

MINUTES

Meeting of the Chicago Water Partners Advisory Council (CWPAAC)
(An Advisory Body to the Chicago Department of Water Management)
Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Held at Wintrust Sports Complex, 5499 W. 65th St, Bedford Park, IL

Call To Order

The meeting was chaired and called to order at 10:10 a.m. by David Kohn, Deputy Commissioner for Regional Partnerships, Chicago Department of Water Management (CDWM). Mr. Kohn welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their participation. He also thanked and acknowledged the Village of Bedford Park and its Mayor, David Brady, for hosting today's meeting. At this time, Mr. Kohn asked everyone at the meeting to facilitate a roll call and to please introduce themselves.

Roll Call & Self-Introductions

In addition to Mr. Kohn, meeting participants and representatives of suburban communities and water systems in attendance who introduced themselves were:

Joy Lennon, Water Administrator, Village of River Grove
William Pazdzioch, Water Superintendent, Village of River Grove
Kylah Seltzer-Johnston, Cook County Bureau of Asset Management, "Build Up Cook" Program
Eyal Argaman, Booky Oren Global Water Technologies
Booky Oren, Booky Oren Global Water Technologies
Sarit Oren, Booky Oren Global Water Technologies
Nick Gornick, Deputy Director of Plant Operations, City of Joliet/Grand Prairie Water Commission
Benjamin Daish, Asst. Finance Director, City of Berwyn
Sal Stella, Director of Public Works, Village of Forest Park
Rick Barger, Water Operator, Village of Forest Park
Jason Zurawski, Superintendent, Brookfield-North Riverside Water Commission
John Spatz, Village of Oak Lawn Regional Water System
William Meyer, Director of Public Works, Village of Oak Lawn Regional Water System
Wally Dowling, Water Operator, Central Stickney Sanitary District
Steven Davids, Public Works Department, Village of Stickney
Bryan Juricek, Water Foreman, Village of Alsip
Andy Karpinski, Water Commissioner, Village of Alsip
Michael Ward, Water Plant Operator, Village of Evergreen Park
Paul May, General Manager, DuPage Water Commission
Ramesh Kanapareddy, Executive Director, Northwest Suburban Municipal Joint Action Water Agency
William Green, Director of Village Projects, Village of Bridgeview
Thomas Brandstedt, Village Engineer, Village of McCook
Chris Lesniak, Water Department Superintendent, Village of Bedford Park
David Brady, Mayor, Village of Bedford Park
Colleen Kelly, Director, Justice-Willow Springs Water Commission
Wesley Barber, Superintendent, Broadview-Westchester Joint Water Agency
Randy Conner, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Water Management
Joel Vieyra, 1st Deputy Commissioner, Chicago Department of Water Management
Kathleen Henly, Asst. to the Commissioner, Chicago Department of Water Management

Public Comments

None.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Kohn thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for introducing themselves. He then turned to consideration of the minutes from the previous meeting of September 10, 2024, noting that draft minutes of that meeting were sent in advance to the members of the CWPAC for review and asking if anyone had any additional comments on or corrections to the minutes. Hearing no further comments, Mr. Kohn stated that he would entertain a motion to approve the draft minutes.

A motion to approve the minutes of September 10, 2024, was made by Mr. Kanapareddy and seconded by Mr. Dowling. Mr. Kohn then called for a voice vote to approve the minutes, first asking those in favor to signify by saying “aye” and then asking any opposed to signify by saying “nay.” The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote. Mr. Kohn thanked the members and indicated that the approved minutes would be posted on the CWPAC webpage that has been established on the Department of Water Management website.

Update on Cost-of-Service Rate Modeling

Mr. Kohn then turned to the next item on the agenda, an update on the City of Chicago’s efforts to develop individual projected Cost-of-Service (COS) rate models for all suburban wholesale customers, based upon the American Water Works Association (AWWA) COS rate methodology. He reported that Chicago continues to work on updating individual COS models for all wholesale customers, recalling the City’s commitment to sharing those rate models with each member of the Chicago Water System in 2025.

He said the City’s focus at this time is acquiring the “peaking factor” for all system members, which is a key data point needed to develop accurate COS models for all wholesale customers. Peaking factors, he recalled, are values specifying maximum hourly and maximum daily water demand and are typically measured during warmer months when water demand is higher. CDWM is considering various solutions to capture this data for Chicago Water System wholesale customers, such as enhanced metering, telemetry, or adaptation of the existing metering system. He said CDWM will continue to update the CWPAC members on how the City proposes to obtain peaking factor data.

