

ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF GROUNDWATER  
IN THE LAS VEGAS VALLEY GROUNDWATER BASIN

Meeting No. 70

8:30 A.M.

November 30, 2016

Las Vegas Valley Water District

1001 S. Valley View Blvd., Las Vegas, NV

Members Present:	Richard Avila	Kumiko Katie-Moore
	Todd Croft	Stacey Lindburg
	John Guillory	Robert McLaughlin
	John Hiatt	

Members Absent:	Kelli Ross	Trent Scarlett
-----------------	------------	----------------

Also Present:	Andy Belanger	Omar Saucedo
	Katie Horn	Natalia Londono-Arroyo

#### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The Advisory Committee for Groundwater Management met for its 70<sup>th</sup> meeting on November 30, 2016. The meeting began at 8:30 A.M. and ended at 9:42 A.M. Andy Belanger, Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), facilitated the meeting.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members from the public wishing to speak.

#### REVIEW MEETING SUMMARY OF APRIL 28, 2015 MEETING

John Hiatt noted that on page three of the meeting summary, the word "state" should be changed to "estate."

Todd Croft asked if there had been a resolution to the ideas discussed during the April 28, 2015, committee meeting to encourage delinquent well owners to pay the Groundwater Management Program (GMP) fee. Andy Belanger, (SNWA), explained that the challenge with the April 28, 2015 meeting was that quorum was not met; therefore, action could not be taken on items discussed. Mr. Belanger added that these ideas could be covered under item No.3, if it was the committee's desire.

Mr. Hiatt noted that water lines were being extended often as a result of development, and a person that wasn't within 180 feet of a water line last year, could be within 180 feet of a water line this year. He added that this should not be a constraining factor on what the advisory committee does.

## **Advisory Committee for Groundwater Management**

Administrative Meeting (November 30, 2016)

Page 2 of 5

Mr. Croft noted that he agreed with Mr. Hiatt. He added that Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) worked with a neighborhood contamination issue and some of the homes involved were located more than 180 feet from a water line.

John Guillory noted that for properties with permitted water rights and domestic wells located more than 180 feet from a water line had the option to deepen their well depending on the well's condition instead of connecting to municipal a water system.

Mr. Croft asked whether the committee should limit the notice to well users within 180 feet or have a broader notification.

In his response, Mr. Belanger referenced the committee's discussion at the April 28, 2015 meeting, should the committee make a recommendation to change the percentage of grant funding for delinquent well owners, only properties who were delinquent on their GMP fees and were within 180 feet would be notified. During the discussion, the committee was advocating that the notification be broader than 180 feet to address well users near the 180-foot boundary.

Stacey Lindburg made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 28, 2015 with the changes to the word "state." The motion was approved.

### RECEIVE UPDATES FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Croft reported that he wanted to make the advisory committee aware of remediation activities that NDEP had been working on. A dry cleaning business near the intersection of Pecos and Tropicana had a release of PCE chemical and a neighborhood with 16 domestic wells is located nearby. The dry cleaners was not willing to contact these well owners to notify them of possible groundwater contamination. Consequently; NDEP used state money to conduct a large outreach program for these well users.

NDEP offered to sample these wells three times to get an understanding of contaminant presence or absence and also offered to cover any costs not covered by the SNWA Well Conversion Grant (15 percent) so that well owners would not have pay the 15 percent out-of pocket expense. Out of 16 properties, four elected to get their wells sampled and two participated in the Well Conversation Grant Program.

There were four properties that had previously connected to the municipal water system years ago but maintained their well. The Nevada State Engineer's Office would work with these property owners and SNWA to plug and abandon these wells.

Mr. Croft added that because of the Well Conversion Grant Program, and the ability for NDEP and SNWA to work together, the agencies were able to reduce potential risk to human health by cutting off the pathway for contaminant to get to people through the drinking water system.

## **Advisory Committee for Groundwater Management**

Administrative Meeting (November 30, 2016)

Page 3 of 5

Mr. Belanger noted that he was aware of a mobile home park in Las Vegas, where the SNWA was working with the State Revolving Loan Fund to provide funding to get the mobile home connected to municipal water due to a water quality issue, which was identified through required testing.

Mr. Croft stated that NDEP maintains a fund of approximately \$1 million annually to mitigate issues related to groundwater contaminants.

Mr. Belanger suggested that the Groundwater Management Program could fund well conversions that derived as a result of a notification of contamination.

Mr. Belanger asked if there should be something done so people were at least aware of potential water quality issue and then determine the best course of action. Mr. Hiatt responded that the notification process could be challenging because many well owners may doubt information coming from the GMP Program. Mr. Hiatt suggested a better approach would be contacting well owners in person, explaining a health problem existed and that their wells would not be taken away.

