

Technical Committee Meeting Minutes
Capital Area Groundwater Conservation Commission
CAGCD Office, 3074 Westfork Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70816
July 18, 2023

I. Call to Order

Tom Seagraves – Capital Area Groundwater Conservation Commission (CAGCC) Technical Committee Chairman

II. Roll Call

Gary Beard – Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District (CAGCD) Executive Director

Members present: Tom Seagraves, Ken Dawson, Lauren Field, Ron Savoy, Rachael Lambert,
Members absent: Jesse Means, Patrick Engemann

III. Establishment of a Quorum

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman

Chairman Seagraves declared a quorum with five members present.

IV. Invocation

Gary Beard – CAGCD Executive Director

V. Pledge of Allegiance

Gary Beard – CAGCD Executive Director

VI. Recognition of Guests

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman

Roy Waguespack – Owen and White; Brett Furr – Taylor Porter/Baton Rouge Water Works; Kristyn Couvillion – Taylor Porter; Catherine Crawford – Boles Law Firm; Max Lindemann – USGS; Matt Reonas – CAGCC Commissioner

VII. Amendments to the Agenda

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman
None.

VIII. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting, November 16, 2022 (action required)

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman

Motion by Mr. Dawson and second by Ms. Lambert to approve the November 16, 2022, minutes as presented. None opposed. Motion passed.

IX. Executive Director's Report

Gary Beard – CAGCD Executive Director

a. **New Well Permit (action required)**

Mr. Beard introduced the new well application.

Max Lindeman simulated the possible impacts of the new well located just east of Exxon, south of the Denham Springs fault. Results are preliminary and are subject to change during the review process. The 2019 model, updated with data through 2021, was used to run two scenarios to year 2050 carrying the 2021 production volumes unchanged into the future. The two scenarios were run in three different strata. Scenario 1 is without the proposed well, while Scenario 2 is with the addition of the proposed well.

Mr. Waggenpack explained the well is to serve as a backup and would be put into production if another well is off to meet public demand or to meet an increase in population.

Mr. Brett Furr interjected stating it boils down to two things: 1) to provide increased capacity but not increased volume and 2) move the centroid of production away from the fault to mitigate the issue of saltwater. Mr. Furr continued by reiterating the well will not increase production volume and stating a little more may be produced occasionally in times of hurricane or during a freeze. He noted that the water would not be wasted. Mr. Furr also commented that the drilling contractor may have already been lost causing an increased cost to the water company while the Commission has slow walked the permit that was submitted in compliance with all applicable rules in place in January when the permit application was submitted. He pontificated on the purpose of the letter drafted by the District's attorneys and signed by Mr. Beard requesting additional information was a retaliation against the water company's refusal to allow Flexim meters to be installed. Mr. Furr stated again the production would not be increased and the delay in approving this application would prevent the water company from meeting water demand during hurricane or freeze and result in a boil advisory. He also pointed out that the water is for drinking and asked what the objection would be for taking water out of the aquifer for drinking.

Tom Seagraves reignited the meeting back asking Max to continue with his presentation.

Max commented on the importance of the assumptions in the simulation. The water quality data for the 2,400-foot sand is poorly documented and therefore, the model doesn't predict the plume very well. The focus was on the drawdown from this well. The drawdown overlays the plume area and when you look how it affects the plume, it shifts it to the east. If it improves on one side, it will shift to the other side. Main take away: the drawdown will affect the plume area.

Chairman Seagraves acknowledged the importance of all information related to the modeling and recognized the difficulty in predicting the future conditions for modeling. He said the takeaway is it will increase the plume and thus the saltwater coming across the boundary. He asked for recommendations for adding a new well without affecting the plume.

Ms. Lambert, Mr. Lindeman and Mr. Waggenpack discussed water quality in different strata.

Mr. Furr said production from the aquifer is down 11,000,000 gallons a year. He revisited the letter from the District and the delay in permitting the well. It was clarified that the decrease in production was due to Georgia Pacific taking several wells offline which were northward away from the fault and far removed from the saltwater intrusion.

Chairman Seagraves asked Mr. Furr repeatedly as did Ms. Lambert if BRWW would give a commitment to not routinely take more water than requested and/or to redistribute the water among the wells. Mr. Furr said the water company would need to meet the needs of the people.

Mr. Furr repeatedly interjected concerning the letter sent by the District; calling it a delay tactic to force metering. He said the CAGCC is way beyond the scope of their authority in not issuing the well permit.

Mr. Beard asked Mr. Waggenspack if it is possible to complete the well at a shallower depth. Mr. Waggenspack responded that the BRWW company was looking to drill a test well to prepare for a group of wells at this site in differing strata. He stated that if the science could determine which sand first, second, third, fourth to take out and minimize impact then BRWW comply.

Mr. Reonas said wouldn't you say that's why it's important to have accurate data. Mr. Waggenspack said yes data helps everyone.