Update on CDWM Corrosion Control Transition (Polyphosphate to Orthophosphate)

Mr. Kohn next provided an update on CDWM’s transition from Polyphosphate to Orthophosphate to achieve enhanced corrosion control within its water transmission system, recalling that this adjustment in treatment procedures – shifting from blended Phosphate to a pure Orthophosphate – has been developed in close coordination with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA).

Following the schedule discussed at previous CWPAC meetings, he said, this treatment transition now is underway at the Jardine Water Purification Plant, and email alerts have been sent to all communities served by the Chicago Water System as well as to indirect customers who provided email addresses to CDWM or to IEPA. This first step involves moving from the current 60 Polyphosphate/40 Orthophosphate blend to a 30 Polyphosphate/70 Orthophosphate blend. He added that CDWM does not anticipate any changes in water quality during the transition other than an expected increase in Orthophosphate from the current target of 0.5 mg/L to 0.85 mg/L (milligrams per liter).

He continued, stating that within the week, the same first step in the transition process will occur at the Sawyer Water Purification Plant and that advance emails alerts also will be sent to everyone served by that facility. Mr. Kohn added that CDWM's Director of Water Quality, Patrick Schwer, is available to address any concerns that may arise, and he encouraged members to contact Patrick with any questions they may have.

Mr. Spatz was recognized and asked whether a timeline was available denoting the full treatment transition schedule. Mr. Kohn said that the schedule was indeed available and was included in a previously disseminated FAQ document; he said he had brought extra copies to today's meeting and would be pleased to share with Mr. Spatz a copy of that document.

Presentation of "K2i" (Knowledge to Implementation)" Global Utility Information Sharing Platform

Mr. Kohn continued to the next item on the agenda. As promised, he said, we are pleased to welcome to today's meeting representatives of Booky Oren Global Water Technologies (BOGWT). BOGWT, he said, is an international consultancy firm headquartered in Israel whose founder, Booky Oren, who is here today, is the former Executive Chairman of Israel's national water agency, MEKROT. They work with water and wastewater systems serving more than 90 million citizens all over the world and provide technological and operational support to help implement improvements based on innovation and best practices.

At this time, Mr. Kohn turned the floor over to Mr. Oren and his team to provide a presentation and live demonstration of the online information platform developed by BOGWT known as "K2i," which stands for Knowledge To Implementation. Mr. Oren thanked Mr. Kohn for the introduction and for the opportunity to address members of the CWPAC.

He began his remarks by providing an overview of his background. As Mr. Kohn mentioned, he said, for many years he served as executive chairman of a company called MEKROT, Israel's national water company. MEKROT supplies 80% of the water to the State of Israel and treats 70% of the nation's wastewater. After leaving that government position, he said, he moved to the private sector and eventually founded BOGWT about 15 years ago.

Mr. Oren said he was pleased to provide an overview and demonstration of the "K2i," or Knowledge To Implementation, online platform that BOGWT has developed. This platform, he explained, contains a library of information and recorded webinar conversations among leaders of water systems across the U.S. and in many other nations. The recorded discussions address common challenges and best practices to meet those challenges as shared by water sector professionals.

BOGWT's motivation in creating K2i, he continued, was to help capture the tremendous innovation going on in water systems worldwide, enabling water and wastewater professionals around the world to exchange knowledge among themselves, without the involvement of any vendors, consulting engineers, or anyone marketing a service or product. K2i's primary focus is on sharing best practices, breaking down knowledge silos, and saving time by allowing water industry professionals to learn from one another.

In addition to information concerning engineering and operational matters, the platform includes webinars on a wide range of topics, including Cybersecurity, Predictive Maintenance, Water Quality Management, Water Loss Management, Asset Management, and Human Resources. Through its subscription to the K2i platform, he said, CDWM is providing CWPAC members complimentary access to this platform as an additional resource and value-added aspect of participation in the Chicago Water System.

