



Longview Drinking Water Improvement Study
Customer Advisory Committee Meeting #4

Meeting Summary

Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2015
Location: Longview City Hall, Training Room
Time: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

In Attendance

CAC Members Present

Bill Beltz
Mark Bergeson
Raymond Colwell
Philip Dennis
Dave Hooper
Rich Kirkpatrick
Patrick McCoey

Amber Olson
Stephanie Owens
Dave Quinn
Vincent Scalesse
Preston Worth
Ken Botero, City Council Liaison
Bonnie Decius, BHWSO Liaison

CAC Members Absent

Orranda Chamberlain
Alissa Lee

Staff and Consultants

Jeff Cameron, City of Longview
Amy Blain, City of Longview
Jeff Coleman, City of Longview

Dale Jutila, CH2MHILL
Brad Phelps, CH2MHILL
Adrienne DeDona, JLA Public Involvement
Jamie Harvie, JLA Public Involvement

Members of the Public

Andy Busack, former Council member
Leeann Colwell, homeowner
Joanne Goff, homeowner
Tracy Goldsmith, homeowner
Alan Farland, homeowner
Jim Fisher, Fisher & Assoc
Dan Johnson, homeowner
Ron & Joni Jones, homeowners
Jim & Loreen Goodwin, homeowners
Gin Matthews, resident
Dave Millard, homeowner
Rick Olson, homeowner
Stephen Powell, homeowner

Overview Summary

- The CAC reviewed the results of the community survey, discussed and began rating the values and evaluation criteria, and heard public comment.
 - “Impression of” will be removed from in front of “purity and cleanliness” in the final Customer Perception criteria
 - Two criteria – effect on property values and potential future legal costs – will be added to the Cost category.
 - It was determined that the CAC would rate the full list of criteria individually prior to the next meeting. The full results of the group’s work will be presented at the meeting in April.
- The next CAC meeting will be held on April 14 at 6:30 p.m. The CAC will continue their discussion on the evaluation criteria, hear the results of the stakeholder interviews and begin to evaluate groups of options if time allows.

Parking Lot Items

- Request for water taste test

Information Requests

- Community Survey responses shown by geographical area
- Compare CAC ratings of the criteria (still to be completed) with the community’s ratings.

Welcome, Introductions, Review Agenda

Adrienne DeDona, JLA Public Involvement, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced herself. She noted that microphones will be used at this meeting to help the audience hear.

Staff and committee members introduced themselves.

Adrienne reviewed the agenda. She noted that 20 minutes would be set aside for public comment, which was scheduled to take place before the conclusion of the committee discussion on the evaluation criteria.

Adrienne said that the project team had been receiving a lot of information requests from committee members and explained the project team’s process for addressing them. Adrienne has received the requests, compiled responses with the help of City staff and the technical consultants, and sent replies out to the entire committee.

Adrienne noted that one of the committee members had suggested conducting a taste test of the water. She explained that this is an option for the CAC to consider pursuing as they look at the different options. It was put into the parking lot for later consideration.

A committee member asked for an update on the work being done by the well water optimization team. Amy Blain, City of Longview, said that the team had started sampling two weeks ago to see if the City would be able to do anything differently that would affect taste concerns. She is waiting on the results of lab work; once she has enough data to provide an update, she will do so.

A committee member said she has enjoyed reading the responses to the information requests from other members of the CAC. She said when the time comes she would like to know how that information has informed others’ thinking related to decision-making.

Meeting #3 Summary

There were no comments on the meeting 3 summary; it was approved.

Evaluation Criteria Community Survey

Adrienne noted that she had sent a preliminary report on the community survey to the committee members last week, which included about 700 responses. By the time the survey closed on Sunday, March 15, there ended up being about 1000 responses.

Adrienne provided an overview summary of the survey. She noted this was not a statistically-valid survey like the one completed last October. It was possible for a person to take the survey more than once. The purpose of the survey was to allow the community to weigh in on the evaluation criteria to help inform the committee’s discussion on refining and weighting the criteria.

