

## Journal Volume 2, Fall 2022



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### **JOURNAL**

### Volume 2, Fall 2022

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For a complete list of our events please visit our website at <a href="mailto:nhwwa.org">nhwwa.org</a>.

Go to NHWWA.org/About Us for the electronic version of the Journal with active links.

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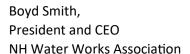
### **President's Notes**

Thank you for your public service; for supporting our Association with your time, talent, and treasure; and for taking time to read this latest issue of the *Journal!* This has been another exciting and productive year of growth and improvement, thanks to our highly qualified Board of Directors and many colleagues that volunteer their time to help us meet our mission. A few key successes:

- Operator certification training. We have restructured our program offerings to be more Grade-specific, with Grade 1A and Grade 1 training in Spring and Fall; a new Grade T2 program launching October 7 and bi-annual Leadership Roundtables Operators to offer management skills to Grade 3, 4 and other Primary Operators.
  - Grade 1A 2 course materials include practical knowledge with a focus on passing exams. Using experienced Instructors recruited from NH water sector leadership, we also expect to build stronger personal and professional relationships as an integral part of our training programs.
- Governance and leadership. Our Board of Directors is strong and getting stronger. Using bylaws that include Director and Staff roles and responsibilities aligned with our Strategic Plan, we are building effective and functional committees to increase our impact and deepen our talent pool. We are always looking for experienced and thoughtful leaders looking for ways to make meaningful contributions to the public water sector!
- Financial position. Building on a solid financial foundation, we are exploring ways to add staff resources to increase our current capacity. We will be reaching out to you and others across the sector to plan the best way to proceed.

Thanks again for all you do and hope to see you at one or more of our Fall events!

Gratefully,





### **Legislative & Regulatory Updates**

### **Building Advocacy Capacity – The Four Associations**



Conceived by the need to collaborate for common cause and sparked by former NHDES Water Division Director Tom O'Donovan in early 2020, the Four Associations include NH Water Works, NH Water Pollution Control, NH Municipal, and Granite State Rural Water Associations, convened on a

regular basis with NHDES. Our shared purpose is to provide safe, affordable, and dependable water services to New Hampshire citizens. Working together, the Four Associations are stronger than anyone of us alone.

Last legislative session, we achieved two substantial wins for water: Renewed State Aid Grants (SAG) for wastewater projects (HB398) and increased recognition and benefits for public workers, including water providers (SB325). Passage of HB398 added ~\$13 Mm to FY23-FY24 State support to fund NHDES-approved wastewater projects. SB325

puts water workers on par with Emergency Responders for financial and other benefits.

We are tracking and participating in number of ongoing policy issues important to our sector. Additional details will evolve as initial bills are filed for consideration later this year, and as we speak with legislative leaders about their priorities and concerns. Communicating these issues and how we are dealing with them to the public is critical to help reduce fear and increase trust in public water services. The following are issues we expect to be working on in the upcoming months:

- Fluoridation. Legislation to remove local decision-making authority is expected, despite clear health benefits. We will advocate to maintain local control of fluoride use.
- ◆ PFAS in Drinking Water. While we have effective treatment technologies, capital and operations costs are far more expensive than currently funded, and there is a substantial and growing amount of public concern. EPA recently released interim, non-peer reviewed Health Advisories for PFAS / PFOS that are lower than analytical reporting limits (~2 ppt), making quantification impossible. EPA public messaging is also problematic, essentially saying if PFAS / PFOS are present, "don't drink the water, talk to your doctor".
  - EPA MCLs are likely to be lower than existing NH MCLs, with roughly 500 public water systems expected to exceed new MCLs and additional compliance costs in the \$3Bn \$4Bn+range, rapidly consuming even the enhanced SRF budgets.
- PFAS in Wastewater Residuals. EPA validated analytical methods are needed and pending, but preliminary NH biosolids analysis indicates not as much a problem as originally feared. Dealing with PFAS before they reach treatment plants is critical. Upstream ("sewer shed") source definition and control are underway (NHDES funds available, four systems currently engaged). Banning of biosolids / sludge (like Maine) and lack of disposal options will substantially increase residuals management costs, and pending rules could make septic discharge non-compliant.

EPA may designate PFAS / PFOS as hazardous waste. Since these compounds are present in everything from landfill cover to agricultural fields and home septic systems, the financial implications for management and remediation are enormous.

- Lead in schools.
  - New NH rules require sampling at all water fixtures (~30,000 additional locations).
  - Action level of 5 ppb.
  - No NHDES staff to run this program.
  - Fining authority has expired.

We will try and make this a more manageable, yet equally effective, law following analysis and recommendations developed by NHDES.

