**MINUTES**

**KENTUCKIANA REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (KIPDA)**

**REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

**KIPDA Burke Room**

**11520 Commonwealth Drive**

**Louisville KY 40299**

**April 14, 2020**

 The Regional Water Management Council of the Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency met at 1:30 p.m. on April 14, 2020 via video conferencing application (Zoom). Members in attendance were:

Russ Rose, Chairman, Oldham County Water District, Oldham County, Kentucky

Justin Reed, Oldham County Environmental Authority, Oldham County, Kentucky

Ted Chisholm, Lagrange Utilities Commission, Oldham County, Kentucky

Arthur Jones, City of Shepherdsville City Engineer, Bullitt County, Kentucky

Scott Fleming, Shepherdsville Sewer, Bullitt County, Kentucky

Keith Griffee, Bullitt County Finance Officer, Bullitt County, Kentucky

Jim Grunow, Louisville Water Company, Jefferson County, Kentucky

Jeremy Raney, Louisville Water Company, Jefferson County, Kentucky

Stephanie Laughlin, Louisville MSD, Jefferson County, Kentucky

Scot Treece, New Castle Water Works, Henry County, Kentucky

Keith Morris, Henry County Water District, Henry County, Kentucky

Matt McAllister, City of Eminence, Henry County, Kentucky

Tom Doyle, Shelbyville Water, Shelby County, Kentucky

Melvin Phoenix, West Shelby Water District, Shelby County, Kentucky

Ronnie Fick, Mt. Washington Water and Sewer, Bullitt County, Kentucky

Stephanie Laughlin, Louisville Metro Sewer District, Jefferson County, Kentucky

Wesley Sydnor, Louisville MSD, Jefferson County, Kentucky

Kevin Gibson, Oldham County Environmental Authority, Oldham County, Kentucky

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**  **REPRESENTING**

Justin Carter KIPDA

Rachael Miller KIPDA

Jarrett Haley KIPDA

Hayden Kandul KIPDA

Adam Forseth KIPDA

Zach Herzog KIPDA

Amanda LeFevre Division of Compliance

Sarah Gaddis Division of Water

Jory Becker Division of Water

Linda Bridwell KIA

Edith Halbleib KIA

Ashley Adams KIA

Russell Neal

Jim Silliman Oldham County

Pat Hargadon Shelby County

Holly Nicholas

Heather Stevenson KRWA

Derek Guthrie

Debbie Landrum

John Riley Spencer County

Brittany Koenig

Gary Larimore KRWA

Jason Pennell

Jory Becker

Joe Burns KRWA

Brian Boardman

Steve Eden

Joe Robinson Trimble County

Katie Umberg

Paul Maron Strand Associates

Jennifer Taimi

Sheryl Chino

Steve Emly

John Loechle Louisville MSD

Sarah Parsley

Becca Trueman Currys Fork Watershed

Clay Kelly Strand Associates

Clay Bostic Jacobs Civil Engineering

Alicia Jacobs Division of Water

Anshu Singh Self

Kent Chandler Public Services Commission

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Rose called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

 Ms. Miller called roll. There was a quorum.

**MINUTES FROM JANUARY 14, 2020**

 Mr. Chisholm moved to approve the minutes from the January 14, 2020 Regional Water Management Council Meeting with two corrections. Mr. Gibson seconded. Motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

**KIA STAFF REPORT**

 Ms. Halblieb stated that the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority (KIA) is working on putting together an estimate of the projects that are upcoming for the lobbyist and council financing infrastructure authorities and a second lobbying group. The funding has not yet been approved by the congress for the upcoming ‘20-’21 cycle, but KIA is working on putting together a draft intended use plan (IUP) and the project list.

Ms. Stidwell added that all the current borrowers need to be aware of a few things. Firstly, KIA is currently working totally remotely like many others. If anyone needs anything, KIA is available to assist, particularly those with ongoing projects or draws that have not been processed yet. Those can be sent electronically, and KIA is working hard to ensure those are being processed. KIA is trying to be as accommodating as possible in the current situation. There have been a few questions about June loan payments. Current loan borrowers most likely received their bills around the end of March. These bills were sent out a little early so that the bills can be dealt with. Because of bond requirements, KIA is not able to allow loan payments to be skipped. However, KIA will work with any borrower who has an issue or needs some help in this current situation on a case by case basis.

As Edith mentioned, KIA is working on the 2021 list. There are 27 projects for 2020 that still have not been reviewed by KIA’s Board. Normally, if projects are not reviewed by June or July, they would not be admitted. Due to this unprecedented situation, KIA is looking at moving all the 2020 projects to the top of the 2021 projects list.

