

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WELLS AND BORINGS

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)

625 North Robert Street, St. Paul

Freeman Building, Room B149

March 7, 2018, Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Byron Adams
Bruce Bloomgren
Chris Elvrum
Daniel Gibbs
Dennis Koepp
Troy Kuck
Richard Lamb
Annie Felix-Gerth
Daniel England
Danny Nubbe (Chair)
Mark Thein

Members Absent

Bruce Johnson
David Kill
David Henrich (vice chair)
Roy Forsstrom
Michael Liljegren
Haden Shipman
Brian Stangret
Roy Forsstrom

Others Present

Kara Dennis (MDH)
Alex Martell (MDH)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Danny Nubbe called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 13, 2017, MEETING MINUTES

Chris Elvrum made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2017, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved on a voice vote.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MARCH 7, 2018, MEETING AGENDA

Danny Nubbe made a motion to approve the March 7, 2018, meeting agenda. The motion was seconded and approved on a voice vote.

4. EXPENSE ACCOUNTS

Alex Martell distributed expense report forms, and requested that members complete and return them in a timely manner.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Alex Martell takes the Hydrologist Supervisor position of the Central Office Operations Unit

Alex Martell accepted the Central Office Operations Unit Hydrologist Supervisor position, which was previously held by Ed Schneider. He started in the position on February 14, 2018.

B. New Well Management Section Staff

Erik Widmark is the new well inspector for the Metro District Office. He started on December 20, 2017, and replaced Steve Bennett. He has a lot of experience in the well drilling industry, primarily in environmental work.

6. OLD BUSINESS, UPDATES

A. Bored Geothermal Heat Exchanger (BGHE) Rulemaking Update

A draft of new BGHE rules are currently posted for review and comments. If there are 25 comments on the draft of the new BGHE rules from separate individuals, then there will be a hearing. If there is not a hearing, then the rules should go into effect sometime this summer.

B. Engineer's Group Legislative Proposal on Environmental Wells

There is a legislative proposal put forward by the Professional Engineers and Consulting Engineer groups to change some of the requirements in statute for environmental wells. These changes may include changing the term temporary environmental well to temporary boring and exempt temporary borings less than 25 feet deep from notification and fees.

Comments from the Council:

- Richard Lamb brought up an issue that there are quite a few geotechnical groups that are not sending in sealing notifications and records. Chris Elvrum responded that Minnesota Department of Health will take enforcement actions against geotechnical firms that are not submitting proper paperwork for regulated wells/borings.
- Richard Lamb asked if there is still a license requirement for shallower borings or borings that are only open for a few hours (15-25 feet in depth). There is less risk when there is a boring that is open for less than 72 hours. Chris Elvrum said this could be addressed in the rule writing process.
- Richard Lamb also asked about administrative requirements for highway embankments that are composed of artificial till. Chris Elvrum said that MDH will not differentiate between native soils and artificial till because an artificial till can still be hydrologically connected to groundwater.
- Several members of the Council wanted to know when a draft of the new Environmental Well Rules will be available for review. Alex Martell said that the goal is to roll out a draft of the rules this year, but that the BGHE rule writing process should be wrapped up first.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Icing Nitrate Water Samples

Starting July 1, 2018, accredited labs will flag water samples that do not meet the EPA lab requirements. The EPA methods for testing for nitrate requires that nitrate samples are at a certain temperature. The labs will flag water samples that do not meet the temperature requirements.

Comments from the Council:

- Mark Thein was concerned that lowering the temperature of a water sample would change the composition of the water sample if the water came out of the tap at a temperature higher than the temperature required by the lab.
- Annie Felix-Gerth explained that, when kept cold, samples are more representative because chemical reactions slow down with a decrease in temperature.
- Dennis Koepp brought up the concern that many parts of northern Minnesota do not have proximal access to accredited labs.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Training for Drillers

Danny Nubbe mentioned that Wisconsin requires a well driller have a certificate in order to install wells. This certificate certifies that they are knowledgeable about code requirements and have received some training. This topic has been brought up in past meetings. Should we work on implementing some requirement for people who are actually on the rig and doing the work? There may be pushback because some contractors are hesitant to pay for a day of training and no work, but it costs a lot of money to fix mistakes. Training can prevent expensive mistakes.

9. ORAL EXAMS

A. Jed Graves

B. Jonathan Leader

C. Luke Geib

D. Greg Reed

10. ADJOURN

Daniel England made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.