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Chris Victoria, Anne Arundel DPW  
Alice Volpitta, Blue Water Baltimore  
Michael Williams, Univ. of MD College Park

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## MINUTES

### MARYLAND WATER MONITORING COUNCIL BOARD MEETING

#### APRIL 11, 2023 - *HYBRID*

#### In Attendance

*In person:* Matt Stover, Katherine Hanna, and Ken Mack; *Virtually:* Nancy Roth, Najma Khokhar, Lindsay DeMarzo, Chris Victoria, Ken Staver, Jason Dubow, Andy Becker, Brian Smith, Bob Hilderbrand, John Denniston, Mat Pajerowski, Matt Harper, and Rupert Rosetti.

Matt (Stover) [Chair] called the meeting to order at 10:00AM. Matt verified that nobody was new to the Board Meeting. He stated that State agencies are adjusting to the new gubernatorial administration and their appointed secretaries. He expects that we will continue to focus on PFAS, environmental justice, and climate change. MDE is identifying opportunities to include climate resiliency and address environmental justice issues and direct resources towards those efforts. He brought attention to MDE's Environmental Justice Screening Tool. Katherine mirrored Matt's comments regarding EJ.

Ken S(taver) asked who was MDE's deputy secretary. Matt said that Suzanne Dorsey remains Deputy Secretary of MDE. Matt and Katherine (Hanna) mentioned management shifts at both MDE and DNR.

#### The Minutes (10:08 AM)

Katherine (Hanna) [Executive Secretary]: she said that she has the minutes and has not had a chance to go through them. She will send them out next week for comment and approval.

#### Nominating Committee (10:09 AM)

Ken M(ack): he initiated the voting process for the continuation of four current board members. Ken requested that everyone vote in the online poll before lunch. Ken then moved to the question of the outstanding board position. He mentioned two potential board members: Thomas Guay and Heather Quinn. He would send out their material shortly. He asked for people to suggest any additional recommendations and reminded that it was an "At-large" seat. Quinn is from MGS and Guay is from the Severn River Association. Both have a wealth of information, are very interested, and have provided their information. Matt asked if anyone had any experience working with either.

Mat recommended Quinn, having worked with her for a number of years. She has a long record in coastal and groundwater issues. He endorsed her.

Matt has worked with Guay and applauded his experience and energy. He has worked with youth in the area and expanded boat monitoring. He endorsed him.

Ken M said that he would get the materials out next week and give a couple of weeks for people to review the materials and complete the vote by July. Matt wondered if the new administration would apply the new ethics standards to these candidates. Ken M verify that three Board members have terms ending at the end of 2023, two of which need a continuation. Ken M and Matt again solicited for more board nominations.

Ken M brought up the fact that the bylaws require alternate board members. Please provide him names of alternates for when board members cannot attend. This might also be a pathway forward for new board members. Matt suggested that names also be collected to serve on our committees.

Rupert (Rossetti) asked if we have a table showing who is on each committee? Matt read out the chairs for each committee and asked that each chair send an updated roster for their committee. He also asked that new people reach out to one of the committees to volunteer. And since Andy (Becker) has stood down, we are looking for a chair for the Monitoring and Assessment committee.

Rupert said he was looking to join a committee that matches more closely what he does. He volunteered for the Citizen Science and Stewardship Committee. Matt thanked him.

Brian (Smith) pointed out that the MWMC website does have a committee chart, but it is not up to date. Katherine made a note to check the committee webpage for needed updates.

Matt announced that the next committee chairs meeting would be May 26 or June 17.

#### Committee Chairs Meeting (10:17 AM)

Matt went over his notes from the meeting on March 17. They discussed everything the council does other than the annual conference. They covered logistical issues for each committee, and what they might want to accomplish over the years. Topics discussed:

- What type of products do we want to produce?
- Workshops range - one hour to a full day?
- What sort of fact sheets? What specific topics?
- What web page might be helpful?
- What past activities are worth repeating?
- What financial resources do we have for these activities? (Last year's in-person conference generated significant revenue.)
- Do we have the personnel/staff to serve and help on these committees?

He asked for people to volunteer to serve on at least one committee.