Mr. Beard, Mr. Lindeman, Ms. Lambert, Chairman Seagraves, and Mr. Waggenspack discussed ways to investigate and modify the permit application to find a solution for the well that would not damage the aquifer.

Mr. Furr interjected with the timing of the permit application. He declared the Commission to be acting outside the scope of the rules and the water company should have received the permit approval by now.

Discussion continued on the saltwater intrusion modeling and the use of it in permit reviews. Ms. Lambert said there are rules to be followed when applying for a permit, and if the rules are not known by everyone, it leads to a [law]suit. Mr. Lindeman commented on the use of modeling as a move in the right direction. Mr. Furr said this is for the future.

Chairman Seagraves said this is the first time he has been involved with approval of a permit application where USGS has shown that this is a problem overlapping the plume. So, he asked if there is a suggestion or recommendation to easily shift a parameter that solves this problem until data gets better. He indicated that plan would be through the USGS model.

Mr. Dawson said if we know it could be detrimental in some cases, we as a Commission must act in a way that we can answer when the public asks, "if you knew it was a problem, why did you approve it?" He went on to inquire if the Commission can come up with a decision that satisfies the need without being a detriment to the aquifer. A discussion ensued on permitting a water well from a test hole. Mr. Beard asked for a method for today that would allow the Committee to move forward with the approval.

Discussions continued on water distribution, well costs, and assumptions made as inputs into the model.

Mr. Reonas and Mr. Waggenpack discussed how the water company projects into the future. Mr. Furr said the water company has a comprehensive plan. He stated that the water company looks at various options, but projection is an overstatement. Mr. Waggenpack commented on the aging system and suggested the water company should be adding two wells a year.

Mr. Reonas said the Commission is in a tough situation. The Commission has known about problems for decades and this Commission is now taking a proactive approach. He said if the Commission could get the regulated user community to be more open and transparent it would make it easier to weigh in on decisions like this. He brought up the example of Lula street saying the issue didn't just pop up, it took decades to develop.

Chairman Seagraves said in the past there was no data to work with -now we have data to consider. Ms. Lambert discussed implementation of new criteria needing to be phased in.

Reonas asked if BRWW could work more cooperatively with us in the future. Mr. Furr said they have been an open book. Mr. Reonas disagreed. Mr. Furr again interjected on the metering project and permit approval timeline.

Ms. Lambert said it would be helpful to the Commission if the water company could provide the plan for phasing wells out of production. Mr. Savoy agreed saying having those data points would be helpful for planning.

Mr. Dawson said transparency is necessary. The scathing audit report from the legislative auditor started the Commission down this road. The Commission must consider the modeling results. Now, the Commission has to decide how to move forward.

Mr. Furr stated the water company needs to increase their capacity not their volume. Mr. Seagraves asked if BRWW had plans to increase volume to meet the increasing population. Mr. Furr said the water company volumes will not increase significantly because the volume per capita is decreasing as population increases. Mr. Furr and Chairman Seagraves continued to discuss water volumes.

Mr. Beard, Ms. Lambert and Mr. Waggenpack discussed the drawing revisions.

Mr. Furr interjected; telling Mr. Beard that he does not currently have the authority to put the meters on BRWW wells. If the Commission is allowed to install the meters, the water company will design the wells for the meters.

Chairman Seagraves asked if there was a motion. Mr. Beard said he would like to move this approval to the Board, and he will work with USGS and LSU and run the model at different depths not to affect the plume.

Motion by Ms. Lambert and second by Mr. Dawson to submit the application to the full Board with the additional information from USGS and LSU as to which of the aquifers have less impact on the plume.

No public comment. None opposed. Motion passed.

Mr. Waggenpack expressed concern that the Board approves a stratum that the water company has not contracted. Mr. Reonas said the Commission has a job to do and expressed a feeling of being strong-armed. Mr. Reonas said the Commission sat around for years and now is trying to act. He requested the water company to be more transparent.

Mr. Waggenpack asked for a guideline for permit approval.

Chairman Seagraves said Commissioners cannot turn a blind eye. The whole metering program is about getting information to make good decisions.

b. New application forms

Mr. Beard said he and Kellie have worked on the application and would like the Committee to review.

Lambert asked about rules regarding the change of ownership.

Mr. Beard asked the Committee to make comments and suggestions so that changes or additions can be made.

Mr. Reonas suggested gathering input from users. Ms. Lambert suggested gathering input from other engineers. Mr. Beard agreed.

X. Chairman's Report

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman
The Chairman had nothing additional to report.

XI. Member Agenda Items

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman
No member agenda items.

XII. Old Business

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman
No old business.

XIII. New Business

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman
No new business.

XIV. Commissioner Comments

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman
No Commissioner comments.

XV. Announcements

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman
No announcements.

XVI. Public Comment (Non-action items only)

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman
No public comment.

XVII. Adjournment – (action required)

Tom Seagraves – CAGCC Technical Committee Chairman
Motion by Mr. Savoy and second by Mr. Dawson to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned.