

Colorado WaterWise Board Meeting

Thursday, February 11, 2021

Conference Call

10 a.m. to noon

P: Called-in via phone
X: Attended in-person

Board:

P	Alyssa Quinn	Platte Canyon W&S District	alquinn@plattecanyon.org
	Amy Volckens	Brendle Group	avolckens@brendlegroup.com
P	Brad Brady	Yearout Energy Solutions	brad.brady@yearoutenergy.com
P	Courtney Black	Intera	CBlack@intera.com
P	Diana Denwood	Aurora Water	ddenwood@auroragov.org
P	Don Drew	Courageous Marketing	d.drews@courageousmarketing.com
P	Eric Olson	City of Fort Collins	eolson@fcgov.com
	John Berggren	Western Resource Advocates	john.berggren@westernresources.org
	Katie Helm	City of Fountain	khelm@fountaincolorado.org
	Lance Ackerman	Colorado Springs Utilities	lackerman@csu.org
P	Laura Wing	City of Thornton	laura.wing@cityofthornton.net
P	Lindsay Rogers	WaterNow Alliance	ler@waternow.org
P	Lyndsey Lucia	Northern Water Conservancy	llucia@northernwater.org
P	Quint Redmond	Agriburbia	qredmond@agriburbia.com
P	Ruth Quade	City of Greeley	ruth.quade@greeleygov.com
P	Thomas Riggle	Centennial W&S District	triggle@highlandsranch.org
P	Tyler Kesler	Town of Erie	tkesler@erieco.gov
P	Melissa Brasfield	CWW Board Staff	admin@coloradowaterwise.org

Guests:

Tara Meininger – Martin & Wood Water Consultants

Richard Randall – Navitas Equity Solutions

Call to Order

Diana called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM

Board Business and Action Items

- Approval of January Board Minutes. Ruth motions, Laura seconds. January minutes are approved.

Navitas

Richard provided some background on how he founded Navitas. Originally, he was an institutional real estate investor and had properties with high utility costs. He started making capital investments in those properties to reduce the utility expenses. He saw success in this approach and decided to create a business to help private real estate owners make these investments into their properties to save water and electricity. They primarily work through a performance contracting basis and perform specialty contracting, assist with rebates, as well as audit these projects. They are based in Denver but are doing work all over. They are currently focused on water but work on other areas of efficiency as well.

Diana added that she met Richard when Navitas reached out to Aurora Water about a toilet rebate for an apartment property with 600 units and about 1,000 toilets. Aurora Water is still working on the calculations for the water that is expected to be saved but should be significant.

Eric asked what they are doing with the toilets once they are removed. Richard noted they try to recycle them in markets that allow for that but not all areas have recycling options. Ruth added that in the past she had reached out to CDOT about porcelain recycling, but they were not going to be providing enough volume to be of interest to CDOT. There might be some interesting conversations to have and relationships to foster in the future.

Action Plan Updates

Diana only received 9 votes on the Action Plan via email, so we need to vote now. Diana confirms we have a quorum today. The board voted to approval the 2021 Action Plan. All 13 board members voted to approve the 2021 Action Plan. The 2021 Action Plan is approved.

CWCB BMPs

Courtney had a call with Kevin Reidy to discuss updating the BMP Guidebook and grant funding. Kevin is in support of the idea of updating the BMPs and it's something that he has thought about in the past. He said that over the years he has had a broad group of people talking about it, so there is a broad audience using it currently. He noted that the topics are broad which is good. One thing he sees as the role of the BMPs is that it allows smaller entities access to the basic information that could greatly benefit from the documents.

In terms of funding, the grants that usually come with water conservation measures are not available right now. He did say that there is funding available through the State Water Plan fund, but the timing for that grant is in December each year. Kevin noted he has at least \$600,000 to use over the next 3 years for grants. He added that could change if the CWCB board decides to open up the summer application period. There is also the Water Supply Reserve Fund which could be an option as well. That funding could come in while we wait for the State Water Plan funds to open up in December.

