



Consortium Technical Committee Meeting Summary

MARCH 6, 2024 CALLED TO ORDER: 1:30 PM ADJOURNED: 3:05 PM
QUORUM PRESENT – YES – 16 MEMBERS
MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM/VIDEOCONFERENCE

Approval of January 3, 2024 Meeting Summary

Todd Heidgerken made a motion to approve the January 3, 2024 Consortium Technical Committee (CTC) meeting summary as presented. Rich Sattler seconded the motion. The January 3, 2024 meeting summary was unanimously approved as presented. (16:0:0)

Cybersecurity Presentation

Rebecca Geisen, Consortium Managing Director introduced Leslie Kainoa, Cybersecurity State Coordinator from Region 10 of the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) who joined the CTC meeting to give a presentation on cybersecurity and CISA resources available for water and wastewater agencies.

CISA is the nation's risk advisor whose mission is to lead the national effort to manage, reduce and mitigate risk to critical infrastructure. The goal of CISA is to foster resilience across the system and increase the capacity and ability of critical infrastructure to secure their assets. They do this by information sharing – rapidly identifying cyber and insider threats and techniques, and sharing among a broader community; risk assessments – understanding the threat to entities and their systems and assets, identifying gaps in security programs and understanding tools available; capacity-building – increasing the strength of organization's security program and building resilience; and public and stakeholder engagement – highlighting threats or known risks to the general public and educating on potential responses and resources available.

The Pacific Northwest is located in CISA region 10 which offers services in cybersecurity, protective security, chemical security, emergency communications, and operations and outreach.

Leslie shared examples of recent cyberthreats that affected water and wastewater facilities and other utilities and resources CISA provides to combat threats and increase system security including vulnerability scans; phishing campaign assessments; web application scanning; cybersecurity workshops; tabletop exercise support; risk and vulnerability assessments; ICS/OT cybersecurity resources; validated architecture design review; remote penetration testing; and speaking and outreach engagement. Leslie outlined several examples of the types of services CISA provides. Leslie noted that the CISA website [cisa.gov](https://www.cisa.gov) has a plethora of resources, information, and tools available at no cost for water and wastewater agencies.

Leslie concluded by encouraging entities to fill out the CISA Assessments Services Request form which registers an organization in the CISA system and qualifies it for all of the CISA services.

Rebecca thanked Leslie for the presentation and advised that she would share the presentation with the resource links and contact information out to the CTC following the meeting.

Winter Storm Debrief/After Action

Several Consortium members were asked to share their experiences and lessons learned during the January winter storm.

Pete Boone from Tualatin Valley Water District (TVWD) advised that during the freeze event, Washington County 911 dispatch centers received a huge increase in calls, many of which were for frozen pipes, hydrant issues or water leaks with no need for fire response. As a result, TVWD developed a process to assist Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue (TVFR) to field the calls that were water related. During the event, TVWD and TVFR Emergency Managers were in contact and a TVWD liaison was able to sit within TVFR's EOC to help coordinate and take and route calls to water providers in the area that were water related and did not need fire response. TVWD utilized the Drinking Water Advisory look up tool to figure out who the caller's water provider was if not known. Pete noted that this process was not initiated until a few days into the freeze event so the impact was not as good as it could have been but would be an excellent tool/process to initiate from the beginning of any future event of this nature. TVWD is now working with the Washington County 911 dispatch center to formalize the process ahead of the next event.

Ty Kovatch, Maintenance and Construction (M&C) Director from the Portland Water Bureau (PWB) outlined the bureau's preparation before the weekend freeze event. PWB planned for around the clock Urgent Responder staffing with two urgent responders on each shift. Two standby crews were available to respond beginning Thursday, the dispatch office was fully staffed, and snowplows were added to two six yard dump trucks.

Ty mentioned that going into the freeze event, PWBs water was "warm" about six degrees Celsius so there was not too much response needed in the early front-end of the event but as the freezing temperatures continued and the water got to 4 degrees Celsius and below is when broken main and pipe activity really picked up. Ty noted that this event was exacerbated by the hundreds of thousands of people who were out of power as well. Together with widespread power outages, PWB saw thousands of customers with frozen pipes in their homes. As the ice in pipes expanded, it caused widespread damage for these customers, and as the thaw began, PWB saw a huge demand for emergency shutoffs across the City. During the course of this event, PWB Dispatch fielded more than 4,100 calls for service. On Wednesday January 17, the thaw caused much of that ice to reveal its damage and PWB saw the peak call volume of the event when Dispatch fielded 1,093 calls, most of which were for emergency shutoffs. PWB had urgent responders all over the City 24 hours a day responding to these requests home by home.

Through nearly the first week of the event, PWB had just 6 main breaks, which is a normal pace of breaks for this time of year. However on Friday, PWB saw the cold water from the watershed make its way into the Powell Butte reservoirs, and dropped the in-town water temperature below 4 degrees Celsius, which commonly is a precursor to main breaks, particularly on cast iron mains. From Friday to approximately Wednesday, PWB crews worked around the clock and repaired approximately 37 main breaks.

Ty commented that every weather event has its own complexion. This event was exacerbated by the power outages across the City and increased the number of frozen backside plumbing which necessitated a bigger response from PWB Dispatch and field staff. The pivot from assisting individual customers with frozen pipes and needed shutoffs to then responding to main breaks was unique and taxed both dispatchers answering call and staff in the field.

Ty commented that lessons learned with this event included the recognition of a bottleneck in their dispatch office – not enough stations to receive calls and not enough employees trained to take dispatch calls as many of those trained as backups were also needed in the field. Additional training will be given to all M&C managers, supervisors and other appropriate staff to take dispatch calls for future events. Ty will be working with the bureau's Customer Service Director to better coordinate call taking and transferring between the customer service group and the bureau's Dispatch office.

