

**WATER ALLOCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF MEETING

Sept. 15, 2003

Members Present:

Sandra Whitehouse
Chip Young
Meg Kerr
Tom Sandham
Lori Urso

Members Absent:

Mary Anne Barry
Sen. Sosnowski

Water Resources Board Staff:

Connie McGreavy

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Dr. Whitehouse called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May, June and August meetings were approved on a motion by Lori Urso. (There was no meeting held in July.)

III. ITEMS FOR ACTION

A. Report Outline

Ms. McGreavy explained that the outline (due Sept. 9, 2003) was an attempt to track the committees' goals and progress for a report to the Water Resources Board. The report is due later this month. Dr. Whitehouse reviewed each section aloud and then delegated different parts to members. Each individual present was asked to write up the Short Term Goals section, which corresponded to his or her personal area of participation. Dr. Whitehouse volunteered to write up the Long Term Goals section and Ms. Kerr volunteered to write up the Outcomes section. Ms. McGreavy suggested that an Executive Summary was needed and a list of sources to make the report complete. She will contact Ms. Barry to see if additional assistance is available and post all past meeting minutes to the web page for reference. Dr. Whitehouse hopes to have a rough draft completed by Sept. 25, 2003.

B. Finalize Recommendations

Dr. Whitehouse began discussion on the recommendations. She advised that the first paragraph be edited, by either referencing "preliminary" recommendations and/or adding: identification of funding sources before development of a full educational program. Mr. Young asked whether funding was limited to state sources. The answer was no, however, there was agreement that the state should invest in conservation over the long term. Dr. Whitehouse asked Ms. McGreavy to investigate whether the Board has an 804 account (restricted receipts). If not, other agencies might have such

accounts where funds could be placed. Mr. Young emphasized that water allocation must be presented as a statewide issue, since it will affect everyone. Ms. Kerr suggested that watershed councils are not necessarily relating to water allocation as an issue to be concerned about, not even in areas that have studies ongoing.

Text changes were agreed upon for each of the four recommendations in order to clarify exactly what the committee was responsible for and what the state might, otherwise, collectively do to realize shared education goals. Mr. Young offered to prepare a scope of work for a media strategy and estimate its dollar value. In response to a question he asked regarding training, Ms. Kerr stated that neither Grow Smart RI nor URI-Cooperative Extension had training sessions planned. She will follow up. Mr. Sandham stated that the Conservation Districts are doing education and can provide these services inexpensively. He suggested the committee write to each of the districts for cost estimates. Ms. McGreavy stated that there are several entities capable of providing education and that the 1990 Arthur D. Little study had observed that conservation education in Rhode Island is fragmented. She believed that several committees were going to be including education in their recommendations, which would improve the chance that something would be funded. Mr. Young offered other ideas for the media strategy such as preparing Opinion-Editorial pieces for the Governor and/or legislative leaders, possibly timed with significant environmental celebrations such as Earth Day, Water Week, Rivers Day, etc.

C. Presentation to WAPAC

Ms. McGreavy asked the Education Committee to give a brief overview of its findings regarding WAPAC education messages at the full WAPAC meeting later this month. Mr. Young will present his analysis emphasizing the need for joint advocacy, coordination and funding. Ms. Kerr suggested that consensus from the WAPAC was important going forward, so as not to diffuse the message. Dr. Whitehouse will brief the WAPAC on legislative priorities, a timeline and strategy.

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

A. WAPAC Education Messages Analysis

Dr. Whitehouse thanked Mr. Young for preparing the analysis while acknowledging that identifying the “3 barks” (chief education messages) was still not possible. He urged that a meeting be scheduled immediately with the Joint Advocacy and Funding Committee to devise a strategy. He asked what other states were doing to educate their constituencies, especially neighboring states. Ms. Urso will share her findings with him. Ms. McGreavy stated that there was a fair amount of education available concerning drought, and that determining what works is valuable. Mr. Young felt that the analysis was straightforward and that members could contact him with any questions. Ms. McGreavy stated that the analysis would be made available at the WAPAC meeting.

B. Drafting Legislative Proposals

Dr. Whitehouse asked who would write the legislation. Ms. McGreavy answered that it would likely be a combination of resources from the Governor's Office and the RI General Assembly. Both Dr. Whitehouse and Mr. Young felt that any water allocation legislation would be complex, and would be best presented in one package. Ms. McGreavy was not certain that a comprehensive water allocation bill would be drafted until all the recommendations are decided on. It was possible that individual elements could be packaged separately and advocated by independent organizations. She stated that the Joint Advocacy & Funding Committee had not met since last fall, but that the committee was intended to help sort through all the priorities and identify resources.

Dr. Whitehouse and Mr. Young felt strongly that coordination was important and that there should be someone overseeing this process. Dr. Whitehouse asked if a lawyer was available from the Board who could prepare legislation. Ms. McGreavy stated that most legislation was reviewed by legal counsel after it was prepared. Mr. Sandham did not think it was appropriate for the committees to be preparing proposals or doing advocacy.

Ms. McGreavy explained that she was planning to distribute the recommendations to the WAPAC shortly, and that she was working on an analysis to be completed by the end of the month. From this analysis, it will be possible to get a sense of legislative priorities, as well as other factors such as whether new regulations are needed, whether funding is needed, the number of committees supporting recommendations, timeline for implementation, etc. The analysis will be benchmarked against the recommendations of the 1990 Arthur D. Little baseline study [that became State Guide Plan Element 722, Water Supply Plan]. Ms. McGreavy stated that the full WAPAC would play a part in determining priorities during discussion at WAPAC meetings. The goal will be to identify 3-4 top priorities and form the "3 barks" from there.

Mr. Young asked who are our allies. He suggested we look to where water problems have occurred and select representatives to sponsor bills. Dr. Whitehouse suggested that legislative advocacy could focus on key committee members in the General Assembly, particularly the House of Representatives. She added that legislators serving on the Water Resources Board could be sponsors. Ms. McGreavy stated that the Board works closely with the Senate Policy Office on legislative matters. Several names of representatives were suggested as possible sponsors from Pascoag, N. Kingstown, Jamestown, Aquidneck Island, East Bay, West Bay, etc. Dr. Whitehouse agreed to distribute the House Finance Committee List and suggested that, eventually, it would be good to provide the Speaker of the House with a list of water allocation bills. Mr. Young suggested a meeting with the Governor's policy staff and General Assembly leaders. Dr. Whitehouse indicated that the legislative advocacy strategy had to align with the media strategy and concurred that a meeting with the Joint Advocacy Committee should occur, ideally before Sept. 25th (WAPAC meeting).

Ms. McGreavy shared a memo from the Governor's Office outlining a format for legislative proposals that were due from agencies by Nov. 1, 2003. Mr. Young mentioned that the town of Jamestown was requiring new [water-saving] toilets for residents. Ms. McGreavy asked whether this was a new local ordinance and agreed to follow up.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Integrating with the NRCS on Outreach

Ms. Kerr and Ms. Urso explained that the outreach program was devised by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as part of the Optimization Modeling project in the Wood Pawcatuck watershed. Due to funding concerns, some recommendations may not be acted on. Ms. McGreavy explained that two members of NRCS were originally on the Education Committee and moved to the Integrated Water/Wastewater Committee instead. Ms. Kerr and Ms. Urso will serve as liaisons to the NRCS and encourage coordination with WAPAC education efforts.

VI. AJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM. The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 20, 2003 at 1PM at URI's Bay Campus.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie McGreavy
RI Water Resources Board

Date