

Maine Water Utilities Public Awareness Committee Minutes

The *Public Awareness Committee* shall communicate to the general public on issues important to the drinking water profession and assist the membership in enhancing public awareness in their local communities.

April 24, 2003, 1:00 PM
Augusta Water District, Augusta, Maine

Committee Members: Joy Adamson; Mary Jane Dillingham; Kim Marchegiani; Jeffrey McNelly, Jeff Preble, Gary Stevens, Madeline Storer, Brian Tarbuck, Greg Cataldo

Committee Members Present: Brian Tarbuck; Carrie Rossiter (for Jeff McNelly); Madeline Storer, Jeff Preble, Greg Cataldo

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 pm.

- There were no comments or corrections on the previous minutes, though I did notice in the compilation of these minutes that Greg Cataldo was not listed as a committee member in the previous minutes. I've corrected this for these notes. Sorry Greg! - Brian
- Brian provided an update on website progress. The new web address is still www.mwua.tkiweb.com. Jeff has requested that we point the existing URL address, www.mwua.org to reflect the new FrontPage site. Brian will be taking care of this by the end of April. Brian pointed out that because of an uncomfortable transition period between operating systems and servers that he was temporarily unable to edit the MWUA website at XWave (aka tkiweb). Joy Adamson is now capable of logging onto the MWUA website and has authoring ability. This will help us maintain information until MWUA has uplink capability.
- Joy Adamson hosted a FrontPage mini-training at the Drinking Water Program on April 14th, 2003. It was not well attended, but Chris Silke from Auburn Water District and David Parent from Sanford Water District did make the trip and took home some good information. Drinking Water Program employees rounded out the group and were genuinely interested in the presentation and came away informed. If anyone is interested in having a FrontPage jam session at their utility, let Joy or Brian know and the PAC will try to make that happen.
- Brian suggested that the surface water article get sidelined for the time being as the conflict in Iraq is still consuming valuable press real estate. Other committee members disagreed with the wait and see approach and suggested that we finish off the article anyway and pursue some weekly publications that might be interested in running it. Brian indicated that he was not aware of a list that the PAC had of weekly Maine publications, and Carrie mused that she might have a list back at the office. Pending location of this list, you can expect that the committee will submit the article for publishing consideration.
- The committee also discussed press releases for MWUA functions at length. The net result of that conversation was that the MWUA should do a press release for drinking water week next week as drinking water week is the following week. Some commented that this release should include the number of utilities represented by the Association and the number of

people served by these utilities. It should certainly highlight those communities that are actively taking part in DWW and encourage local press to contact their local water purveyor for information or a comment. It was agreed that local utilities ought to do their own press releases to help get the word out too.

- The April meeting didn't have much at all to do with Public Awareness, but we did sell a few more T-shirts and hats which is nice. Carrie mentioned that it would be a good idea to do a targeted press release to local news agencies when we visited their area. She's going to pursue notification of the local press in Dover Foxcroft for the next meeting. Brian recommended that we also contact the local politicians in each area as a way to let them know that the MWUA exists and to give them a potential opportunity to meet some of the leaders in the water utility arena.
- The Children's Water Festival will be at USM in Gorham on **Friday, May 23rd**. See this website for details. <http://www.state.me.us/dep/blwq/docteacher/cwf/> Brian, Carrie, MJ, Lisa and Madeline from Consumers and Gary and his son Jared have "signed up". It's going to be all day starting at about 7:30 am. The problem is that due to some miscommunication that happened between Brian and Linda Woodard (from the Audubon; she's setting this up), it is unclear at this time whether or not the MWUA will have a room for presentations. Brian expressed concern over this and apologized for whatever his role might have been in this error. He then explained that Linda indicated that the puzzle would likely not be appropriate for a "booth" setting because of its complexity and duration required to explain it. The committee brainstormed the following ideas for ways to get kids interested in drinking water and provide them with a take-home message or idea. These ideas included:
 1. develop some software that kids could use online that would allow them to do Gary's puzzle on the internet or answer a quiz or something (this was looked at as a longer term solution, but everyone agreed the idea had merit)
 2. Get Gary to draw up a "Where's Waldo" type thing that kids could use to find water bad guys or something.
 3. Make up some balloons that kids could use as water balloons that say MWUA on them or have water facts, something like that.
 4. Come up with a "Where would we be without water?" game. No more Waterville, water chestnuts, water polo, water buffaloes, Watership Down, Waterloo...
 5. Come up with a magnetic dart game that kids could throw darts and tie that into water education (play on the interactive / carnival type idea).
 6. Give out water pistols and just stand back. ☺
 7. Develop a water quiz type game show where a carnival type hawker would ask kids water questions and hand out prizes to the ones that answered correctly.

- Drinking Water Week (first week of May) was assigned to Joy as this effort is predominantly driven by the Drinking Water Program. Click on the following link to see what the DWP is up to on that week, or drop Joy an email. <http://www.state.me.us/dhs/eng/water/>
- Other DWW websites:
 - <http://www.awwa.org/Advocacy/dww/> (AWWA)
 - <http://www.pwd.org/water/national%20drinking%20water%20week.html> (Portland)
- Brian recommended that the MWUA investigate whether or not an Americorps person might not be helpful for outreach work that the PAC is struggling to complete. Lewiston / Auburn and Portland Water have been successful w/ Americorps personnel in the past and it might be a good fit for the Association. Their website is: <http://www.state.me.us/labor/mcc/>
- Hall of Flags legislature day is on May 14th. For more information, contact Jeff, Carrie, or Rick Knowlton.

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 20th, 9:30 am, Portland Water District's new education center

- Meeting was adjourned at 2:25 pm.