Kari Duncan Rockwood Water PUD General Manager also shared share storm impacts and lessons learned from the winter storm event. Rockwood Water PUD is located in the East Portland/North Gresham area near the Columbia Gorge corridor and received severe winds and ice throughout the event. Kari advised being a smaller entity with fewer staff put a huge burden on the staff that was able to respond to the event. Kari mentioned that Rockwood typically uses their groundwater supply during summer peak-time usage but due to leaky and broken pipes, they turned on groundwater to augment supply. Typical demand for this time of year is approximately 6 MGD, usage during the freeze event peaked at about 11 MGD. Rockwood was also providing groundwater to the City of Gresham to augment their supply. Kari noted that power outages were particularly challenging. Power was out at their district office as well as some of their groundwater well sites and although Rockwood has backup generators for these facilities, it took some time to get the generators working due to cold fuel and frozen breakers. Kari advised that also had issues with power fluctuation, power from PGE would come on and go off making running the generators difficult as well as causing fluctuations at the booster stations and disruption in water supply. Kari mentioned that due to the severe winds, they experienced a lot of down trees at significant operating sites. Thick ice accumulation at the district office and other sites district caused staff safety issues. It was noted that customer leaks were most significant in areas that lost power.

Kari advised that lessons learned from the winter storm event included the need to implement more on-call staff and rotating staff throughout an event to avoid burnout; develop a better mapping system for generators and breakers, i.e., better understanding of where they are and what they are supplying; providing winterization kits for customers, i.e., hose bib covers, etc.; developing more remote work options; and purchasing camping gear – cots, sleeping bags and food for the district office in the event staff needs to stay on site during an event.

CTC members discussed the need for refined communications for customers related to freezing pipes and power outages, damage assessment submittals, disaster declarations, establishing project codes during disaster events,

and ORWARN assistance and shared worker agreement.

Director's Report

Rebecca Geisen, Consortium Managing Director shared the following updates:

- Reminder – Updates to the Drinking Water Advisory Tool boundary map are due Friday, March 15. Please send to Patty Burk.
- Reminder – The Consortium Board voted unanimously to recommend the adoption of the IGA to individual Boards, Councils, and Commissions at their meeting in October. The IGA and talking points were sent to all Board and CTC members. Signed IGAs should be sent to Patty Burk. Hoping to get all signed IGA from members by June 30, 2024. Have received 12 to date.
- Rebecca has been meeting with various stakeholders, particularly GIS staff, for phase 2 of the Emergency Drinking Water Framework Plan to identify what information would be helpful for water providers and emergency managers to include in an emergency drinking water planning map. These discussions have led to conversations on how the data will be used, what data water providers are willing to share, what do emergency managers need to know and where to store and how to maintain the data.
- Consortium staff has been working on updating the bylaws for the Consortium, Executive Committee and Technical Committee. Rebecca asked for a volunteer to review the draft documents. Jessica Dorsey volunteered to review.
- Earmark support letters were sent out via email for approval. CTC supported process. Suggestion was made to include which specific funding source is being tapped in the email so members have a better ability to cross check against any other potential competing requests among Consortium members.

Program Updates

Bonny Cushman, Consortium Program Manager shared the following updates:

- Annual print orders are due tomorrow, Thursday, March 7.
- The June Consortium Conservation Committee (CCC) meeting will focus on curtailment programming/projects. Consortium staff will be doing a look back at what has been done with regard to curtailment over the past five years and then look forward to the next five years - how curtailment work aligns with the Consortium Strategic Plan and how the Consortium's curtailment programming can assist members with meeting their WMCP requirements. The Water Communicators Network will be invited to attend this meeting as well.
- A subcommittee of CCC is looking at Youth Education programming. Taking January through June to research what the landscape is for education programming in the Portland metro area and the types of service and program models that are available. Will come back to CTC in early summer to present recommendations for moving forward.

- Currently running indoor digital conservation ads in English and Spanish in concert with Fix a Leak Week.
- The 2024 media campaign planning is well underway. If there is a specific type of message members would like to see with regard to conservation or emergency preparedness during this campaign let Bonny know. Members were asked if they have a particular project or site, they would like to highlight to let Bonny know as well.
- Supporting Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) with developing a campaign that will run from May to September that focuses on PublicAlerts.org. The goal of the campaign is to drive up sign ups with Public Alerts and highlight the site as a great source for emergency preparedness information.

Meeting Attendees:

David Winship and Brian Diaz – City of Beaverton

Todd Heidgerken and Beth McGinnis – Clackamas River Water

Jessica Dorsey, Sophia Hobert and Heather Knapp – City of Hillsboro

Justin Poyser – City of Gladstone

Robin Pederson – City of Gresham

Tammy Schalk – Lake Grove Water District

Bret Bienerth and Cole Trusty – City of Lake Oswego

Sarah Jo Chaplen – Oak Lodge Water Services Authority

Edward Campbell, Ty Kovatch and Jamaal Folsom – City of Portland

Kari Duncan – Rockwood Water PUD

Rich Sattler – City of Sherwood

Wyatt Parno – South Fork Water Board

David Schaffer – City of Troutdale

Rachel Sykes – City of Tualatin

Pete Boone and Kevin Sutherland – Tualatin Valley Water District

Mike Grimm – West Slope Water District

Leslie Kainoa - CISA

Rebecca Geisen, Bonny Cushman, and Riley Berger – RWPC Staff

Next CTC Meeting: April 3, 2024, via Zoom/videoconference.