Kevin also had some ideas with the BMPs moving forward. The first was a self-assessment tool that would help gear organization to what they need to focus on within the BMPs. Kevin also liked having it be more interactive like on a website with case studies to update on an annual or so basis. He also noted that the case studies need to be updated. He also thinks having links to other resources would also be good.

Courtney wants to have some discussion about where we want to go from here. Diana explained to the guests what the BMP Guidebook is.

- Diana mentioned that we probably don't have information on AMI in the current BMPs.
- Lyndsey asked if Courtney has gone through the document to know how much we need to update.
 - Courtney has not gone through and done a comprehensive review but thinks that's a good initial step.
- Alyssa said it is something she would support and worth getting a small group to go through the document to identify what needs to be updated and have that help us determine whether we need a grant.
 - Diana agrees and notes the management team is eager to have this updated.
- Diana added this project needs a strawman project proposal to work through the details. Diana noted that we likely don't have the resources on the board to get these updates completed.
- Laura thinks the next step is to get a scope of work for a contractor to do the analysis because it can be really time consuming. They could also do a literature review to see what else is out there. They could also go out to collect case studies.
- Diana asked who is interested in leading this project.
 - Courtney said that she is happy to be the internal leader but thinks a contractor is necessary to do the bulk of the work.
- Tyler asked if it would be worth looking at what has been done as part of the state of water conservation survey and see what can be pulled from there.
- Don said if there is grant money available, we should hire someone to help and the funding is the way to bring the project to light and thinks this document is a value to the membership benefits.
- Lindsay said she likes the idea of using the resources out there to make it collaborative to include what is already out there. This also seems aligned with AWWA Rocky Mountain section and their guidebooks and it might be worth seeing if it would be helpful to work with them.

- Thomas agrees this is something that can be brought up on the next AWWA conservation committee call. **Thomas can reach out to Ann with AWWA Rocky Mountain section.**
- Laura offered assistance from her team for the strawman development.
- Melissa noted that if we went with a grant, we may need to make it available to everyone instead of keeping it a member benefit.

CWW Certification

Lindsay explained that this certification program idea spurred from the discussion with Don on member benefits and engagement. This is also something that Lindsay has thought about for promoting engagement by promoting professional growth opportunities. The idea is to develop an annual certification that individual members could receive a certificate at a certain level of certification. The levels would be based on the number of credits received for participating in various programs offered by CWW already. They want to gather feedback today to come back in March with a more formal proposal. Lindsay thinks there is a gap in certification for water conservation professionals.

Melissa described how this could work within Wild Apricot. The platform does not have an exact way to track a certification, so we would track portions within Wild Apricot and some things on an external system. However, there is a way for us to track the actual levels within Wild Apricot to be able to easily show who is at each level and give recognition. The tracking of credits would likely be housed outside of Wild Apricot. Melissa noted that there are likely certification management platforms out there, but are not to a point of needing that yet.

Questions from board members:

- Lyndsey asked about the number of members we currently have. And asked if we want to survey the members to gauge interest.
 - Melissa confirmed we are at 100 individuals with a couple recent new members.
- Lindsay asked about the breakdown of individuals versus organizations.
 - Melissa confirmed that members represent 45 organizations.
 - Melissa confirmed that tracking in Wild Apricot would tie the certification information to each individual contact, not to an organization.
- Diana likes this idea, and she has had conversations with others at Aurora Water about a water conservation professional certification, so this is really appealing. She is also interested in considering allowing CEUs that can be applied from other groups/classes outside of CWW. She also would like us to consider renewing every 2 years instead of 1 year.
 - Ruth added that the certification could require X number of CWW credits and Y number of outside credits.
- Quint asked if anyone in the utility have access to the benefits through membership or just certain individuals.
 - Melissa explained the bundling of organizations.
 - Quint added that this could work to grow the membership of CWW by marketing this to non-members.
- Thomas said this could be something college students are interested in as well. Quint agreed.
- Alyssa added that AWWA Rocky Mountain section looked into this a while ago and had reached out the Pacific NW section who has something similar and she thinks it fizzled out, so there may be interest there as well.
- Diana added that we need to determine if this is CO specific.

Diana said next step will be to develop a team and create a strawman. **Lindsay, Don, Melissa will meet and discuss.**

Drought Materials & Round Robin

The LLYLI committee met on Tuesday and are getting close to finishing drought material development. These materials will be available to all active CWW members. The Metro Drought Coalition meeting brought up the development of drought materials with interest from a lot of individuals. The coalition asked for an update on the LLYLI materials at the next meeting. Alyssa opened up discussion on drought and what utilities are preparing for, as well as any ideas for materials might be helpful to your organization.

- Fort Collins is not anticipating calling restrictions.
- Tyler asked if drought restrictions preclude utilities from doing drought education.
 - Eric said in times of drought they see a lot of interest in audits and assistance.

- Tyler said they are not likely to issue restrictions but will be doing education.
- Eric asked how we make voluntary restrictions positive.
 - Don says visibility and comparisons to those around you is an opportunity to raise awareness.
- Diana added that there is a lot of politics that goes into issuing drought restrictions.
- Alyssa added that it's important to continue to spread the message of water conservation even in non-drought years.
- Diana noted that Aurora is not likely to have restrictions. And she does not even see much in the way of voluntary restrictions, either. It would likely take something like an exceptionally low snowpack year to institute restrictions.
- Thornton is looking at identifying year-round water rules but will not likely go into effect until later this year.

Education Committee Updates

Brad discussed the 2021 Action Plan items. Our webinar in February is talking about Green Infrastructure. We are planning ahead with the following topics in future months:

- April discussion on a drought update.
- June discussion on watershed health.
- July discussion on next gen water and land use development.

Finalize Committees

- Annual Event
 - Current members: Melissa, Alyssa, Lyndsey, Lindsay, Thomas, Katie, Ruth, Chris Wolf
 - New members: None
- Membership
 - Current members: Diana, Don and Melissa
 - New members: Richard, Alyssa
- LLYLI
 - Current members: Alyssa, Laura, Lyndsey, Ruth, Don, Thomas, Tyler, Melissa, Amanda, Eric
 - New members: None
- Education Events
 - Current members: Brad, Lindsey, Quint, John, Melissa, Jessica
 - New members:
- Website
 - Current members: Melissa and Diana
 - Expressed interest: Lyndsey
- Newsletter
 - Current members: Ruth, Diana, Melissa, Don Ireland, Bridgette, Zack Allen
 - New members: Possibly Morgan Hopkins-Crawley
- Tools
 - Current members: Amy, Eric, Rick Shultz, Kevin, Courtney, Lance
 - New members: No new members

Membership Pledge

Diana discussed the membership pledge document. This is more of a commitment than a pledge. This form will be completed by all board members and will indicate different categories of membership commitments. Each board member must have at least one pledge but can have multiple. **Diana will finalize this document and share it with the board to review then will send it out for everyone to complete.**

Round Robin

- Lindsey mentioned that they took on a project in Henderson, NV and working to develop a commercial water use scorecard to determine which type of business to allow in their communities. The idea is that if there is a business that wants to come to town that is projected to be a high-water user, then there is a way to have them contribute to water efficiency measures.
 - Diana said Aurora's newer Niagara water bottling plant is a sore spot for Aurora water conservation staff.
 - Thomas suggested talking to Boulder, they may be doing something similar with water offsets.

- Thomas met with Karen McCormick from Boulder and is working on a soil health bill with a lot of strong support. This would be a voluntary program to provide incentive to farmers to adapt and change various practices. The goal of the bill is to increase soil moisture and increase carbon in soils. Thomas has mentioned CWW in those discussion and Karen is interest in getting our support on the bill.

Wrap Up and Adjourn

Diana adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Submitted by:
Melissa Brasfield