**KDOW STAFF REPORT**

Ms. Gaddis reported that everyone in the Kentucky Division of Water is teleworking right now. All the inspectors are still going out to do their work in the field. All water systems should still be hearing from inspectors and supervisors just as normal. The inspections are being done a little differently now. Ms. Gaddis called for an end to drinking water and wastewater inspections for her staff because she realizes how important it is to keep operators healthy. The Division of Water does not want to expose operators to people who are traveling from place to place in an effort to keep everyone healthy. Inspectors have been asked not to conduct in-person indoor inspections at drinking water facilities and wastewater facilities at this time. Package plants are being looked at when necessary, but they are not being visited in general as frequently right now. Inspectors are being asked to stay on top of distribution inspections and going out to check water temperature and chlorine on the drinking water side. The appropriate chlorine residual is being maintained throughout the system. Inspectors should be keeping in close contact with operators via email and phone calls. Everyone needs to be in close contact right now for several reasons.

In the current emergency, it was realized through working with fewer members of staff on shifts and trying to maintain the appropriate social distance, it has never been more important than now to ensure that drinking water and wastewater compliance is being maintained. The Kentucky Division of Water does not have relaxed standards during this time for the water industry. In fact, not only is compliance expected, the standards are heightened because it is incredibly important to have clean drinking water and adequate wastewater utilities. For this reason, the Division of Water has full expectations that monitoring, safety standards, and good recordkeeping will continue. A new process has been implemented on the drinking water side for electronic submission of data and Ms. Jacobs will give an update on that.

The Division of Water is encouraging systems to submit their boil water advisory information via the e-notification system. If a water system is not signed up on the e-notification system website, Ms. Gaddis would be more than happy to assist with that. The communications that are coming in electronically and going into the Division's system in an automated fashion are very useful when there isn't someone at the office answering phone calls. In addition, any systems with boil water advisories are being asked to email the results of the tests instead of sending it via fax since there is no one at the office right now to receive the incoming faxes.

The Division is asking that if any wastewater systems have bypasses or overflows to send the notifications through e-notification as opposed to calling them in. If an operator calls their inspector, the inspector should absolutely be answering those calls, but that requires extra work on his or her behalf to enter the information into the system. E-notification just automatically sends that information into the Division's system so that it can be followed up on at a later date. Also, there will be instances with KPS permits where there will not be someone on staff to monitor, so these instances will be handled on a case by case basis. Operators should call into the regional office to discuss that issue.

Any emergencies should be reported via telephone immediately. Ms. Jacobs and her drinking water staff issued a list of guidelines that includes a list of regional office emergency contacts in that document and please use them if there is any type of emergency or operator shortages. A program that can provide backup operators from the Kentucky Rural Water Association will be discussed a bit later.

Ms. Jacobs stated that keeping up communications is the best bet to maintain operations and keep things running smoothly. All the mail should be in and compliance is being run and data entry. Systems should make sure they are responding quickly to any calls or messages from compliance officers. The electronic submittal process is easy to use but KDOW staff is available for any questions. Information can also be submitted by mail, but it is recommended that the electronic submittal form is used for May.

Ms. Gaddis added that everyone should’ve received hand sanitizer from Buffalo Trace. If anyone is in need of more from the distillery, please let her know.

Mr. Becker added that the heavy lifting is borne by the drinking water field operations program, and they are doing a great job. He also appreciates the municipalities and the area development district supporting everyone during this time. As Ms. Gaddis stated previously, there is an electronic submittal process for construction applications and that process is being solely relied upon to receive those applications. Any questions can be emailed to wibsupport@ky.gov or wibengineering@ky.gov.

**PSC STAFF REPORT**

Mr. Chandler with the Public Service Commission (PSC) reported that in response to COVID-19, the Public Service Commission did enter a few orders. The first one was an initiated docket that is still open. It is case number 2020-85. The Commission went out of its way to grant waivers or deviations from a number of regulations and items that jurisdictional utilities are required to do, but it also suspended the disconnections for nonpayment. The Commission reasoned fairly well that if people are going to be expected to be healthy at home, then the availability of heat, lights, water, and sewer service are required to do that for at least 30 days and until further notice. This order was implemented 28 days ago. The Commission also suspended late payment fees for failure to pay on time, but it was made clear in the order that customers are still expected to pay. It does not relieve the obligation to pay.

The Commision tried to give as much flexibility as they could with these waivers to jurisdictional utilities. They said that if utilities want to close their lobby, reduce their hours, stop doing quarterly meter reports and meter reads, etc., they could suspend those activities until further notice. The Commission then realized that clarification was required of some of the items, one of which was that the Commission closed its office but allowed filings electronically or via email. That email address is psced@ky.gov.

