

**Safe Water Advisory Group (SWAG) A City Council Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at 6:30 – 8:30 pm. City Hall Conference Room A and via Zoom**

Attending in person: Brian Goetz, co-chairs; Councilors Rich Blalock and Vince Lombardi, Asst. Fire Chief Bill McQuillen, Rep. David Meuse. And via Zoom: Andrea Amico, co-chair, Sen. Rebecca Perkins Kwoka, City Health Officer Kim McNamara. Absent: Hope Van Epps, Rich DiPentima. Staff: Al Pratt, Stephanie Seacord (recording secretary)

Welcome & approval of minutes (Andrea Amico, SWAG co-chair) – Minutes from the February 23, 2022 meeting approved as presented

Community Drinking Water Forum review (Brian Goetz, Deputy Director, City of Portsmouth DPW and SWAG co-chair & Andrea Amico) in preparation for May 3 event in Council Chambers.

- Topics –
 - Councilor Lombardi recommended that the segment describing the Water System explain what the City is responsible for maintaining and how homeowners can help ensure the quality of their drinking water with the plumbing inside their houses.
 - Kim McNamara noted that her segment on Source Water Protection will cover household groundwater protection –reducing the use of household cleaning chemicals and other household hazardous waste. The City’s spring Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day is May 21. The list of materials is posted to the City website:
<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/solid-waste-recycling/household-hazardous-waste-day>
- AV functionality – video, slides and interactive polling platform in person, on Ch. 22 and via Zoom
- Materials
- Discussion – Brian to circulate the Slido questions to SWAG for comments.
- Promotion
 - Flyer distributed through Committee networks – including the Schools, through Committee member Hope Van Epps
 - Noted in City Newsletter starting 4/20 and through 5/2
 - Posted to website
 - Press release distributed to media
 - Will be reinforced on City social media – for others to ‘like’ and ‘share’
 - Forum is being held during National Drinking Water Week. A proclamation from the Mayor will be made at the City Council meeting on Monday, May 2, encouraging the public to attend the Forum the next night.

NH Legislative review by Rep. David Meuse – There are a dozen or so water-related bills active in the current session of the NH Legislature. If 4 bills out of 25 make it to signature that’s a pretty good record. NH has some of the toughest drinking water standards because the NH Legislature started advocating three years ago. NH has the opportunity to be ahead of Federal standards, on PFAS, for example – we’re in a position to make a difference.

- HB 398 regarding appropriating funds for environmental services/wastewater treatment was passed and signed <https://legiscan.com/NH/bill/HB398/2022>
- HB 478 regarding treatment of PFAS contaminants in the Merrimack Village area, passed the House and now in the Senate <https://legiscan.com/NH/bill/HB478/2022>

- HB 1066 regarding cyanobacteria blooms passed the House and looks good in the Senate <https://legiscan.com/NH/bill/HB1066/2022>
- HB 1185 regarding requiring industrial wastewater dischargers to test for PFAS, passed the House and received a 5-0 “ought to pass” recommendation from the Senate committee <https://legiscan.com/NH/bill/HB1185/2022> Andrea asked if this would include Portsmouth wastewater treatment facilities (it does). Brian noted that the City must follow guidance resulting from State studies. That perfluorinated chemicals are ubiquitous and that it would be impossible to separate wastewater from the City’s Water System from all other household and outside sources. Rep. Meuse noted that the Legislature tries to give NH DES the support and resources they need to help the Department set priorities. “NH standards are more stringent than Federal standards because we know NH has a problem and we can and do make a difference.” Because there is legislation at the state level, the State government can be more nimble than the Feds.
- HB 1421 requiring schools and child care facilities to provide lead tests to DHHS and at regular intervals passed the House and Senate and is headed to be signed <https://legiscan.com/NH/bill/HB1421/2022>
- HB 1440 requiring NH DES to set PFAS standards for runoff in surface water. Moved for “interim study.” <https://legiscan.com/NH/bill/HB1440/2022>
- HB 1422 requiring more transparency on consumer product labels to note they contain PFAS. Rep. Meuse cosponsored this bill to encourage consumers to use their purchasing power “to close the endless loop” of PFAS entering the water supply through waste disposal. Deemed unlikely to pass this year. <https://legiscan.com/NH/bill/HB1422/2022>
- Next legislative session:
 - Andrea asked if there is any legislation addressing PFAS in bio-sludge or regarding animals affected by PFAS (legislation in Maine). None currently in NH.
 - Potential legislation covering practices to treat/contain leachate from dump sites and packaging/transporting leachate to other states for disposal
- The NH Legislature can help move concerns along. For any assistance, please get in touch

Portsmouth Water System Quarterly Update – top-line review of the First Quarter 2022 report previously distributed to SWAG and posted to City website: https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/sites/default/files/2022-04/Portsmouth_Drinking_Water_Update_2022_1st_Quarter.pdf

PFPrA Update, Andrea Amico – In March, EPA & NHDES agreed to resample the Portsmouth and Merrimack sites and others (total of 10 sites at tap and source). The results were markedly different at both original sampling sites. “Raised more questions than answers” – tested by the same Eurofins lab? Issue of seasonality/timing? Different lab methods used? Same equipment?

- Andrea – there will be more labs, testing for more compounds, thanks to the \$10 billion Federal investment in PFAS research. “We’re testing for compounds we didn’t know were there and remain at the forefront to find out more.”
- Brian – The City continues to work with DES Brandon Kernen and toxicologist Jonathan Petali to develop sample methods and study new compounds to determine their effect. The EPA needs to develop the process, quality controls, etc. then dictate to the labs. Though Portsmouth’s sampling is ahead of the EPA, are the labs getting ahead of listing compounds or behind in why we test.
- Councilor Blalock – Thanked everyone for their hard work in getting out in front on PFAS, but it would be hard if we get ahead of the labs and the EPA. “Portsmouth can’t be the research lab on this.”

No comments from public. Adjourned at 8:12 pm