Adrienne explained the CAC's packets included an initial summary report, a map of respondent's addresses, and a full list of open-ended responses (see attachments). She said that some CAC members had expressed interest in hearing what kinds of comments the City has been receiving from water customers – and the open-ended responses are a good resource for this type of information.

Adrienne reviewed the summary report. She noted that most people found the criteria to be complete and that the open-ended responses did not include suggestions for any specific additional criteria. Dale Jutila, CH2MHILL, presented a chart showing the importance ratings for each of the criteria from the community survey. He noted that the criteria in the Customer Perspectives category were rated very important more so than the criteria in the Technical Feasibility/Long-term Sustainability and Cost categories.

Adrienne provided a brief summary of the open-ended responses, which she categorized in the following areas: solutions, concerns, cost implications and communications (see attached for more detail).

Adrienne presented a map showing the locations of survey respondent addresses. Over 90 percent of respondents provided an address and there was a very good distribution around the service area.

- A committee member asked whether Coal Creek Road is part of the City/BHWSO water system. Adrienne replied that it is.
- One committee member said that reading the survey comments altered his perception of the problem. From discussion during previous meetings, he thought that odor and color issues had been mainly taken care of but, on the contrary, the survey responses show that this is still a very current problem. Adrienne noted that this can be seen in the survey results – that taste and smell rank very high, just as much as spotting/residue. She said that a lot of the open-ended responses about taste and smell had to do with chlorine, however there were other taste and smell issues.

Stakeholder Interviews

Adrienne said she had contacted roughly a dozen people who were recommended for stakeholder interviews. She had completed six interviews and has one more scheduled. The others had not replied, though she would continue to reach out to them. Of the people Adrienne had spoken to, everyone thought the values and criteria were quite complete and no one had offered any additional criteria. Adrienne said she would provide a complete report of interviews at the next CAC meeting.

- A committee member asked whether Adrienne has interviewed anyone at the hospital. Adrienne said they had not replied to her. The committee member will send an additional contact.

Values and Criteria Evaluation

Dale Jutila reviewed the updated initial draft list of water supply options and groupings. He explained that an aqueduct has been added as an additional option under the surface water category. He also said that two additional Mint Farm well field options have been added, including looking for strata layers with lower silica content and using scavenger wells at Mint Farm.

Dale presented a process diagram, which he said the team had developed to help address questions about how the evaluation process will be completed. He noted that the current meeting would focus on prioritizing the values and criteria, which would be used at later meetings to help the committee consider the options, first in groups and then narrowing individual options, and ultimately arrive at recommendations to the City Council and BHWSO Board.

Discussion on Values and Evaluation Criteria:

- One committee member said that the second key value category should be divided into two – that Technically Feasible and Long-term Viability were two separate ideas. Dale explained that the category had come from the “sustainable” element of the CAC vision and reviewed the criteria under this value, noting that most of them generally fall under the technical aspects of the project.
 - The committee discussed this topic. One committee member said that these two values need to be linked, because while something may be technically feasible, it should not be considered if not sustainable in the long-term. Another committee member felt the key value itself was not very important; however the criteria underneath were much more important.
- A committee member suggested adding a criterion about addressing the original source of the problem. He noted that if the water quality problems stemmed from the piping, then the committee should not consider changing the source. He wanted to make sure the committee focused on solutions that would solve the cause of the problems.
- A committee member noted that replacing pipes was one of the options, however it might not belong on the solutions list because replacing pipes would be completed as part of the City's ongoing capital improvement projects. Amy Blain confirmed that the City had an annual plan for water main replacements, however if replacement needed to be done at a more global scale, it would require additional budget.
- One committee member asked whether water lines would be replaced with the same size pipe. Amy replied that pipes would be upsized or downsized where needed.

