

**SACWSD – Water Hardness Advisory Committee (HAC)  
December 5, 2017**

Members of the South Adams County Water and Sanitation District (SACWSD) Water Hardness Advisory Committee (HAC) convened for their seventh and final meeting to learn about the public meeting comments (meeting summary of notes taken, and personal observations from meetings on November 28 and 29) and build agreement on a recommendation to the SACWSD Board. (*See appendix A for a list of attendees and appendix B for the agenda*).

**I. Public Comment**

*The beginning of the meeting was for any public in attendance to comment briefly. The one public observer chose not to speak.*

**II. Public Meeting Observations from HAC Members in Attendance**

HAC members who attended one or both public meetings (Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> in the south, Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> in the north) provided the following observations:

- The south meeting (Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>) had an older group of participants. Many said the water was fine [as-is] and they had been drinking it for years, yet later in discussions it became clear few were actually drinking it – most said they had an in-home softener or bought bottled water.
- The north meeting (Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>) had a younger group of participants. Many were at the meeting to gather more information about hardness and possible solutions before making a decision about how they would address it personally.
- Not sure participants really understood the issue, and some conversations [small groups], may have confused things further.
- The biggest concern mentioned for a central treatment option was the impact on fixed-and/or low-income customers.
- Another concern was the investment already made by those who installed an in-home softening and/or filtering system.
- One participant at the southern meeting came in against a central treatment option, but through the small group discussion learned more and supported the need for central treatment for the benefit of all (although they had an in-home system).
- On both nights, those who liked/wanted a central treatment option were quieter until asked about their preference. The most vocal/talkative participants were those against central treatment; these participants were also most apt to offer their perspective more frequently.
- Participants opposed to central treatment, most often, had invested in their own in-home systems (some invested a lot of money and/or time researching the best system for their needs).
- Participants opposed to central treatment suggested that if there was a rate increase for central treatment they receive a rebate or waiver from SACWSD for money already spent on an in-home system. Others in the group responded by asking why District customers should pay for a home owner's own decision.
- Another suggestion from those who opposed the central treatment option was to wait and increase rates to manage the waste treatment once growth and additional in-home

systems became a problem for waste treatment permits [Note: It was communicated on the meetings that a significant increase of in-home systems' discharge will impact the District's ability to meet waste treatment discharge permits].

- All participants learned a lot from the presentation and small group discussions.
- The biggest concern was the impact of a rate increase on fixed- and/or low-income customers.

### III. What is the HAC recommendation to address water hardness, and balance all HAC criteria?

HAC participants provided what they believe the HAC should recommend. There was consensus:

**AGREEMENT:** HAC recommends the pellet softening central treatment option.

### IV. Develop/Refine Recommendation Language

HAC members refined draft recommendation language in the HAC Recommendation Report. The following is the final language agreed to by the HAC, with some small additions provided following the meeting via email:

#### **AGREEMENT:**

The HAC recommends SACWSD implement a pellet softening central treatment system. The pellet treatment was the best balance of the HAC criteria. In particular:

- Improves water quality
  - Reduces hardness – meets the goal of 115 mg/l (200+ mg/l lower than currently).
  - Reduces minerals that impact taste – it is industry accepted that lowering mineral content results in better tasting water.
  - Reduces the rate of scaling due to reduction in calcium carbonates.
  - Reduces minerals that contribute to skin irritation.
- Manages costs to residents
  - It is only a moderate increase compared to any other central treatment option.
  - Will likely decrease DIY costs for residents: increase appliance life; decrease bottle water and/or in-home systems needs/costs.
  - The monthly rate increase may be difficult for some residents on a fixed/low income, but the \$11-14 monthly increase is within range of what a majority of the survey respondents said they would be willing to pay for improved water (57%).
- Most sustainable option - Current system is not sustainable long-term, with population

growth more residents will install in-home systems that will result in additional chloride and TDS levels at the waste water treatment plant, making it difficult or financially infeasible to meet permitting requirements.

- Minimizes environmental impacts - waste byproduct is the least difficult to dispose and the waste may be marketable to offset operation and maintenance costs.
- Provides a community wide benefit.

