



JOINT BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

9:00 AM

Virtually in Zoom

MINUTES

Members Present Mayor MacDonald (Vice-chair); Deputy Mayor Verbeke, Councillors Dunn, Hammond, Tiessen - Leamington
Mayor Santos (Chair), Deputy Mayor Queen, Councillor DeYong, Patterson - Kingsville
Councillor VanderDoelen - Essex
Councillor Walstedt - Lakeshore

Members Absent Councillor Jones - Leamington

Also in Attendance: Rodney Bouchard, Union Water Supply System Manager
Khristine Johnson, Recording Secretary

Municipal Staff Present: Kevin Girard, Andy Graf - Town of Essex
Andrew Plancke - Town of Kingsville
Albert Dionne - Municipality of Lakeshore
Laura Rauch, Shannon Belleau - Municipality of Leamington

OCWA Staff Present: Robin Trepanier

Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers Rob Petro
Joseph Sbrocchi

Call to Order: 9:00 am

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest:

Councillor Jones (Leamington) sited conflict of interest pertaining to the discussion on greenhouses and therefore would not be attending today's meeting.

Adoption of Board Minutes:

No. UW-11-22

Moved by: Councillor Dunn

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor

That the Minutes of the UWSS Joint Board of Management meeting of Wednesday, February 16, 2022 is received.

Carried

Business Arising out of Minutes:

There was none

The Chair notes that there is an amendment to the agenda and that a delegation from the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) will be in attendance to make a short presentation as well as answer a few questions pertaining the current moratorium in place regarding large service applications. In attendance is Rob Petro and Joseph Sbrocchi.

Mr. Sbrocchi speaks to members of the board indicating that OGVG realizes that greenhouse growers are a significant part of the UWSS. They have all demonstrated that they have been able to marshal their members in the past to help reduce peak stress during the Spring of 2021.

Mr. Petro then goes through his presentation. He notes that over the years the greenhouse industry has had sustained growth and the UWSS has not realized the same growth. He then presented some water usage numbers for the period of May 2021, during which time the UWSS was still only operating at 75% capacity due to maintenance activities, and the temperatures had risen quite dramatically. He further notes that following as a result of a conversation with UWSS General Manager, OGVG reached out to their members to shift some of their water draws in order to assist the UWSS.

Mr. Petro discusses the possibility of greenhouses shifting to more “shoulder” (fall and winter) growing seasons, which would allow water usage during low season at the UWSS. He notes that at this time the UWSS has one clarifier down and may again run into a similar situation as 2021. He further notes that the greenhouse industry benefits the entire community. He also indicates there is opportunity for everyone to benefit from using water in a better way through conservation programs, such as time shifting, etc., in order to lower the peaks at the water treatment plant.

Mayor MacDonald asks if OGVG is aware of what kind of acreage of new greenhouses is expected in the coming year. Mr. Petro notes that planning is at the municipal level, but many greenhouse members have been forced to find their own water (at their expense) either through wells, or even the LADIA line.

Mayor MacDonald asks the Manager if all of the greenhouse applications have been built. The Manager feels there is potentially another 50-75 acres that are in the process of being built that are still to come online. These are the greenhouses that were approved prior to the moratorium. The UWSS does not have any more applications in the queue.

Shannon Belleau, Leamington, notes that there should also be consideration given to the distribution infrastructure. She reminds members that any additional greenhouses have to be added to the model to determine impact on the distribution side.

Mr. Sbrocchi indicates that a lot of greenhouses that are “lit” are pulling water in the winter months and not pulling as much water in the summer months. He is hoping there are better ways of thinking about using water more efficiently.

Councillor Tiessen asks OGVG if there are actually some greenhouses that are sitting empty in the summer. Mr. Petro notes that he is not specifically aware, what he is saying is that a blanket moratorium ignores when there is capacity available. He further explains that summer water use seems to be the restriction. Further OGVG does not tell greenhouse operations house to conduct their business.

Councillor DeYong asks OGVG their need of treated water vs non-treated water. Musing that perhaps greenhouses could find an alternative source of non-treated water. OGVG notes that some greenhouses don’t use treated, but they don’t speak to floral or cannabis. Mr. Petro notes that greenhouses would require some treated water for sure and further notes that they are hoping to use the UWSS even in off peak months, which he feels will allow more flexibility within the greenhouse industry.