Mat agreed with Matt's summary and said overall we are trying make our committees more strategic in operation. The goal is for each committee to identify a small number of issues to address over the next couple of years, then, for each issue, identify objectives and strategies. That might be a workshop or a series of meetings seeking expert advice, or producing a factsheet. He also suggested that if the council is not addressing a particular issue, we can create a new committee. The committee should meet a minimum of three or four times a year for continuity and progress.

Jason would like a table listing one or two deliverables that each subcommittee had that can be on a shared drive. Mat asked Matt if each subcommittee settled on specific ideas. Matt recalled that we asked each committee to firm up ideas for the next committee heads meeting. Ideas included workshops on eDNA &

grant writing, a web page hub of different organizations, as well as discussion of PFAS, microplastics, saltwater intrusion, career advice, etc. He observed that some of these topics can be relevant to two or more committees, allowing them to combine objectives.

Jason again mentioned the table and pointed out that we could get ideas across committees. He volunteered to develop the table. Members agreed to try the Google Apps. Matt mentioned a possibility of getting around the prohibition of sharing Google Docs outside of state agencies.

### Committee Reports (10:40AM)

Monitoring and Assessment Committee (Andy Becker): Andy announced that he is stepping down as chair but will continue to organize the streams round table each spring. We had that in March with the fewest number of attendees so far. We had 14 presentations, which also was low. Mark Trice compiled the online mapper, providing data for the Roundtable. Two groups provided data after, which needs to be added to the online map.

Matt asked why we had lower attendance this year? Andy speculated that it might have been due to email filters. Matt and Andy discussed the purpose of the Roundtable. Matt suggested the Roundtable might conflict with spring sampling. Andy said that it was at the usual time.

Matt suggested that the round table be moved to February next year. Ken M said a February date would be better for his group.

Citizen Science and Community Stewardship (Jeff Regan): Matt stated that Jeff was not present.

Information Management Committee (Najma Khokhar): the committee was inactive this quarter but planning a workshop about QC/QA. They're developing a list of the different types of QC/QA processes based on the data collection type. The plan is to hold the workshop in June/July. Matt asked and Najma verified that they would be short workshops. She further explained that each workshop would be set up by data collection type. Najma said that she is looking to come up with a list of protocol options to present to different agencies and groups. Najma said committee attendance has decreased to five or six active people.

Groundwater Committee (Mat): Mat said that Jason is Co-chairing the groundwater committee with him. Jason reported that there are four members on the committee: himself, Mat, Andy Staley from MGS, and he reached out to MDE's Robert Peoples and Greg Bush. Jason is setting up a small meeting and will already be meeting with Staley and company to discuss Maryland's saltwater intrusion plan, to be updated by the end of 2024. They will be looking at the aquifer chapter, analyzing resources including new staffing, and research recommendations to be implemented over a five-year period. He suggested that the May 25 meeting with MGS could be the committee's first meeting. He detailed a new house bill that would require water quality testing with new home sales. The bill has passed and is waiting for the Governor's signature.

Mat lauded the legislation and pointed to it as related to the goals of the groundwater committee. He said he couldn't make the May 25 meeting but thought Jason's progress was appropriate for the committee. He would like to see new members from Water Supply and private industry.

Jason asked Ken S if saltwater intrusion was impacting agriculture. Ken S said the major impact was loss of land. Land around Tuckahoe Creek faces saltwater intrusion during dry years.

Matt says he gets email from the Harry Hughes Center regarding saltwater. He wondered if this issue was being handled by another group. Jason said that they work closely with the Center. He said that there was

a loss of farmland on the lower Eastern Shore due to salinization of the soil. Matt asked if Jason was planning a workshop or seminar. Jason was not sure yet and gathering ideas. Ken S and Jason went on to discuss the definition of saltwater intrusion and farmland loss. Matt asked, and Jason verified the house bill does not include monitoring for the presence of salt.

Ken S asked if there was a manganese problem in groundwater in Maryland, based on the letter of the house bill. Mat said in the Piedmont and western Maryland it's a secondary standard.

Mat solicited for more members on the groundwater committee.

Student Committee (Lindsay DeMarzo): Lindsay was not present. Jason reported ideas developed during the subcommittee meeting. A session devoted to students giving lightning talks at the annual conference. Offer free or half price registration as an incentive for judges of the poster session. Use the council email list to recruit student presentations and judges. Both discussed combining the career chat with a spring career fair. Nancy verified that it would work in conjunction with the Maryland Stream Restoration Association. They discussed recruiting students for volunteer work, such as stream cleanups, etc. They discussed that they were satisfied with their committee size, but if they ran into a dynamic person, they would try to recruit them. Also recruiting student speakers for our Board midday talks from faculty presenting at the conference. They will meet again in May or June.

