

West Virginia Water Gaging Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday October 4, 2007

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Kanawha City
Room 2129

Council Membership Representation

Organization	Present	Absent	Proxy	Represented By
WV Conservation Agency	X			Russ Campbell Edward Cox
U.S. Geological Survey	X			Hugh Bevans Ron Evaldi
WV Department of Environmental Protection	X			Mike Stratton
WV Division of Highways	X			Doug Kirk
WV Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management	X			Jim Steele Paul Howard
WV Division of Natural Resources	X			Danny Bennett
WV Water Research Institute	X			Tamara Vandivort
National Weather Service	X			John Sikora
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	X			Tim Curran
U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service	X			Dick Judy
WV Rivers Coalition		X		
Canaan Valley Institute	X			Todd Miller

Other Representation

Michael Baker Jr., INC.	Mohiuddin Shaik
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Administration

The Secretary conducted a Roll-Call of the member organizations. Upon conclusion of Roll-Call, the Secretary notified the Council Chair that a Quorum had been established.

Call to order and agenda review

Russ Campbell, West Virginia Conservation Agency (WVCA), called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m. Campbell asked if there were any additions to be added to the Agenda. Hearing none, Campbell asked for a motion to accept the agenda.

Action: Mike Stratton, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), moved to approve the Agenda. Danny Bennett, Division of Natural Resources (DNR) seconded. Motion passed.

Approval of 9/6/07 Meeting Minutes

Campbell asked if there were any additions, corrections, or comments to the minutes. Hearing none, Campbell asked if there was interest in accepting the minutes.

Action: Hugh Bevans, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), moved to approve the 9/6/07 meeting minutes. Mike Stratton, DEP, seconded. Motion passed.

Status of the West Virginia Water Gaging Council's Web page

Ed Cox, WVCA, discussed the current status of the new West Virginia Water Gaging Council's Web page hosted by the West Virginia Conservation Agency. An email went out to all members with the new web page address and a PDF example of the web page. There have been discussions with the West Virginia Water Resources Institute to establish a redirect link from the original web site to the new web site.

Tammy Vandivort, WV Water Research Institute (WRI), stated that in talking to their webmaster, there should be no problems in establishing the redirect link and it should happen no later than sometime next week.

Ron Evaldi, USGS, asked if we had gotten an answer since the last meeting on the issue of the contents of the web page being proprietary to WVVRI.

Stratton, DEP, indicated that a letter from Paul Ziemkiewicz offered that only the page design is proprietary and the page contents and logo are property of the Council. Stratton indicated that he had forwarded the WRI webmaster's contact information to WVCA.

John Sikora, National Weather Service (NWS), requested a change to the member agency web site link on the new WVVGC web page. He requested that the NWS link go from the current NOAA link to Weather Service's weather.gov link.

Jim Steele, WV Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) indicated that rainfall.net be added to the web page.

Ron Evaldi, USGS, offered to work with Ed Cox to create a "switching station" for the Council web page that would allow for improved web access to all known water gages in West Virginia. This would allow for one central listing of different web pages containing all the West Virginia gaging data. Access to a gage from several sources also reduces down time on getting information. A particular gage sometimes can be hosted on several web pages. If there is gage you are trying to view through a web page and that system is down, a switching station would allow you to access for the same data from another web page in a different system.

Russ Campbell expressed thanks to Tammy Vandivort and Paul Ziemkiewicz for their work in creating the original Council web page and for their continued support and coordination in keeping a Council web page going.

National Weather Service 30 day Forecast for West Virginia

John Sikora, NWS, reported that currently the driest part of the state is in the southwest (along the Tug Fork Basin). The drier than normal conditions also stretch north to the Parkersburg area affecting the entire western half of the state. These areas are anywhere from 11 to 13 inches below normal rainfall since January. The drought monitor the NWS has out has now increased the severe drought a little further east into Kanawha County. The NWS expects some relief during the week of 8 through 12 October with a cold front moving through with the possibility of some rain and cooling temperatures. After next week, high pressure moves back in to the area with dry weather for the remainder of October. The other dry area in the state is the eastern panhandle about 5 to 7 inches below normal in precipitation. The Northern Panhandle through Randolph County (northeast part of the state along the western slopes) received a good amount of rainfall in September. This area is considered normal in precipitation at this time.

