systems deal with every day. Keep your eye out for photo opportunities – you could win up to \$100! For more info, visit our website: <http://www.mwua.org/events/mwua-2013-photo-contest/>.

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biofilm, and productive conversations for boards and operators.

MWWCA also has some great presentations prepared, including blue print reading, trench safety/confined space, DEP method update rules, 7Q10 and monthly stream/river flows, and water and sewer utilities collaborating on construction projects.

Watch for the 2013 brochure in your mailbox, and make sure you save the dates of **February 5th and 6th**. Also, you can check our website, www.mwua.org, where information will be posted as it is available.

HOST: Fryeburg Water Company

LOCATION: Fryeburg Masonic (Pythagorean) Hall, 50 Portland Street (Rte 5 & 113), Fryeburg, ME 04037

DIRECTIONS: Coming from Bridgton, Turn at monument, 7th building on left

PROGRAM

- 8:00 AM – 8:30 AM **Registration, Continental Breakfast**
- 8:30 AM – 8:40 AM **Introduction/Welcome to Fryeburg**
Sharon Jackson, Fryeburg Town Manager
- 8:40 AM – 9:00 AM **Overview of Fryeburg Water Company’s System**
Hugh Hastings, President, Fryeburg Water Company
- 9:00 AM – 9:15 AM **Regulatory Update**
Normand Lamie, PE, Chief Engineer, Maine Drinking Water Program
- 9:15 AM – 10:00 AM **Business Meeting**
Annual Committee Reports
- 10:00 AM – 10:15 AM **Break**

TECHNICAL PROGRAM

- 10:15 AM – 10:25 AM **Summary of the Salient Issues Identified in the Decreasing Revenues NOI (Docket 2012-00315), TBD**
- 10:25 AM – 10:40 AM **Southern Maine Regional Water Council Deliberations and Position**, *Christopher Crovo, Executive Director of Asset Management and Planning, Portland Water District*
- 10:40 AM – 10:55 AM **Pros & Cons from the Standpoint of Various Sized Systems, Examples Included**, *Normand Labbe, Superintendent, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Wells Water District*
- 10:55 AM – 11:10 AM **A Small System Perspective**, *Amanda Smith, Superintendent, Winterport Water District*
- 11:10 AM – 11:25 AM **Rate Making Absent the PUC Oversight Process**, *Michael Hanson, Superintendent, Sanford Sewerage District*
- 11:25 AM – 12:15 PM **Statutory Implications**, *William Harwood, Esq., Verrill Dana, LLP*
- 12:15 PM **Lunch**

***There will be a tour of Fryeburg Academy following lunch*

Jonathon Ziegler
President

Rick Anair
Program Coordinator

REGISTRATION FOR MWUA DECEMBER 13, 2012 MEMBERSHIP MEETING
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