Matt asked if they had enough people on their committee. Brian reiterated that the members thought it was a good size, because it's easier to schedule things.

Annual Conference Planning Committee (Katherine): planning committee meetings will commence in the next few weeks. Katherine invited people to join the committee. She contacted the Conference Center, and they offered dates of December 14 or November 17. She has begun the IFP paperwork and needs to make final refinements, including the date.

Ken M brought up potential academic and other institutional conflicts with the November date. He also pointed out that there were already a number of holidays in that month, making it shorter.

Brian related his committee's discussion of the fact that the date of the conference conflicted with exams, drawing fewer student posters. A November date might be more conducive. Committee members discussed having the meeting just after Thanksgiving. They discussed conflicts with county MS4 and other reporting.

Matt asked when colleges and universities have their exams. Brian agreed that they were held generally in the first couple of weeks of December. Katherine concluded that holding the conference in November was better than December, even with conflicting events in the month.

Matt and Katherine discussed increasing registration to 425. Katherine pointed out that there would be more complexity, particularly space for lunch and in the auditorium. There would be a greater risk with more registration slots, again we would need to fill 80%. Matt thought that holding the conference earlier would attract more attendees. Ken M noted that some of his people wanted to attend last year but missed it because of the short registration window.

Lunch Break (11:40 PM)

News Roundtable (12:04 PM)

Mat: next week is the National Water Monitoring conference in VA. There is an overlap between conference talks and topics of interest in Maryland. PFAS continues to be a major issue at USGS, especially given that the federal government is establishing a Maximum Contaminant level for two of these chemicals. Looking at places to sample PFAS in Maryland and throughout the Northeast region. It's probably a subject we will revisit at our annual meeting as a session topic.

Matt H(arper): no major updates other than spring sampling.

Najma: She did not have anything.

Andy: heavy with spring sampling, multiple crews out today. Working on an TMDL implementation plans; a watershed assessment effort; supporting various clients with MS4 monitoring and planning efforts.

Brian: my group at DNR is fully occupied with tidal shallow monitoring. We have been deploying our new seasonal continuous monitoring probes; a lot of 2023 data should be rolling into Eyes on the Bay website. Our crew should be doing the first data flow monitoring cruise in Tangier Sound this or next week. Those will continue monthly through October.

Chris (Victoria): we are one of the clients that Andy is sampling for in Central Maryland. KCI and Coastal Resources are out doing our round 4 sampling this year.

Brian asked Chris about the eDNA workshop. He said he hasn't done anything since the committee heads' meeting, being busy with other priorities, and plans to get back to it in May. He asked Michael Williams to verify that the Patuxent Refuge could not do a hybrid meeting onsite. Chris suggested the USGS Science Center. Mat confirmed that they had the facilities needed. Chris and Mat discussed the attendance at this workshop. Chris and Brian discussed issues regarding the speakers. Chris wondered if it was better to have virtual speakers and not pay stipends. Brian offered a possible speaker. Chris asked if there were any questions and to send him an e-mail if you have interest in the workshop.

John (Denniston): at TSO we're extremely short staffed and we're recruiting for three positions. We are following FAA requirements of firefighting foam, even though it contains PFAS. Matt asked about a bill banning the use of PFAS foams during training exercises. John was not aware of the bill passing and pointed out the potential conflict between state requirements and that of the FAA. Mat heard that the Air Force wants to replace and phase out AFFF over years. John concurred.

Ken S: occupied with spring sampling like everyone else. In Ag, the prime issue continues to be the Bay nutrients. Everyone agrees that we're not going to make the 2025 TMDL deadline. What's the strategy after 2025? They will rewrite the latest version of the model. There is a great concern about soil health and quality. Legislation has been passed in the state of Maryland. And the interest in carbon sequestration to meet greenhouse gas goals. He thinks it's been oversold. There is debate as to whether improving soil quality improves water quality. Conclusions cannot yet be drawn. Maryland is a national leader in soil health, scoring #1, as we have implemented cover crops and no-till. We still have dissolved nitrogen and phosphorus issues, which soil health does not solve.