Although the HAC want SACWSD to explore possible options to alleviate the impact of a rate increase on fixed and/or low income customers, the HAC recognized that their task was about addressing hardness only and removed the suggestion from their report.

#### **V. How to provide and present HAC recommendation to the SACWSD Board**

The HAC Recommendation Report will be finalized (comments by 2pm tomorrow) and emailed to Jim Jones by 3pm December 7<sup>th</sup> to be included in board meeting packets.

The HAC agreed to have Steve Erwin be the main spokesperson for the group at the December 13<sup>th</sup> SACWSD Board meeting. The rest of the HAC (as many as can attend) will stand with Steve provide additional information and perspectives to Board questions.

#### **VI. Next Steps**

- **This evening** – Jody Erikson/facilitator will send the revised final recommendation report for HAC for final comments and/or edits.
- **Tomorrow, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2:00pm** – HAC will send Jody edits to the final Recommendation Report. Jody will then send the final Report to Jim Jones by 3:00pm.
- **Dec 13<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm, SACWSD Board meeting** – The HAC recommendation agenda item will be early in the meeting, followed by public comment specifically on hardness. The Board is expected to make a decision the same night.

## **APPENDIX A: Attendance**

### **HAC Members Present:**

- Brett Burrough, Business-North
- Danny Thomas, Resident-South
- Elaine Hassinger, Tri-County Health
- Glenn Murray, Resident-North
- Jack Hagaman, Business
- Jessica Monahan, Resident-North
- Jim Jones, District General Manager
- Robyn Jeffords, Resident-North
- Steven Erwin, Resident-North
- Tina Dorf, Business

*Missing:* Pamela Sprattler, Resident-South; Tillie Villarreal, Resident-South; William Frew, Business-North; Jenny Axmacher, Commerce City; Kelly Tannenbaum, north resident (recently moved out of the District)

### **Observers:**

- Betty Thomas, Resident

### **Staff & Consultants:**

- Kipp Scott, SACWSD, Water Systems Manager
- Byron Jefferson, SACWSD, Administrative Services Manager
- Theresa DeMouy, SACWSD
- Greg Chol, SACWSD
- Vincent Hart, Carollo Engineers, Inc.
- Phil Michael, Alliance Power
- Jim Michael, Alliance Power
- Jody Erikson, JSE Associates (Facilitator)

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## **APPENDIX B: Agenda - SACWSD – Water Hardness Advisory Committee (HAC)** **December 5, 2017**

**Objective:** Build agreement on a recommendation, and recommendation language

**6:15 Welcome & Introductions**

**6:20 Public Comment** – *depending on how many attend, 3-5 min each*

**6:35 Discussion to Build Agreement: What is the HAC recommendation to address water hardness, and balance all HAC criteria?**

**7:45 Possible language for the Recommendation Report**

**8:10 How to provide and present HAC recommendation to the SACWSD Board**

- Who/How will the HAC provide the Recommendation Report to the SACWSD Board?
- Who/How will the HAC present their recommendation at the Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> Board meeting?

**8:25 Next Steps - Dec 13, - SACWSD Board meeting:** review the HAC recommendation, public comments, and approve 2018 budget (with or without an option to address water hardness)

**8:30 Adjourn**

**INTEREST/CRITERIA LIST**  
**SACWSD – Hardness Advisory Committee**

Any solution must balance (address to the extent possible) the following criteria:

- ❖ Address water hardness in the district
- ❖ Equitable – good for all, fair
- ❖ Manage costs to rate payers (costs to consumers via rates)
- ❖ Protect the environment (decrease impacts)
- ❖ Diminish costs to consumers for doing it themselves (DIY)
  - Costs for customers to treat water themselves
  - Cost from impacts of deposits (e.g., appliance replacement & fixing, pipes etc.)
- ❖ Provide good tasting/drinkable water
- ❖ Minimize negative impacts to human skin
- ❖ Be affordable to scale for growth
- ❖ Protect or improve property value for resale
- ❖ Ensure stable water source
- ❖ Explainable (added 5/2/17)
- ❖ Legal (added 5/2/17)

*Originally generated: March 7, 2017 HAC meeting  
Approved: April 4, 2017 \_\_ Revised: May 2, 2017*