Hugh Bevans, USGS, We have four wells in southern part of the State and the readings are at about 25% of normal. Some of these wells are at record lows.

John Sikora, NWS, Outlook for January and February indicates the possibility of more rainfall systems.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, indicated that he spoke with the State Forester, Randy Dye, and that the State Forester pointed out that there were several channels (especially in Kanawha County) that forest fires may burn across the stream bottoms because of little to no water and heavy leaf litter.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, indicated that the Council would like for John Sikora, NWS, to provide 30 day outlook for future meetings of the Gaging Council.

Status of FY 2008 Gage Budget

Ron Evaldi, USGS, indicated that a funding request for the FY 2008 Gaging Budget was handed out to each state member agency at the September 6, 2007 meeting. DNR was asked if it could increase its funding level from \$12,000 to \$27,500 and DHSEM was asked if it could establish a funding level of \$27,500. Other agencies were asked to meet their previous funding levels.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, asked for a report from the State Agencies on their status of FY08 funding:

- WVCA – Approval to be sought 10/9/07 at State Committee meeting for **\$75,000**.
- DEP – Plan to fund at FY07 level of **\$47,000**.
- DOH – Signed agreement for **\$40,000**.
- DNR – Unable to fund at \$27,500 requested but will fund **\$12,000**.
- DHSEM – Passed request up to Director Gianato but has not received a reply.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, announced after the report that his figures indicated that the state's funding totaled \$174,000 (short DHSEM response) and with USGS match the total FY08 gage funding being at \$348,000.

Ron Evaldi, USGS, noted that with DNR being able to fund only \$12,000 of the new request and DHSEM unable to reply to the new request, the Council will be left with a state cost share shortfall.

The potential gage funding shortfall for the state's cost share is **\$43,000**. State funds are matched by USGS for a total potential shortfall of \$86,000. From the perspective of USGS, this total equates to 6 to 7 gages being lost for flow data.

Hugh Bevans, USGS, Hugh asked for a final answer about the remaining State funding so that any unused USGS funds can be redirected to other programs. Russ asked for an answer from DHSEM within 15 days.

USGS would need to put out a notice of possible gage cuts for about a month prior to discontinuing any gages. It was suggested that priorities for gage cuts be made prior to the next Council meeting. A list of gages that could be cut will be sent to Council members for their input.

Pending Action:

- 1) By 10/19/07 DHSEM will give answer on funding the FY08 Gage Program.
- 2) In the meantime, each agency will prioritize gage cuts.
- 3) On Nov. 5, 2007 @ 1:00 P.M., WVGWC will meet to select gages to be cut from the FY08 Gage Program.

Russ Campbell ended discussion on this topic by asking if any member agency could increase their funding for the FY08 Gage Program.

Status of FY 2009 Gage Budget

Russ Campbell, WVCA, indicated that the Council membership needed to look to the future and the state's cost share for the FY09 Gaging Budget. Campbell opened the floor for discussion and asked the state agencies if they had a feeling where their agency stood with the FY 09 budget.

Campbell then stated that an update for those who missed the last meeting the FY09 budget submission by the WVCA was proposed to include an improvement package for \$300,000 to cover the state's cost share contribution. The WVCA was advised that its budget submission would have no Improvement Package submittals in FY 09.

Hugh Bevans, USGS, stated that this leads us back to our normal budget process for the agencies that have been the financial contributors of the program for another year.

Campbell indicated that the WVCA may resubmit an Improvement Package in its FY 2010 budget proposal for funding the state's cost share of \$300,000 or whatever the amount needed in the gaging program.

Bevans suggested that a committee be formed to seek outside funding. This item will be placed on the December meeting agenda.

Hugh Bevans reported that the Division of Water and Waste Management has provided \$10,000 for operation of the existing statewide groundwater well monitor network.

New Business

Campbell asked if there was any new business. Hearing none, Campbell indicated that he had an item to add.

Michael Baker Jr., INC. Request for Council Membership

Following the procedures set forth in the MOU, Campbell, Chair of Council, received a written request from Ramesh Chintala, Michael Baker Jr., INC. dated October 2, 2007 asking to become a member of the Council.

Campbell asked if there was interest in accepting the request from Michael Baker Jr., INC.

Hugh Bevans complemented Ramesh Chintala on his work for the Council and representing Michael Baker Jr., INC. in meetings since the creation of the Council. Bevans asked if there are any stipulations in the MOU preventing a private industry being part of the Council. Currently the Council is represented by Federal and State Agencies along with Non Governmental Organizations.

Cox, WVCA, stated that there was nothing in the MOU that prevented a private entity or a private citizen from becoming a member of the Council.

Bevans asked if Michael Baker Jr., INC. is willing to be proactive and form a group to work with the engineering consulting community in West Virginia to ensure that their issues are brought forward and that it is just not a Michael Baker Jr., INC. issue.

Mohiuddin Shaik, Michael Baker Jr., INC., indicated that issues of the Council would be taken by Ramesh Chintala and discussed with others representing the industry.

Hugh Bevans stated that would take some outreach and that was what he was looking for from Michael Baker Jr., INC.

Ron Evaldi, USGS, and Danny Bennett, DNR, offered that Michael Baker Jr., INC. has already demonstrated this in the text of the letter to the Chair and by arranging for a presentation about the WVVGC to the Society of Military Engineers in December 2006.

Mike Stratton, DEP, Michael Baker Jr., INC. has been very supportive of the Council. Our agency struggles with this issue as we have never associated or been part of a committee where decisions were made by voting on matters related to the use of public funds where a private sector is a member of that committee. We are concerned at this point with doing something like that and would like to have some more discussion more thought on how we want to proceed with individual firms who want to join this organization.

Doug Kirk, DOH, the DOH has worked with Ramesh Chintala and Mohiuddin Shaik of Michael Baker Jr., INC. and believe that their interest goes beyond their employment at Michael Baker Jr., INC. and have no vested financial interest in the gaging system. There is an understanding of DEP position of not having business involved that might enrich their pockets. But in this case it is felt that Ramesh and Mohiuddin have a genuine personal interest in the mission of the Council and the future of gages in West Virginia.

Mike Stratton, DEP, stated that this argument is well received, but once we open that door it becomes difficult to close that door. The next firm that comes up may not the same motives as Michael Baker Jr., INC. has.

Action: Doug Kirk, DOH, moved that Michael Baker Jr., INC. be considered for membership to the WVWGC; seconded by Paul Howard, DHSEM.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, asked if there was any further discussion.

Hugh Bevans, USGS, and Danny Bennett, DNR, suggested that Michael Baker Jr., INC. be asked to represent the needs of private industry as a condition of their membership on the Council.

Action: Doug Kirk, DOH, moved to amend the original motion that Michael Baker Jr., INC. be considered for membership to the WVWGC and that they represent the industry of Engineering Consulting Community as a whole and not just interest of their company; seconded by John Sikora, NWS.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, stated that the chair is taking the position that the initial motion is rescinded along with its second and that the amended motion and its second are on the floor.

The Chair, Russ Campbell, WVCA, called for a roll call vote:

WVCA	–	YES
USGS	–	YES
DEP	–	NO
DHSEM	–	YES
DOH	–	YES
WVDNR	–	YES
WVWRI	–	YES
NWS	–	YES
USACE	–	YES
NRCS	–	YES
CVI	–	YES

WV Rivers Coalition - absent

The motion was passed with one no vote. The representative of Michael Baker Jr., INC. thanked the Council and stated that Michael Baker Jr., INC. will work to represent industry.

Russ Campbell, WVCA, asked if there was any further business.

Jim Steele informed the Council that a program about the West Virginia Flood warning System will be shown on the Charter Cable Channel 17 program “Distress Signals” on 10/6/07 @ 9:30 A.M., and on 10/8/07 A 9:30 A.M., 3:30 P.M., and 9:30 P.M.

Campbell asked if there was any additional business, none heard

Action: Danny Bennett, DNR, moved that the Council Adjourn. Paul Howard, DHSEM, seconded. Motion passed Meeting concluded at 2:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Edward G. Cox Jr.
Secretary