Nancy: participated in a STAC workshop that the Chesapeake Bay Program ran on the state of stream restoration and monitoring. Where we are with the science, addressing concerns raised, whether it has positive or negative impacts. She was on a panel that Scott Stranko put together. Bob Hildebrand gave a talk on ecological effects. Mark Southerland gave a talk on uplift, sometimes seen but rare. Tess Thompson gave a talk on dynamic stability. Paul Mayer from EPA Corvallis gave a talk water quality impacts. This all supports stream health work group. A summary will come out the next few months with resulting actions.

She also reminded that the National Streams Council, Water Monitoring Conference is coming up the end of April in Virginia Beach. She will be presenting on the healthy Maryland watersheds.

Rupert: I'm continuing to serve on two committees, one for the Octoraro and the other for Lancaster County. We continue to be one of the targets in Pennsylvania for improving water quality. We are anticipating the new water quality model for the Octoraro, from a continuing partnership between the EPA, Pennsylvania Department of Water Quality, and MDE. It will be rolled out the 25th and the 26th of April. We will use water quality information to calibrate the model. With this model we can gauge how well we do implementing BMPs across the watershed. He posted a summary in the chat.

Matt asked who was involved in the model development from MDE. Rupert offered to look it up.

Matt added his group was releasing a report on best management practices removal of PCBs to the Chesapeake Bay. A retrospective analyzing what BMPs have been effective in reducing PCBs. The study looked at BMPs not intended to remove PCBs, which had a removal co-benefit.

Ken S asked if anyone was addressing the issue of PFAS in biosolids. Are there standards? Mat was not aware of any standards, however wastewater treatment does not degrade PFAS, which end up in the biosolids. Hence, it can be applied to cropland. People are trying to quantify it, but he knew of no regulation efforts. They discussed biosoild sources and research. Ken S then related his knowledge of a impervious surface tax levied on farmers in Pennsylvania.

Ken M: Both his and Matt H's crews each found a fish kill, which he attributed to fertilizer applications. His team will complete macroinvertebrate sampling next week. Due to low road salt application this year resulting in low conductivity, his group was able to detect pesticide applications and sewage leakages. We are starting a conductivity monitoring project with WSC, University of Maryland, and Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments. Starts in the next two weeks.

Katherine: MBSS program is wrapping up spring sampling. We are organizing our summer training program to take place after Memorial Day. It will be announced soon for registration. Four days of training held at Bowie State University. We were at the annual meeting of the Association of Mid-Atlantic Aquatic Biologists in West Virginia on March 29-30.

Matt: in my MDE division we're sending people to the National Monitoring conference in a couple of weeks. We are diligently working on reviewing the MS4 monitoring plans that jurisdictions have submitted. We are working with DNR to develop a biological monitoring template to help the counties submit data. Continuing the Tier II review of the maglev line. Focusing on the economic justification for that project. We employed University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science to conduct a review. Reviewing the pooled monitoring grant applications. We are working on a PFAS report and action plan from information pulled from multiple agencies.

Chris asked, what is the time frame is for having the template for the biodata available for the Phase I? Matt was uncertain, but thought it was in May. Chris and Matt discussed the timeline and uses of the data generated by this template.

Ken M asked what the timeline was for reviewing the monitoring plans. Matt stated that the goal was to have them reviewed in 90 to 120 days.

**Action Items (1:51 PM)**

Matt listed the items he had identified:

- Everybody should provide alternates for the meetings. Send an email to Ken M with the name of your alternate from your organization. Ken M said he would add them to the roster.
- Committee chairs and Co-chairs should pull together a roster of their committees and send it to Matt or Mat in the next week or two. Include names of people who said they're willing to help out.
- Jason and Matt will develop a list of ideas for the committees.
- Jason is looking into a shared drive location. Google drive?
- Post the committees and chairs to the MWMC website, along with committee members.
- Move the stream monitoring round table up to February.
- The groundwater committee needs volunteers.

Ken M added:

- Vote for the continuation of members by the end-of-business today. The link is in the chat.
- He will send out information about our two prospective board members.

Katherine added:

- She will be sending out minutes later this week.

Rupert added:

- The MDE participant in the Octoraro water quality model project was Guido Yactayo.

**Adjournment (1:57 PM)**