Mrs. Lindburg suggested a process where well owners received formal notification of a well contamination issue, which would shift the agencies' responsibility to the well owner.

Mr. Belanger responded that there are notification requirements for public water systems, but no notification requirements for domestic well owners. Although there was no legal reason to do the notification, Mr. Belanger asked if there was a reason, that the GMP should notify well users.

Mr. Hiatt responded that the program should notify well users, noting potential legal ramifications if the GMP failed to take action.

Rob McLaughlin reported that North Las Vegas had three well conversions in process.

Mr. Hiatt stated that since groundwater was no longer being recharged through the permanent recharge program, the groundwater aquifer would eventually observe an over-draft situation, uneven subsidence and housing damage.

Mr. Belanger asked Mr. Guillory whether pumping had been stable over the last decade? Had it declined? Mr. Guillory responded that pumping had decreased minimally but for the most part has remained steady.

Mr. Guillory asked how many years it had been since the permanent recharge program was discontinued? Mr. Belanger responded that it has been approximately five years.

Mr. Belanger asked the committee if they felt there was continued value in doing more permanent recharge and increasing the fee back to \$30 annually or leaving it at \$13 per year? Mr. Belanger noted that approximately 17,000 acre-feet of water that was recharged into the aquifer. He noted that this topic is not listed on the agenda, but will be placed in a future agenda for discussion and

## **Advisory Committee for Groundwater Management**

Administrative Meeting (November 30, 2016)

Page 4 of 5

possible recommendation. Also, staff would bring a hydrologist to provide additional details on this matter.

Mr. Croft made a suggestion to go back to holding quarterly meetings of the GMP Advisory Committee meeting.

### **DISCUSS GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO GUIDE FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Mr. Belanger provided a brief presentation on the GMP Advisory Committee meeting, its efforts and the work that had been accomplished over the years.

Mr. Belanger noted that the GMP committee was formed nearly 20 years ago. During the initial stages of the GMP program, the committee met over four times a year. The committee's workshops at the time were attended by over 150 people and up to 300 people in some of the early years. At the time, there was a lot of community interest and concern with groundwater wells.

Mr. Belanger stated that having the perspective of the early days of the committee, when issues were addressed and solved from recommendations made by the committee at various points in time and looking at the history now – Mr. Belanger asked the committee:

1. Have the groundwater related issues been solved?
2. Are there new issues that need to be addressed?
3. Is the legislative framework that was established 20 years ago still valid?

Mr. Belanger noted that one of the reasons why the committee meeting schedule was changed to a meeting per year was because it was difficult to get members to attend quarterly meetings. The GMP program had entered into a sort of maintenance mode where there were few significant issues that needed to be addressed by the committee.

Mr. Belanger commented on Mr. Croft's suggestion regarding quarterly meetings by stating that staff was absolutely open to more meetings if more issues needed to be addressed. A change in statute provided flexibility that mandated meetings to occur only when necessary.

Mrs. Lindburg noted that she agreed that to have meetings just to provide a staff report was unnecessary. She added that moving forward, agenda items of future committee meetings should include educating the public.

Mr. Hiatt noted that an on-going issue that has not been solved is groundwater contamination.

There was a brief discussion about developing an early process where the advisory committee could set an agenda during the first meeting of the year and work the agenda throughout the year.

Mr. Belanger reported that he anticipated 8-10 water bills at the 2017 Legislative Session, which included addressing Diamond Valley Basin and other over- appropriated basins.

## **Advisory Committee for Groundwater Management**

Administrative Meeting (November 30, 2016)

Page 5 of 5

Mr. Hiatt asked if staff could forward a list of groundwater bills and who sponsored them to the committee, and Mr. Belanger responded that staff will do that.

Mrs. Lindburg indicated that the committee should look into developing a groundwater education plan for town board meetings regarding groundwater. Mr. Belanger suggested that staff could provide annual presentations at town board meetings.

Mr. McLaughlin asked for clarification on changing the statutory requirements with regard to advisory committee appointments. Mr. Belanger responded that the proposal was to change the language to say that the committee “may” meet and if a committee is established, it “shall” have representation from broad groundwater sectors.

He added that staff was proposing a less formal appointment structure to provide greater flexibility on how and when the appointments were made. The existing committee appointment structure are four year terms. A lot of administrative work is involved with keeping track of committee appointments, term expiration dates and re-appointments.

Mrs. Lindburg made a recommendation to change committee appointments to every two years and have all committee members on the same appointment schedule.

The committee had a brief discussion about scheduling a meeting in January 2017 to develop a work plan for the year, formalize a committee schedule, review a proposed bill draft of potential committee changes and develop a plan to begin engaging with the town advisory boards.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no members from the public wishing to speak.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 a.m.