The Commission put out a third order to public utilities or publicly owned utilities of any sort regarding the IRS payment protection program. This order did not require prior Commission approval for taking on that debt. The PSC was pushing legislation to allow additional time for water commissioners to get not only their initial training, but also their ongoing training. It is anticipated that the legislation will be heard in the Senate either today or tomorrow and hopefully receive a vote. It would allow water commissioners to have up to an additional six months to finish their training. If that legislation does not pass, then the PSC will have to look at suspending the law or to extend it some other way in light of not being able to hold trainings due to the COVID-19 situation. The Commission has cancelled a few hearings but will try to start having electronic hearings, and there are three planned for May.

There have been some jurisdictional utilities and a few municipal utilities where a landlord has the utility service in their name, and in lieu of evicting the tenants for not paying rent, the landlords are just disconnecting the utility services. The PSC has been receiving these types of complaints from the governor’s office and has been trying to work through the issue with the League of Cities and the Municipal Utility Association. As of today, all such complaints, whether they’re PSC jurisdictional or not, have all been taken care of. Everyone needs their utilities to stay healthy at home right now.

**KRWA STAFF REPORT**

Mr. Burns with the Kentucky Rural Water Association (KRWA) stated that the KRWA staff is staying healthy at home and teleworking with utilities. The staff has been reaching out to contact utilities and answering a lot of questions that many have had regarding addressing compliance issues, meeting compliance, change in sample location sites, and the CCR fund. Since the beginning of this situation, the KRWA has begun archiving quite a bit of COVID-19 information for members and made an information page on the KRWA website. Many of the same documents that the Division of Water has released are archived on the KRWA website as well.

KRWA has also been reaching out quite a bit lately as breaking news is released through their e-news bulletin. Mr. Burns encouraged everyone to subscribe to the KRWA e-news bulletin at [www.krwa.org](http://www.krwa.org). The website also has a link to the electronic document submittal webinar that is scheduled for Friday. There are currently 92 attendees for the webinar and room for 100. This webinar will qualify for an hour of continuing education for everyone who attends.

Ms. Heather Stevenson put out a call for volunteer operators back on March 17, 2020. There have been some operators who have contracted COVID-19, and this program will help ensure operator coverage for the utilities. Between March 17, 2020 and March 30, 2020, 57 utilities have responded to volunteer their assistance as well as some retired operators. A total of 138 certified water treatment operators and 133 distribution operators on the drinking water side have volunteered. On the wastewater side, there have been 88 treatment operators and 64 collection operators volunteer to help in case there is any need.

The KRWA has been busy this week dealing with the power outage in eastern Kentucky and has been working to locate generators as an alternate power source for the water operations. That work will probably continue through the end of the week.

**WATER COORDINATOR’S REPORT**

Mr. Carter stated that the Community and Economic Development Services (CEDS) Division staff at KIPDA have been very busy getting the economic stimulus packages together for the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority (KIA). Mr. Carter appreciates everyone’s assistance with getting that information together and knows it was a really short deadline. There was a total of 50 projects that were submitted - 22 water projects, 23 wastewater projects, and 5 stormwater projects for this possible stimulus package due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This activity gave Mr. Carter even more insight into the needs of all the water systems in the KIPDA region and is here to go to bat for everyone for anything they might need. All 50 projects were submitted yesterday at noon and KIA is working on compiling the projects. Mr. Carter will stay in contact with KIA staff and keep everyone up to date on all project and funding information.

Mr. Carter also stated that he has been working on completing all the system reports and updating all the system data that was gathered during the most recent system visits. The system visits were about 60% completed before the quarantine and the rest of the systems have been working greatly to get their information sent in. Mr. Carter reminded the council that KIPDA is available for any help and support they might need, including CDBG, SRF, self-help grants, or any other funding sources.

**COUNTY UPDATES**

 **Oldham County**

Mr. Rose stated that he appreciates everyone here in attendance and all the water system employees in the KIPDA region. This group is a great resource if anyone has any questions or needs anything.

**WASTEWATER/STORMWATER PLANNING**

 Mr. Carter stated that there was no other wastewater planning business to discuss.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. LeFevre with the Division of Compliance gave an operator certification update. This year is a renewal year for drinking water operator certifications and the hours are due on June 30, 2020. Due to the current situation, the Cabinet has extended the renewal season a little bit. Late renewal fees will be waived for drinking water operator certifications this year through August 31, 2020. If someone does not get their hours in time, that’s fine and they will not be charged a late fee. That August 31, 2020 deadline will also be a bit open knowing that it is uncertain how everything will play out.

With the way the system works, the Division of Compliance is not able to just extend everyone’s license. So, if someone renews after the June 30, 2020 original deadline, their license is technically expired, but it will not be terminated. The Division of Compliance is working with the Division of Water so they know that if they’re doing an inspection or a utility is working under an alternate staffing plan, that will be taken into consideration. The Division of Compliance is currently looking into setting up online certification classes and will keep everyone up to date on all progress.

Mr. Carter stated that there was no other business to discuss.

**ADJOURNMENT**

 Mr. Chisholm moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Morris seconded. Motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.