Deputy Mayor Queen, but he recalls Kingsville allowing a greenhouse to be built during the moratorium. Andrew Plancke (Kingsville) notes that Leamington has installed smart meters for their water usage and also that Kingsville is not as far along as Leamington in terms of smart meters. Kingsville can look at meter records but does not yet have real-time capabilities such as the Leamington system. He also notes that municipalities work directly with the UWSS General Manager regarding greenhouse approvals

The Chair notes that only applications were approved for offline use, within Kingsville, or online were approved prior to moratorium.

Councillor Patterson asks OGVG what their formal request from the Board is and what kind of timeline they are looking at.

Mr. Petro asks the board to consider removing the blanket moratorium and consider large service applications on a case by case basis, and to collaborate with the UWSS in terms of demand. OGVG is looking for a response on the moratorium as soon as possible and then potentially further information once the Clarifier is back online, so 3-4 months.

The UWSS General Manager notes that this discussion touched on a lot of his points within the forthcoming report. He notes that there has been some shipping delays for the DAF Clarification retrofit project and looking closer to late July for being up and running. He also notes that there are certainly opportunities to potentially assist each other. However, he also notes that while there may be more capacity available during the winter, this is the time in which UWSS operations staff is completing yearly maintenance and large portions of the system are offline. Also, time shifting to night time may work in some cases, but night time filter backwashing is also occurring. UWSS has to be careful not to shift too much flow to the nights.

The Manager also notes some other potential projects that could assist the UWSS is pushing more water into the system.

Councillor Hammond asks the Manager what happens if UWSS can’t keep up with the demand on high peak days. Who suffers?

Mr. Petro notes that everyone would suffer. His final note is that OGVG wants to work with everyone not against.

The Manager then notes that the UWSS does not have daily capacity issue. The treatment system is able to accommodate daily water demands even during peak summer use. The issue is the daily peak hour demands in hot summer afternoons.

No. UW-12-22

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Queen

Seconded by: Councillor DeYong

That that presentation provided by the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) is received.

Carried

Report UW/06/22 dated March 11, 2022 re: Status Update of the UWSS Operations and Maintenance Activities and Capital Works to March 11, 2022

The Manager reviews his report with the Board. He notes that the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) inspected the UWSS on February 24th, 2022 with no issues identified.

The new hydrant pressure/temperature monitoring devices have been ordered. He further notes that these devices will be installed in Kingsville (3) and Essex (1) and will work in conjunction with the real time pressure monitoring network that has been developed by UWSS, with support from local municipalities.

The annual filter maintenance has been completed on filters #1 through #4. Disinfection has taken place and they were returned to service during the first week of March 2022.

The Leamington Water Tower (LWT) is scheduled for inspection in early April 2022. Repairs will be made to the corrosion protection system inside the tower. The water will be drained in order to conduct inspection and make necessary repairs. The Manager notes that OCWA operations staff will work with Leamington water staff members to ensure the impact is minimal.

The Manager provides an update on the DAF project. He notes that things are moving along well. The masonry work on the auxiliary building is going well, and he anticipates the work over the next few weeks will include the walls going up, roof, dome and tanks installed. He notes that not all of the necessary supplies are arriving in a timely manner, but is hoping to receive all of the materials by mid-April. He anticipates another six (6) weeks to put everything together and then testing can begin. There was a miscommunication between the designer and contractor and it was necessary to raise the wall by 0.5m, but does not expect this to delay the project.

The Manager does explain to the Board that there may be a shortage on capacity as UWSS will be running with three (3) clarifiers instead of four (4) during part of the summer. He feels that the UWSS can meet 90-92% treatment capacity for most of the day. He will be in communication with the OGVG when necessary.

The Low Lift Pump #7 rehabilitation is behind schedule due to shipping delays. He does anticipate that the work should be completed by the end of April 2022.

The Manager notes that the flows are down slightly over 2021, but it is still early in the year.

Deputy Mayor Queen asks the Manager about the AWT capacity, as he recalls this tower was to assist the UWSS with its capacity issues, when it was constructed. The Manager notes that there is still a hydraulic issue with the AWT. The AWT designed to meet the minimum requirements by the Ministry, but this does not provide for the peak demands of the UWSS in the summer.

Councillor Dunn asks if the DAF project is expecting further delays. The Manager notes that he has provided the worst case scenario to the Board and notes that this is why the UWSS conducted the clarifier testing last year, to ensure that water can be pushed.

Councillor Patterson is worried about continued shipping delays and asks the Manager if there is a plan in place for stocking parts for certain critical parts. The Manager explains that yes, some parts are stored as back up, but not all is possible.