Assisted by his BOGWT colleague Eyal Argaman, Mr. Oren proceeded to demonstrate the K2i platform and its embedded AI tool. He encouraged CWPAC members to follow along and to log in to K2i on their laptop computers, noting that Mr. Kohn had provided BOGWT with a list of CWPAC members' email domains to facilitate access to the platform. The AI component of the platform, he explained, helps members drill down to find the exact information they seek within K2i's extensive library of webinars recorded with participating systems such as the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, CDWM, the Orange County Sanitation District, Clean Water Services of Oregon, as well as water agencies serving Singapore, Portugal, the Netherlands, Greece, Italy, and other jurisdictions.

Mr. Oren navigated through the K2i platform and provided various examples of information found therein about various common water industry challenges. The subjects and webinars explored included Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR), Automatic Meter Reading (AMI), Leak Detection, System Data Management, Workforce Recruitment and Retention, Managing a Hybrid Workforce, Cybersecurity, and SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) systems.

Next, he invited CWPAC members to discuss specific challenges of concern to them, about which they would like to obtain more information from K2i. He emphasized that if there are issues not currently addressed in the platform, BOGWT would be pleased to help arrange additional conversations to cover those topics. Members offered examples of various subjects and lengthy discussion ensued.

Mr. Oren concluded his presentation by emphasizing the importance of sharing knowledge and learning from other utilities to improve operations and decision-making. He encouraged attendees to think about their current and future challenges, to take time to explore the K2i platform, and to reach out for support and information. He thanked the members for their attention and said that he and BOGWT look forward to working with the CWPAC going forward.

Discussion/Action Item: Continued Formation of CWPAC Executive Committee

The next item on the agenda, Mr. Kohn said, is action needed to complete the governance structure of the CWPAC pursuant to the By-Laws. The final task in this regard, as discussed at the previous meeting, is to complete formation of the executive committee that leads the organization by establishing the agendas for its meetings and guiding the CWPAC's overall mission.

He recalled that the executive committee comprises nine members: a permanent representative of the City, currently Mr. Kohn; the five largest partners of the system by water volume; a representative of the Northern Region partners served by the Jardine water purification facility; a representative of the Southern Region partners served by the Sawyer water purification facility; and one At-Large representative who is from a community or water system that is not among one of the other committee members.

At this time, he said, the five largest partners by water volume and their representatives have been designated. They are the DuPage Water Commission, represented by Mr. May; Oak Lawn, represented by Mr. Meyer; the Northwest Suburban Municipal Joint Action Water Agency (NSMJAWA), represented by Mr. Kanapareddy; Bedford Park, represented by Mr. Lesniak; and Joliet/Grand Prairie Water Commission, represented by Ms. Swisher.

So, he said, the CWPAC now needs to designate the three remaining executive committee members – the Northern Region, Southern Region, and At-Large representatives. He added that the role of executive committee members, while not particularly time-consuming, is critical to the governance of the CWPAC. He stated that three CWPAC members have expressed their willingness to fill these remaining positions, and that, barring any further nominations from the floor, he would like to present these individuals for approval by the membership.

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Kohn announced the members who've indicated their interest in serving on the executive committee: for Northern Region representative, Mr. Barber from the Broadview-Westchester Joint Water Agency; for Southern Region representative, Mr. Dowling from the Central Stickney Sanitary District; and, for At-Large representative, Ms. Kelly from the Justice-Willow Springs Water Commission.

Mr. Kohn then said he would entertain a motion from the floor to accept and approve these executive committee nominations. **Said motion was made by Mr. Kanapareddy and seconded by Mr. May. Mr. Kohn then asked those in favor to signify by saying "aye" and next asked any opposed to signify by saying "nay." The three nominations were accepted and approved by the unanimous, affirmative voice vote of the members.** Mr. Kohn thanked the three members for serving on the executive committee and the CWPAC members for their support to complete formation of this important committee.

Old Business

None.

New Business

At this time, Mr. Kohn asked if any members of the CWPAC wished to offer additional comments or bring up new business. Hearing none, Mr. Kohn said he wished to review the CWPAC meeting dates proposed for 2025 as listed on the agenda: **March 11, June 17, September 9, and December 9**, all of which are Tuesdays. He said that these dates had been chosen carefully so as to avoid conflicts with the dates of major water industry conferences next year that many CWPAC members will attend.

He asked the members to please note the dates of these quarterly meetings on their calendars, adding that the location of the first 2025 meeting will be shared with the membership as soon as it is confirmed. He concluded by again thanking the Village of Bedford Park and Mayor Brady for hosting today's meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the CWPAC, Mr. Kohn asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Said motion was offered, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.**