- A committee member asked when the committee would consider the affordability of the solutions. Dale replied that the cost-related criteria will help the CAC consider this and noted that the cost-related criteria, especially the indirect customer costs, were rated quite important in the customer survey. He continued on to say that the project team will provide preliminary cost information when the CAC considers the groups of options and also plans to provide estimated impacts on rates by the time the CAC considers individual options.
- One committee member commented that the problem must be within the distribution system because some customers have problems, such as spotting, and others do not. He said that the water coming out of the well head would probably not damage appliances. He reiterated concern that the CAC may end up solving the wrong problem.
- A committee member asked whether responses to the survey have been broken down by location, saying that this could provide information on areas where people are having water quality issues. Several committee members agreed that this would be helpful. The project team said they would work on providing a report showing responses by geographical area.
- One committee member asked whether some problems came from rust and iron caused by reverse flow from the wells. Amy Blain replied that there were some places in town that have historically had problems with water quality. The iron problems they were seeing after the switch came from dislodgement of build-up in the pipes after the flow was reversed and from water spending more time in the pipes dissolving the iron build-up.
- The committee member followed up by asking whether spotting and silica have only appeared since switching to the wells. Amy confirmed that the previous surface water had some silica in it, but not at a level noticeable to customers.
- The committee member asked whether chlorination had increased since switching to the wells. Amy said yes, that chlorination was increased slightly in order to reduce problems with iron and manganese.
- Another committee member commented that none of the problems that are occurring now were noticeable until the water source changed. She agreed that committee should not focus on the wrong problem, however she had come to believe that one of the main problems was the water source, which may also amplify the potential for problems in the distribution system.

Adrienne told the committee their concern for not focusing on the wrong problem is well founded and noted that the types of water quality issues each potential option will resolve will be discussed further during the evaluation of alternatives. She refocused the group on the discussion of developing a working list of evaluation criteria.

Dale led the committee in an exercise to identify the relative importance of the three key values. It was decided that the two jurisdictional liaisons on the committee would also participate in the exercise, since no decision would result. The results of the exercise were:

- Technical Feasibility/Long-term Sustainability (average score/importance of 39)
- Customer Perception (average score/importance of 33)
- Cost and Affordability (average score/importance of 28)

Discussion

- One committee member asked whether the individual criteria within the category would be equally weighted. Dale said no, that each criterion would also be prioritized, but this exercise is a preliminary way of gauging importance.
- Committee members indicated that these results generally match how they voted individually.
 - One committee member said that he would have rated the Customer Perspectives lower because they were different for everyone, while the technical issues were universal for everyone. He said he could support the numbers listed because they are just a guide and not resulting in final decisions.
- One committee member said he found it difficult to rate the three categories because he felt that they should be organized differently. He said that the indirect cost to consumers should be included with Customer Perspectives. Impacts on rates should be included in the second category regarding technical issues.
 - A committee member noted that silica issues are featured twice, once under Customer Perspectives, which focuses around personal frustration, and once under Cost.
 - Another committee member said these criteria were fine under the current categories. He said he considers it different levels; if water quality is so bad it creates an economic problem, it advances to the third category.
- A committee member said that any water that would ruin an appliance would probably not meet federal standards, whereas the Longview water met all standards.
 - Dale noted that one of the underpinnings of the study was that Longview water was regularly tested and met all water quality standards.