No. UW-13-22

Moved by: Councillor Dunn

Seconded by: Councillor Hammond

That Report UW/06/22 dated March 11, 2022 re: Status Update of the UWSS Operations and Maintenance Activities and Capital Works to March 11, 2022 is received.

Carried (UW/06/22)

Report UW/07/22 dated March 9, 2022 re: Extension of Moratorium on Applications for UWSS Treated Water Allocations

The Manager reviews his report with the Board members and notes that earlier in the meeting there was discussion as to the reasons behind the moratorium of March 2021. He notes that the moratorium is set to expire and further that the DAF project experienced delays that were not anticipated. He therefore, feels it is prudent to extend the moratorium for up to 12 months and that the Board request he come back in the 4-5 month range to update the Board on the treatment capacity status.

The Manager explains that he is also working with an outside firm to assist with the allocations and wants time to communicate with municipal colleagues to make sure the process works for all participants.

Councillor Walstedt notes that he will move the recommendation, however, does want a report to be brought back to the Board in either late August or September of this year. He feels that this is the right thing to do to protect the residents of the area.

Councillor DeYong asks the Manager if there is an appeal process wherein a greenhouse could potentially bring legal action during the moratorium. The Manager notes that he is

working with the legal firm to evaluate some of the older allocations that would have expired. Further to that she asks if time of use and evening water use is better for the system.

The Manager notes that the UWSS has always planned for approximately 3-6% greenhouse growth, not the much higher growth numbers experienced over the last 3-4 years.

Shannon Belleau of Leamington notes that in 2019 Leamington passed a bylaw regarding the greenhouse volume of water per day down to 6,000 igpdpd, some sites could potentially still be using more, because not every single greenhouse had their rate of flow control valve adjusted. She suggests that all greenhouses have their flow control valves updated.

Mayor MacDonald then speaks noting that the UWSS needs to have a hard line regarding the moratorium, so we need to ensure that we have all the data and all of the legal reviews completed this ensures balance for everyone. Several other members concurred with this opinion.

Councillor Hammond notes that there have been a large number of property purchases, with the potential for very large greenhouse facilities. He notes that one (1) acre of greenhouses is equivalent to 22 homes. How will UWSS determine who receives water.

Councillor Tiessen agrees with the Motion. He also indicates that water is not proprietary.

Councillor Walstedt agrees with Councillor Hammond's earlier statement regarding property purchases and confirms that many acres of property have been purchases in Staples and along Rochester Townline.

Shannon Belleau notes that Leamington has approximately 25 applications in the queue with over 700 acres of potential greenhouses waiting for approval, on a case by case basis. She believes that the moratorium is necessary to remain in place, if not any additional treatment released would be used up immediately.

Mayor Santos notes that this Board wants to ensure that we are protecting the water, not pushing anything beyond what our capacity can handle.

No. UW-14-22

Moved by: Councillor Walstedt

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Verbeke

That the Union Water Supply Joint Board of Management (UWSS Board) extends by up to 12 months the existing moratorium on new requests for treated water allocations from new or existing entities that use more than 50,000 litres per day;

And further, that the Manager brings a report back to the UWSS Joint Board of Management in September 2022 to update members on this matter;

And further, that the moratorium would not apply to any type of residential development

Carried (UW/07/22)

Report UW/08/22 dated March 10, 2022 re: MECP Drinking Water Inspection Report for the UWSS - February 2022 Inspection

The Manager explains that the MECP inspection took place on February 24, 2022 and was issued March 2, 2022. The inspector did not identify any areas of concern. On page 12 of the inspection report there was a note regarding the chlorine residual regarding our pond. The Manager notes that UWSS had a difficult time finding an instrument capable of analyzing to the level required. However, in October 2021 UWSS was able to source one that measured down to the required levels. The Manager notes that a temporary dechlorination system has been put in place and that the chlorine levels are well below where they need to be.

He further explains that there is no longer an immediate rating provided but rather a follow up report is provided in a few months.

No. UW-15-22

Moved by: Councillor VanderDoelen

Seconded by: Councillor DeYong

That report UW/08/252 dated March 10, 2022 re: MECP Drinking Water Inspection Report for the UWSS - February 2022 Inspection is received.

Carried

New Business: nothing reported

Adjournment:

No. UW-16-22

Moved by: Councillor VanderDoelen

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Verbeke

Date of Next Meeting: April 20, 2022

/kmj