

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WELLS AND BORINGS

Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, December 8, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Daniel England
David Kill
Jordan Mayer
Roger Renner
Mark Thein
Bruce Johnson
Annie Felix-Gerth
Kelly Gribauval-Hite
Michael Liljegren
Richard Lamb
Steve Robertson
Steven Traut
Joseph Stevens
Troy Kuck
Michael Steffl
David Duffey

Others Present

Dave Schulenberg
Kara Dennis
Justine Greene
Jennifer Weier
Sue Lang
Brooke Lund
Corrie Floyd
Robyn Hetland
Emily Berquist
Dan Miller
Tom Hovey

Members Absent

Daniel Gibbs

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by the Chairman of the Council, Roger Renner.

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF December 8, 2021, MEETING AGENDA

Joseph Stevens made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. The meeting agenda was approved with no suggested additions.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF September 1, 2021, MEETING MINUTES

Kelly Gribauval-Hite made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mark Thein seconded that motion. The meeting minutes were approved with no suggested additions.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS – Kara Dennis

Continuing Education/2022 License Renewal (Online CEUs and Record Submittal)

As a part of the new license renewal process change for 2022 renewal, a list of missing/late records will not be provided at the time of license renewal. Licensed companies will be required to self-report if all their records have been submitted to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). A memo went out to licensed well contractors on October 21, 2021, with this announcement. MDH will still follow-up on late/missing records. The Advisory Council also discussed potential ideas for 2023 license renewal.

5. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF THE MOUNT SIMON AQUIFER – Dan Miller

Dan Miller, a Water Use Consultant in the Ecological and Water Resources Division in the Minnesota DNR, provided a presentation on changes regarding [Minnesota Statutes, section 103G.271, subdivision 4 \(a\) \(www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/103G.271\)](http://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/103G.271) and the use of the Mount Simon-Hinckley aquifer. The previous statute language limited the use of the Mount Simon-Hinckley aquifer in the Twin Cities Metro (seven-county metro area), but the 2021 statute changes broadened the restrictions on the use of the Mount Simon-Hinckley aquifer to statewide. Existing wells constructed into the Mount Simon-Hinckley aquifer outside of the Twin Cities Metro area are not required to be sealed, but any future water appropriations permits for the Mount Simon-Hinckley aquifer will be for potable use unless there are no feasible or practical alternatives. New wells constructed into the Mount Simon-Hinckley aquifer will be limited to potable use.

6. CLEAN WATER FUND UPDATE – Emily Berquist

Emily Berquist, hydrologist at MDH, provided an overview of the two Safe Drinking Water for Private Well Users Grants issued from the Clean Water Fund during the previous biennium. MDH received Clean Water Funds to pilot two grants to provide financial assistance for water testing and water treatment for private wells. The first category was Arsenic in Private Wells, and the second category was Nitrate in Private Wells in Minnesota’s Karts Area.

Horizon Public Health was issued \$100,000.00 to promote private well testing for arsenic in Grant, Stevens, and Traverse Counties. Horizon Public Health contacted with RMB Environmental Laboratories to provide water test kits and analysis. They also provided brochures and communication materials to advertise the program. Horizon has a contract Culligan to install reverse osmosis treatment systems for eligible applicants with elevated arsenic, along with maintenance support for a year. Horizon identified programs that assist families that are low-income, and applicants need to show proof of enrollment in a financial assistance program to qualify. The grant period goes from January 12, 2021 – December 31, 2022.

Olmsted Soil and Water Conservation District was issued \$100,000.00 for monitoring and testing private wells for nitrate in six-County Partnership in Southeast Minnesota. This grant will also help Olmsted Soil and Water Conservation District provide technical assistance and financial support for water treatment systems to treat elevated nitrate concentrations. Eligible applicants with elevated nitrate can apply for financial assistance for water treatment, constructing a new well, or repair and reconstruction. Applicants need to show proof of enrollment in one financial assistance program to qualify for financial assistance for water treatment. They are also providing a cost share assistance for applicants that do not meet the requirements in the financial assistance program. The grant period goes from March 2, 2021 – December 31, 2022.

7. DISCUSSION ON ONLINE CEUS AND MDH AGENCY POLICY REGARDING IN-PERSON MEETINGS

MDH were directed to not attend in-person meeting events by agency leadership, so MDH staff will not be attending in-person meetings, including the Minnesota Well Water Association annual meeting in January 2022. MDH-presented CEUs will be provided online for 2022 license renewal. Frustration over this decision was voiced during the discussion.

8. DROUGHT DISCUSSION: WAS YOUR WORK IMPACTED BY DROUGHT CONDITIONS?

MDH received a few media requests during the summer of 2021 asking how the drought was impacting the well drilling industry. This led to a conversation about the labor shortage in the industry.

9. ADJOURN

David Kill made a motion to adjourn. Mark Thein seconded that motion. The meeting was concluded at 11:58 a.m. by the Chairman of the Council, Roger Renner.