

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WELLS AND BORINGS

Retirement Systems Building
60 Empire Drive. St. Paul, Minnesota 55103
Board Room 117

Wednesday, September 4, 2019, Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Chris Elvrum
Daniel England
David Kill
Dennis Koepp
Michael Liljegren
Jordan Mayer
Roger Renner
Joseph Stevens

Others Present

Kara Dennis
Alex Martell
Jeff Paddock
Frieda von Qualen
Jennifer Weier

Members Absent

David Duffey
Annie Felix-Gerth
Kelly Gibauval-Hite
Daniel Gibbs
Bruce Johnson
Troy Kuck
Richard Lamb
Haden Shipman
Brian Stangret
Mark Thein

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. Less than half of the Advisory Council Members were present at this meeting, and a quorum was not met. Quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present at a meeting to transact business. In the absence of a quorum, an unofficial meeting was held and no official business was conducted.

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF June 5, 2019, MEETING MINUTES

Tabled until the December meeting.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF September 4, 2019, MEETING AGENDA

Tabled until the December meeting.

4. EXPENSE ACCOUNTS

Alex Martell distributed expense report forms and requested that members complete and return them in a timely manner.

5. UPDATES

Bored Geothermal Heat Exchanger (BGHE) Rulemaking Update – Alex Martell

The BGHE rule making process is still moving forward. The BGHE rule continues to be open for public comment, but no comments have been received.

Environmental Well Rule Writing and Updates – Alex Martell

A draft of the Environmental Well Rule has been prepared for internal review by Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) staff. The new draft of the Environmental Well Rule includes the provision to allow the use of bentonite chips and pellets for sealing wells and borings under certain conditions, and a provision requiring full-length grouting for all water-supply wells. Public engagement will commence after MDH staff have had an opportunity to comment on the draft rule language. David Kill suggested that information about the proposed rule be made available at the Minnesota Water Well Association conference in late January 2020.

Well Management Section Budget – Chris Elvrum

Chris Elvrum shared a summary of the Well Management Section budget. The Well Management Section is considering proposing fee increases during the 2020 legislative session, but is not sure it will be a priority for the Governor. David Kill inquired about the program's IT services costs. In the past couple years, a significant amount of program funds were spent on migrating MDH databases and programs to a cloud-based platform, due to an agency-wide transition. The Well Management Section is to receive additional Clean Water funds, but those funds cannot be used for existing program functions. Chris will keep the Advisory Council apprised of any potential legislative action regarding fees.

Clean Water Fund Resources – Frieda von Qualen

The Well Management Section received \$1.5 million from the Clean Water Fund for the next two fiscal years, which was a \$700,000 increase from the previous biennium. During this current fiscal year, these funds are being used for a study on the occurrence of radium in private wells, and to update information brochures and other communications products. These funds are also being used to pilot programs that would provide free or low cost private well testing. Last year Well Management Section partnered with Stearns County to pilot a private well testing program, and this program was a success with 80 percent of the well test kits returned to the lab. MDH is currently partnering with Becker and Ottertail Counties to provide low cost private well testing. Money from the Clean Water Fund is also being used to provide free private well test kits in partnership with the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center for participants in the well and septic classes. These classes are held all over Minnesota, with MDH staff presenting some information, and are free to attend.

6. IDEAS FOR 2020 CONTINUING EDUCATION CONTENT – Frieda von Qualen

Frieda von Qualen asked for topic ideas for 2020 continuing education within the themes of well construction and sealing issues, connecting geology with the well code, contaminants of emerging concern, and resources available to well contractors. Roger Renner suggested the topic of perforation during well sealing, to expand on the module presented during 2019. Roger Renner also suggested the topic of sieve analysis and screen selection and an overview of the available brochures and resources provided by MDH.

7. LICENSING WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Alex Martell passed out a memo that included recommendations from the 2019 Advisory Council Licensing Workgroup. This workgroup met twice over the summer to review the license requirements for well contractors. Recommendations include a proposal to implement the use of the National Ground Water Association exams. This discussion will be tabled until the December meeting.

8. ADJOURN

The meeting was concluded at 1:39 p.m.