



ON-SITE SYSTEMS TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD SUMMARY OF ACTION



February 20, 2002

Members Present Sharon Minsch, Carol Nesbett, Craig Woolard PE, Mark Musial PE, Wes Turner MD, Joel Neimeyer PE

Staff Present: Jim Cross PE, Jeff Poet, Don Keefer PE, AWWU, Ron Watts PE, Jeff Urbanus, DHHS

Guests: Bob Cowan PE, Earl Dotten, AWWA

Chairperson Sharon Minsch called the meeting to order. A motion to approve the minutes from January was made. It was seconded and approved.

Introduction of New Members

Joel Neimeyer was introduced as a new member of the Tech Board. The assembly has not appointed him yet, but he should be appointed by March. Chris Allard was not in attendance, but will be the other appointee.

New Staffing Status

The new civil engineer position was listed on the 20th and closes on the 28th of February.

Arsenic and System Approval procedures current status

As of the January Tech Board meeting, arsenic testing had been instituted as a requirement for Health Authority Approvals. Subsequent to that an article appeared in the Alaska Star newspaper that made it quite controversial. It was discussed at higher levels in the Municipality, and the decision was made to stop the arsenic testing requirement and re-evaluate the best way to address the arsenic situation in the Municipality.

Prior to discontinuation of testing On-Site received 17 arsenic samples results, 13 of which had non-detectable levels of arsenic; one exceeded the new standard of 10-ppm and there were three that were detectable but less than 10 ppm.

Craig Woolard said they had just received some funding through the drinking water program to do some sampling of arsenic around the Anchorage bowl. At this point testing locations are unspecified.

Sharon asked if municipal testing of arsenic would be reinstated. Jim answered that in the discussions he has had, everyone thinks the Health Authority Approvals are the proper way to do it, but the decision has not been made to reinstate at this time. Jim has been instructed to prepare a case as to why it should be done. The decision to do it will be made at a higher level.

Keven Kleweno handed out a letter that DEC had mailed to all class A public water systems throughout the state. Compliance to the EPA arsenic level is not required until January 2006. Class public water systems may have to notify people, but until that time they are not in violation of any regulations. It is also very clear that the arsenic rule only covers community water systems and non-transient non-community water systems. It does not cover single-family homes or class C public water systems at all. Once the DEC receives all the sampling information they will see what the next step is. They are looking at going back to all the class C wells, and if it is a class C serving a residential unit they will be cut out and have them fall under the state arsenic rule.

Sharon Minsch asked if a Class A system has a requirement for regular well water sampling. Kevin answered that the only time they have to sample is when they are originally designed. Jim asked if they would require samples for arsenic, and Keven said that yes they need to sample and it will be a state violation if they do not sample by Dec. 31st of this year. Samples will be taken from raw water not treated water, because a lot of water systems in the state have treatment systems, and they want to know exactly where they stand.

Craig Woolard's project will look at what type of arsenic we are dealing with. Craig said that they will be looking at speciation and they have a geochemist that will be working on it as well. They are looking at a lot of water quality parameters.

Keven said that they are estimating treatment for arsenic will cost on average \$300,000 per system, which computes to a \$28 – \$100 per person per month increase in water costs not including maintenance etc. Treatments options are somewhat limited; the basic three options are membrane treatment, some sort of activated iron, or some type of coagulation co-precipitation. The state is not looking at point of use water treatment systems at this time.

Right now there are over 71 Class A water systems that have arsenic levels above the 10-ppm EPA standard statewide, 15 – 20 are in the Anchorage bowl. That number could increase when the raw water sampling is complete.

Innovative Code and Contract Status

Jim received an email from legal. They said they are about to let the contract out. The new contract is a covenant that runs with the property so that when the property changes owners we don't have to get a new homeowner to sign it. He hopes to have something in hand by the next Tech Board meeting.

Drinking Water Treatment

Sharon feels the Muni needs to do something to make sure buyers are informed about elevated nitrate levels. When HAA's go out and there is an advisory notice, she would like to see a signature on a form from the buyer so that they know what they are getting. Jim said that he felt Sharon's idea was a good one. He gave a realtor's seminar and tried to get some feedback from the realtor's to ensure that buyer's got the HAA blue sheet and the work sheet so that they get

all the data. They came up with some suggestions, but nothing that was foolproof.

One option is to look at administratively requiring the buyer to sign the blue sheet when they have received it along with the worksheet, but only if we are giving them some type of advisory. They receive an advisory if nitrates are above 5 and below 10, or if the septic system is near failure.

Carol Nesbett suggested attaching the HAA requirement to the title, because when you transfer title, typically a title or mortgage company will be involved who will take a look at the title report, and see that in order to close there has to be a HAA. Jim said that identifying the appropriate properties would be a major project for someone, and asked if it would ensure that the buyer gets a copy, or just that the HAA would be done. Carol said that you would not have to identify the properties because it could be something that would be on all properties within the Municipality of Anchorage, and it would be up to the parties involved to make sure that they were complying. Carol will investigate and find out if it can be done. Jim agreed that it would ensure near 100% compliance and if specific wording could be included it may also ensure that the buyers are notified.

Sharon said that starting right now On-Site could administratively deal with anything with a warning and make sure that it gets a buyers signature. Carol agreed that would be an immediate solution, but that it should not be a lingering thing because there is an easier solution. Sharon asked for Carol to check with her title people and Jim to check with legal, and discussion will be continued next month.

Sharon does not agree with the city denying a Health Authority Approval to homes with nitrates over 10 regardless of treatment. She would like to see a Health Authority issued with a notice that the water exceeds EPA standards and needs treatment. With the proposed arsenic testing, even if you exceeded the EPA standards you would still get your HAA, but you would receive a notice along with the HAA. Jim said if we get the HAA as part of the title so that we are assured that the prospective buyer will be notified, then we might be able to change the code so that a nitrate level of 10 is not a mandatory pass/fail limit but an informational level only.

At this point in the meeting the tape recorder malfunctioned and there is no recording of the remainder of the meeting. Topics covered on the agenda were the AWWA update by Earl Dotten, coordination of the on-site program with DHHS, and an update on the status of the engineer and well driller luncheons.