

FINAL W2ASACT MEETING NOTES
Meeting on March 7, 2017, 9:30 am to 12 pm
DNRC, HQT Building, Room 225

Members and participants present:

Rika Lashley	Morrison-Maierle	John Arrigo	DEQ Enforcement
Mark Smith	DEQ/PPA/SRF	Kari Smith	DEQ
Anna Miller	DNRC/FDB	Julie Flynn	MBOI
Lindsay Volpe	DNRC/RDB	Sarah Robbin	RATES
Bob Fischer	DNRC/RDB	Elisa Prescott	Great West Eng.
Alice Stanley	DNRC/RDB	Denise Cook	DNRC/RDB

Via Conf. Phone:

None

Call to Order, Sign-in Sheet, Agenda Changes

Alice Stanley, Chair, called the scheduled meeting of the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W2ASACT) to order at 9:33am, on Tuesday, March 7, 2017. Sign-in sheet was routed and meeting agenda was distributed. Those present briefly introduced themselves. The notes from the December 6, 2016 meeting were distributed. Anna Miller made a motion to accept the minutes and Bob Fischer a second and the minutes were approved and adopted.

DEQ Community Assistance & Enforcement:

John Arrigo, DEQ Enforcement and Kari Smith, DEQ Water Quality

John and Kari described their roles at DEQ relevant to infrastructure improvements. Kari formerly ran the wastewater permit compliance department. Currently she is on the monitoring side of water issues.

John said DEQ wants to facilitate communication and help communities. He provided a spreadsheet showing enforcement by community. He said DEQ would rather come to an agreement than assess a fine or penalty. He recommended EPA's Echo website: <https://echo.epa.gov/?redirect=echo> which contains compliance data of communities. Echo stands for Enforcement and Compliance History Online.

Communities in violation must follow an approved plan and meet enforcement effluent limits, which are 20% or 40% higher than the permit limits so that they stay in compliance.

Bob Fischer asked what the purpose is of the fine. John explained 3 benefits. 1) Penalties are incentives for communities to comply; 2) a deterrent to others to stay in compliance; and 3) an economic benefit because the city/town has money earning interest without fixing the out of

compliance system. Kari added that if the state takes no action in 6 months, the EPA may take over.

Kari added that we can help communities with compliance assistance and technical assistance, and complete sanitary surveys or system inspections and she referenced the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act.

The top 4 violations in wastewater facilities involved operator education. If DEQ sees an increase in violations, we can develop education to bring the numbers down.

Kari's duties include getting help to communities and with her years of experience with the state, she knows how to navigate the process and develop outreach and education as well as steps to follow-up. Alice Stanley suggested having a meeting with Kari and walk through the funding programs.

John asked how WASACT members coordinate our assistance to communities. Anna Miller used an example of the Town of Vaughn, meeting with DNRC and DEQ and Great West Engineering on a routine basis. Anna added that WASACT used to spend more time at meetings addressing specific projects. Perhaps we could go back to doing that. John said that might save duplication of effort.

Legislative Update:

Anna Miller, DNRC Conservation & Resource Development Financial Advisor

Anna handed out the "Jobs and Infrastructure in Montana" sheet with a table showing the state programs and the funding required. She explained the purpose of House Bill 14, which provides funding for the Long-Range Building program and other programs in the first column in the table. This proposal provides the legislature the opportunity to create jobs by completing state infrastructure projects throughout the state. Some of the funding sources listed in the top row of the table include State Special Revenue Bonds or Coal Tax Bonds and General Obligation (GO) Bonds. She cited the Federal Special Reserve would help fund the building of a Veterans home. Anna stated that there is a limit of \$5 million per application.

Anna stated that the legislature is on a transmittal break and except for revenue and expenditure bills, the bills from the Senate will now go to the House and those from the House will go to the Senate. Alice added that HB 6, 8, 11, and 14, which CARDD is following, will probably be up the week of March 20th.

Committee Updates

Workshops

Mark Smith stated that he has organized the Missoula WASACT workshop on March 9th. The Missoula case study will be about Thompson Falls with Shari Johnson of Shari Johnson & Associates Engineering and the Thompson Falls mayor. The Billings workshop case study was organized by Rural Development and will be March 23.

Alice Stanley reported that the Great Falls WASACT workshop on February 22nd went well with about 80 attendees. John Camden promised a larger room for next year.

Bob Fischer – Uniform Application

Bob is maintaining a list of changes for applicants and this will be updated this fall. There will be a committee meeting in early fall to go over updates and changes.

WASACT Web Site

Lindsay added a link for the EPA to the web site and she will send that to the group. If you would like things posted, please let Lindsay know. A WASACT email address for comments and additions to mailing list will be added next week.

Program Updates

Bob Fischer - RRGL Planning Grants have a March 31 deadline. He hopes to announce awards by the end of April.

Julie Flynn - the interest rate on Board of Investment INTERCAP loans is now 2.5%.

Anna Miller reported that Fort Peck Dry Prairie project is almost done. Rocky Boys North Central project is adding 9 miles to the water system and a Hutterite colony will be added. Central Montana is doing some mapping. Anna added that it will be a big season in the Revolving Fund Loan Program and also busy on the wastewater side.

WASACT Purpose and Goals

Alice opened the discussion as she handed out the latest version of WASACT organization description. She suggested, that as goals for 2017, WASACT improve coordination with enforcement programs at DEQ and EPA and with organizations representing infrastructure communities such as the League of Cities and Towns.

Bob raised a concern about the erosion of the value of a uniform application as participating agencies move toward on-line applications. Examples of this are Rural Development and Dept. of Commerce not using an online uniform application. He is concerned that funders are reverting to the old methods of requiring different applications for every program and the streamlining easy-user aspect of applying for grant money is breaking down.

Elisa with Great West followed by saying that the RD application is a challenge as it is very complicated. Many town/city clerks work only a few hours per week and can't negotiate the RD application process.

Alice distributed the WASACT 2017 annual report and said if there is no objection, she will finalize it within two weeks. Anyone that wants to change or add to it can let her know in that time.

Alice noted that May 7-11 is the 37th Annual Montana Municipal Institute for Clerks, Treasurers & Finance Officers in Billings. Go to <http://msulocalgov.org/offering/municipalinstituteregistration.html> for more information.

Anna requested that WASACT invite a legislator to join us and share her thoughts on the Legislative experience.

End of Updates

Next meeting was set for Tuesday, June 13th at the Department of Commerce Board of Investments to which, all agreed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:38.