- Another committee member noted that the regulatory standards are met at the point the water is tested or enters the distribution system; not at the tap and there are a lot of differences within the system.
- One committee member said that “Impression of” should be removed from the “purity and cleanliness” criteria in the Customer Perception category because the committee knew that the water was treated to federal standards but that a problem still existed.
 - The committee generally supported this suggestion; this change will be made.
 - The committee discussed whether to also remove the phrase “keep in mind that all drinking water is treated to meet all state and federal standards for water quality” from this bullet. It was decided this would remain.
- A committee member said that dividing the criteria into three key values rather than two diminishes the importance of the Customer Perception category. He also suggested that the indirect cost to customers would be difficult to quantify and figuring this out could open the City up for legal liability.
 - Another committee member said that getting rid of the third category would remove any consideration of cost.
- One committee member said the reason why the technical considerations scored so highly was that technical issues must be considered; they were givens. Rather than technical concerns, the CAC should instead focus on the criteria in the first and third categories.
 - Dale responded that the criteria were intended to help the CAC differentiate between one option over another. Yes, the Council and Board would make the final decision and would consider technical information, but it was important that the CAC also be aware of the technical considerations.
 - The committee member said he hopes the CAC would always consider technical requirements, but needed to focus on other criteria that they may not otherwise have had information about.
- One committee member said he was concerned about contamination down the road and suggested adding a criterion regarding this. Another committee member noted that this was addressed under two separate criteria: “purity/cleanliness” and “reliability”. A committee member suggested that these two be combined. Dale noted that one had to do with a technical evaluation and one with customer perception. The committee member said that contamination was not a matter of opinion.
- One committee member said that she thinks that some of the criteria under Customers Perspectives were more important than others; for example, smell/taste were less important than health concerns.
- A committee member said the need to consider current and future contamination should be included in the reliability criteria.
- A committee member said that the results of the ratings exercise showed that nothing that was overwhelmingly important; each key value or category was fairly equally important.

Adrienne noted they had exceeded the allotted time for this discussion on the agenda. It was decided to take public comment before continuing the discussion.

Public Comment

Alan Farland said that he thinks the water quality problem originated with the source. He said they didn’t have the current concerns before switching and he doesn’t hear these concerns coming from Kelso or Castle Rock. He said he hasn’t heard where water comes from that feeds the well. He said that one person at the water department said it was from the lower Columbia River, which was not cleaner and had more problems than the Cowlitz River. He read in the paper that 80% of people in town do not like the current water, which was going to be an ongoing issue. He said that reelection of City Council could be affected depending on their stance on this issue. He said that the water problems not only ruined appliances but also cars, which were customer costs. He said Reynolds had to turn off the car wash because it was damaging the cars.

Jim Fisher said he would endorse the CAC combining the criteria into two categories (Customer Perception and Technical considerations). He thought that risk of toxics should be included as a separate criterion or that it should be clarified that toxic contamination was a concern under reliability. He suggested that decreased property values should be included as a criterion.

Steve Powell said he thought it unlikely that the CAC would recommend something that is technically unfeasible and that City Council certainly would not approve a project that is not technically feasible. He said it follows that, ultimately, they would have to weigh costs and benefits, which really have to do with categories 1 and 3. He said that switching to an improved system would lead to fewer indirect costs and the benefit of improved water quality and health benefits. He said these benefits would have to be weighed against the cost to ratepayers. He said he would not assume that the status quo was the cheapest option if indirect costs were considered and that going to an improved system may actually be cheaper when these costs were considered.

Dave Millard said that in 1985, Longview had the opportunity to join with Castle Rock's water system but Longview City Council refused. He said they had also received FEMA money during that time period but did not use it improve the water system. He asked why they couldn't go back to the Cowlitz River like Kelso and whether there were regulations prohibiting this.

Tracy Goldsmith said she heard that the life for the Mint Farm wells was 20 years and asked what the plan for the water supply was after that. She thought they needed to go to a Ranney system at Fishers Lane.

Dan Johnson said his issue is that the silica level is much higher than before the switch and that the levels could go higher. He had to completely remodel their house due to damage from the water, including replacing the sink, toilets, windows, truck, etc. He said it shouldn't be like this.

Craig Dickenson said that he had told the City that Reynolds water filters would get full of sludge and that contamination would be a problem before the switch and the City they did not listen. He said that tests would show that the wells had the same contamination as in the Columbia River. He said that the wells should be placed at the banks of the Cowlitz River and the Mint Farm wells could be used as a back-up when the Cowlitz couldn't be used. He said a new jetty system would reduce sediment. He said they know for sure that the Cowlitz had good water. He added that the CAC should consider potential legal costs from citizens regarding costs borne by citizens and health concerns due to the water quality.

