Department of Public Works
2662 Riva Rd, Annapolis, MD 21401

Our wAAter.
THE ANNE ARUNDEL CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Our wAAter Public Advisory Group Meeting #7 Summary

Meeting Date: February 27, 2024
Meeting Time: 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
Location: Independence Room - 2664 Riva Rd, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works (DPW)	HDR	Public Advisory Group	
Karen Henry	Ed Shea	Elle Bassett *Arundel Rivers Federation*	Jerry Pesterfield *Heritage Harbor*
George Heiner	Brian Balchunas	Tammy Domanski (virtual) *Anne Arundel Community College Environmental Center*	Tim Williams *Water Environment Federation (retired)*
Chris Murphy	Ziwei He	Sally Hornor *Magothy River Association*	
Erin Dey	Rahkia Nance	Lloyd Lewis *Chesapeake Environmental Protection Association (CEPA)*	
Guy Youmbi	Tucker Cotter	Doug Nichols *Greater Severna Park Council*	

Welcome

Rahkia Nance welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for joining. She also introduced the project team.

- George Heiner, Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works
- Karen Henry, Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works
- Chris Murphy, Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works
- Erin Dey, Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works
- Guy Youmbi, Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works
- Brian Balchunas, HDR
- Ed Shea, HDR
- Ziwei He, HDR
- Rahkia Nance, HDR
- Tucker Cotter, HDR

Meeting Purpose

Meeting to provide programmatic updates and facilitate discussion with PAG members.

Department of Public Works
2662 Riva Rd, Annapolis, MD 21401

Our wAAter.
THE ANNE ARUNDEL CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Cybersecurity

- Guy Youmbi led a discussion on the County's approach to cybersecurity, which described an ongoing project of DPW to evaluate and mitigate cybersecurity risks. Recently completed activities were discussed as well as upcoming tasks.

- Jerry Pesterfield asked a question about the consultant who performed the Phase 1 assessment. Guy explained that the consultant was hired specifically for the assessment.

- George Heiner explained that a recent SCADA upgrade project identified vulnerabilities that were subsequently explored further within the Cybersecurity Assessment.

- Doug Nichols asked about the level of trust DPW has with third-party users/contractors and if they are US citizens. George explained that the County uses a standard contracting process and US citizenship is not a requirement.

- Jerry asked what the 5-year budget is for cybersecurity implementation. He was concerned the County's drinking water supply could be contaminated and that investment is justified. He expressed a desire to look outside the municipal sector (state/federal contractors) for an assessment.

- Tim Williams explained that there are specialty firms who have done this with municipal water systems.

- Brian Balchunas added that the types of engineering services provided to conduct cybersecurity assessments are usually conducted by specialized personnel. George clarified that DPW hired a consulting *firm* to perform the assessment, not just one individual.

PFAS

- Brian Balchunas led a discussion on PFAS and PFAS testing as it relates to the pilot system..

- Sally Hornor asked if there are areas where the DPW knows PFAS is coming in, and if it was possible to put a prefilter on the influent. Brian explained that this doesn't work effectively and that treating the source would be desirable but it's challenging. This is because PFAS treatment is typically done after the conventional treatment train and pretreatment of raw effluent would be ineffective. Chris Murphy explained that Maryland City influent has been found to have elevated levels of PFAS concentrations, but it is a residential area with no apparent source.

- Sally Hornor asked if the County is seeing PFAS in the receiving waters. Karen Henry explained that PFAS has been detected in one groundwater well, but it was below the EPA threshold (and may have been an inaccurate reading).

- Doug Nichols asked if State or County code has outlawed PFAS. Brian Balchunas answered no, but certain PFAS chemicals are being targeted and discontinued.

- Elle Bassett asked if this will affect surface water discharges (pilot and aquifer injection) in the future. Brian explained that there are utilities that are planning for PFAS removal and considering that advanced water treatment may be needed in the future wastewater process.[1]

Legislative Update

- Brian Balchunas led a discussion on legislative updates regarding MAR testing. He noted that the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) said it cannot support a bill at this time and the matter will not be pursued again until next session. However, the County will continue to gather scientific data and support for the program and gain operating experience with the pilot system. The County does not anticipate moving forward with demonstration facility design until a permitting process is in place.

- Tim Williams commented that getting support from the County Executive to introduce a bill is encouraging.

Minor Systems Update

The team shared a news article about a $1.1 million fine from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency levied against a trailer park owner.

- Tim Williams asked if the County is able to evaluate rate impacts of a county takeover of all private treatment facilities. Chris Murphy said the calculations show a much bigger impact than expected, between 3-5% increase.

- Lloyd Lewis asked about plant failure conveying raw sewage to waterways and whether the County has responsibility to act. Karen Henry noted it is the MDE's task to regulate and levy any applicable fines against the owner. George Heiner noted that it appears it is now under the purview of the U.S.EPA. Elle Bassett explained that MDE has been very involved, but the U.S. EPA filed the lawsuit.

- Lloyd Lewis recommended the County let the public know that DPW is aware of active contamination situations and is attempting to bring about a solution with County support. However, the public health notice for beach closure is the jurisdiction of the Health Department and DPW has no authority to distribute notice. Karen Henry said DPW can discuss this with the County Executive.

Septic-to-Sewer Update

- George Heiner led a discussion about the septic to sewer program, explaining that while changes were made to make sewer connections more affordable, the program has not produced desired results.

- George Heiner discussed the funding from the Watershed Protection Bureau that has recently been made available for Septic-to-Sewer projects. DPW is looking to connect to homes fronting

---

[1] On April 10, 2024, EPA announced the final National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) for six PFAS. https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas

Department of Public Works
2662 Riva Rd, Annapolis, MD 21401

Our wAAter.
THE ANNE ARUNDEL CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

an existing sewer using that funding.

● A project team member clarified that the Health Department does not require septic providers to file reports when they perform their work. Therefore, the condition of the septic system is unknown until a violation has been recorded.

● Group members noted they believe the program would be more successful if it was made mandatory and that messaging from the Health Department would have more impact than DPW. They also suggested more coordination with the Office of Planning and Zoning. Group members acknowledged that if a mandatory program were to be implemented, the cost should be made more affordable to residents.

● Sally Hornor mentioned that public education is important, and most homeowners think septic tanks do no harm.

Outreach Update

● Rahkia Nance provided an outreach update, including a recap of the Feb. 10 environmental youth summit at Anne Arundel Community College.

● Tammy Domanski thanked the project team for attending and remarked on the great feedback at the event.

Open Discussion and Q&A

● No formal Q&A was held, as questions were asked and answered throughout the meeting.

Discussion:

1. **Q: Will you please list the names of committee members on the website?**
   o A: Yes, we will add the committee member names to the website.

2. **Q: Was an independent consultant brought in to do the cybersecurity audit?**
   o A: We hired a cybersecurity consultant using the process we use for hiring engineering consultants.

3. **Q: What is the five-year plan budget for cybersecurity upgrades?**
   o A: There is no budget set yet, but it will be part of the overall budget we are allocating for program upgrades.

4. **Q: If there are certain areas where there is more PFAS, can you put a pre-filter?**
   o A: It's hard because you have to have really clean water already to remove PFAS. There are innovative treatment technologies for landfill waste that we're looking at.

5. **Q: Do you see any measurable amounts in drinking water?**

   o A: PFAS was detected in one well below the threshold at that time and below the current limit. DPW will continue to monitor as required.

Department of Public Works
2662 Riva Rd, Annapolis, MD 21401

Our wAAter.
THE ANNE ARUNDEL CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

6. **Q: Has the County outlawed PFAS?**
   o A: There is no total ban, but the County is working to identify specific chemicals to target for removal.

7. **Q: Is there a legislative solution to adapt Bay Restoration funds for operations (instead of capital, which you're currently limited to) costs, especially for environmental justice communities?**
   o A: That is an interesting idea.

8. **Q: Have you been able to model how much the sewer rates would be affected if the private systems were turned over to the County and brought up to County treatment standards?**
   o A: 3-5% increase on an average bill.

9. **Q: What is the County's view that treatment plants are discharging raw sewage?**
   o A: The DPW does not have jurisdiction over this since they are not utility ratepayers.

10. **Q: Please let the public know that you're aware of the issue and working towards a solution.**
    o A: We'll bring this up with the County Executive.

11. **Q: What kind of notification requirement is there?**
    o A: DPW notifies the Health Department when there is any discharge, wet or dry weather. The Health Department then follows their process for notifications.

12. **Q: Have the trailer park tenants been sent notification letters about the sewage discharge?**
    o A: Tenant notification is beyond the DPW's authority and is the responsibility of the owner of the trailer park.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Rahkia Nance thanked everyone for their participation and noted the group will reconvene in May 2024.