Gin Matthews thanked the committee for their efforts. She said that the number of the responses to the survey was very high and the outreach effort is to be commended. She said she was happy to hear people concede that the number one issue is people's health concerns. She said that these concerns were previously dismissed by the City Council and City staff. Initially, the comments were considered inappropriate and radical. As recently as the last two months, the Daily News article quoted a city official as saying there was a psychological element to people experiencing such different water qualities. She told the committee to keep up the good work.

Edward Silvery said the main concern should be how much it would cost to fix the problem. He said he remembers the high quality water from the Cowlitz River and that the switch must be the cause of the problem if the water quality was fine before. He said they knew what the problem was and would like to see the solution reached quickly.

Joann Goff said the water was unfit to drink and they weren't able to use it for most home uses, including washing the car and watering their dog. They had to use bottled water to brush teeth and make coffee. She said the water was ruining things in her home, including cars and counter-top finishes. She said it made her skin itch and that soap wouldn't lather. She said she felt that the process had too many cooks in the kitchen and that she wondered why they couldn't go back to the Cowlitz River and use the infrastructure already there. She said there needed to be more transparency about what they were going to do. She said she was scared of toxins in the wells. She said she is at the point of using bottled water for everything because she is scared to use it.

Loreen Goodwin said she did not like the water and that it damages everything it touched. She said that key value #1 was too dismissive because the issues the community was experiencing were a "customer reality" not a "customer perception". She said she had black crud in their pipes that is causing diminished water flow. Based on the damage to her appliances, she wondered what was happening to the pipes on their property and whether their property value was being damaged. She said their house is only 20 years old and did not have these problems before the water change. She said she could not get things clean at home due to the water. She said it is serious and more than a perception.

One written public comment was provided, which was presented by a committee member (attached to end of summary).

Values and Criteria Evaluation – Continued

Adrienne noted that they had reached the allotted meeting time and asked the committee whether they wanted to take additional time tonight to further discuss the criteria or to discuss at the next meeting.

- One committee member felt that he needed time to digest the information and would like to pick the discussion up at the next meeting.
- A committee member suggested adding two criteria around decreased property values and potential future legal costs. The CAC supported this suggestion; these criteria will be added.
- One committee member said that he thought each category should have the same number of criteria to make sure each criterion has the same weight. Another committee member said that trying to add criteria to make the categories balance wouldn't matter.
- A woman in the audience interjected that she doesn't see "customer satisfaction" in the criteria. A committee member responded that "customer perception" may sound flippant, but that was not the intention of the committee. In total, the criteria are intended to address customer satisfaction with the water.
- One committee member suggested they should rate each criterion individually and disregard the categories. The CAC supported this approach. Adrienne said this could be done in between meetings by sending a poll out to the CAC members; the project team would present the results at the next meeting and the CAC could discuss from there.

- A committee member requested to see a comparison of how the CAC ratings of the criteria compare to the community's ratings.
- One committee member asked if they could assign all of their votes to one criterion. The project team said they could do this if they chose.
- The CAC discussed and decided to add effect on home values and potential legal costs to the criteria under the cost category.

Next Steps

Adrienne reminded the committee that April 14 is the next meeting date. The topics for the April meeting are:

- Report out on the results of the stakeholder interviews
- Report out on the results of the evaluation criteria prioritization by the CAC
- Begin to evaluate groups of options.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40 p.m.

TOTAL DISSOLVED SOLIDS IN LOCAL WATER

1. Longview city water...0.25 grams/liter
2. Kelso city water....0.05 grams/liter
3. Kalama city water.....0.05 grams/liter

Therefore, the Longview city water has five times the amount of total dissolved solids as the neighboring cities.

Silicon Dioxide (quartz) is insoluble in water. All of the silicates are insoluble except the alkali metal silicas (sodium silicate). Sodium silicate is produced by dissolving silica in molten lye – not what is in our water.

I've found that part of the white deposits are soluble in hydrochloric acid. My guess is that is either calcium carbonate or calcium sulfate. The local paper mills spewed these chemicals out their smokestacks for 50 years.

JIM GOODWIN
(FIBRE CHEM ENGR)