- Nonflushables. State-wide labelling effort being studied, with a study Commission reporting deadline of November 2022.
- State Aid Grant program. This statutory program, unfunded for years prior to this session, is required to allocate a portion of State General Funds to NHDES-approved public water projects. Wastewater support (HB398) passed, adding roughly \$13Mn to FY23-24 budget, while drinking water funding (HB415) failed. The drinking water SAG component has been unfunded since 2008. Our next steps include:
  - Maintain WWTF funding momentum need ~\$15Mn / bi-annum consistently.
  - Include in NHDES budget cycles (drafted September / October).
  - Use current levels as "base year" for permanent line item. 3% future cap expected.

Note that Federal dollars can NOT be used for SAG, and the program is required under existing NH law.

 Drought. Increasingly common drought cycles are predicted to intensify with climate change. 2022 water levels are low, and even with recent rain it is hard to catch up. Some considerations:

- Poor '22 / '23 snowpack will make 2023 worse.
- Municipalities have authority to manage water systems.
- Private wells (e.g. golf courses) are NOT regulated.
   Water use restrictions typically resisted by landscapers, golf courses, other businesses. Water use hierarchies vary and are problematic.
- Coordinate water supply use for resilience and sustainability. Convene stakeholders for frank and results-oriented discussion about New Hampshire's water future.

The Four Associations plan to increase our impact by becoming more proactive in the legislative process by building on existing relationships with key policy leaders to earn their confidence as trusted advisers, and to help increase their understanding of policy impacts on public water. We will launch this initiative Fall 2022.









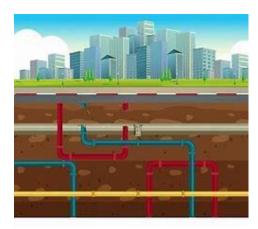
### **REGULATORY UPDATES**

- ◆ The State Fiscal Committee needs to accept federal infrastructure funds in October / November 2022. We expect that they will be accepted, but are ready to provide supporting testimony, if needed.
- Due to internal NH legal review, the proposed manganese standards will be delayed to July 1, 2023.
- Under the Revised Lead-Copper Rule NHDES is awarding contracts to assist systems with <=1,500 customers and is developing a program to award contracts for larger systems.
   EPA final rules are still pending, but all system inventories should be well underway or near completion.
- Cybersecurity is being pushed hard by EPA with grants, incentives, action plans and programs, however NHDES currently lacks resources to meet EPA's expectations (e.g. EPA wants to add cybersecurity to sanitary).
- Emerging contaminants will receive \$10Mm / year for the next 5 years and can be used to sample private wells and disadvantaged communities.
- With roughly 500% 700% increase in federal funding, NHDES is still challenged to hire staff required to manage new and expanded existing programs.

### WHAT'S OUR WATER WORTH?

### **Effective Communications for Public Water**

It is hard to care about something you take for granted and don't understand and is hidden. More than half of New Hampshire residents depend on public water services, yet only a handful know what it takes to deliver safe, dependable, and affordable water services.



### Current Association communications initiatives include:

- Our bi-weekly "Win with Water!" series published by NH Municipal Association and in our weekly emails since January 2022. These short, informative, and action-oriented messages are designed for municipal leaders and managers to help connect them with their water department colleagues. The series also includes longer bi-monthly articles in the Municipal Association's Town & City, authored by NHWWA, NHDES and the NH Clean Water Association.
- Convening a communications roundtable for drinking water leaders. Postponed from September 14 date due to the recent uptick in COVID, we are working on rescheduling this informative and interactive event. Keep an eye on our <u>Trainings</u> page for updated information.
- ◆ Under an NHDES Source Water Protection grant we are working with Resilience Planning & Design of Plymouth on a pilot-scale, communications-focused source water protection project with Sanbornton and Franklin. Project completion is scheduled for June 2023.
- Created a workforce recruitment flyer that is posted on our web site and used at various events, especially those

organized by our amazing Young Professionals.

 Submitted a conceptual proposal for State-wide "Value of Water" campaign to NHDES, who have requested funding from EPA with a decision expected late 2022. If funded, this initiative will be developed and delivered in 2023.

As part of our mission and strategic plan, we will share communications lessons and tools with sector systems and partners. Current ideas include:

### Water Systems

- Optimize existing communications to improve customer understanding and engagement (readable and actionable CCRs, service billings, newsletters, budget hearings and other public presentations).
- Water is local offer tours, open houses, school partnerships, and other opportunities to build trust, knowledge, and partnership with key community representatives. Create simple ways for customers to support the system (water use conservation, land protection, proactive investment).

### Partner Associations (including NHWWA)

- Create communications templates and consistent and effective messages for utilities to deliver.
- Unite to build state-wide / regional voice for public water (like bottled water and tap-treatment industries).

As more people become informed about how water systems work, we envision growing interest in water careers, healthier advocacy and partnership regarding rates,



emerging contaminants and source protection, and more informed public policy.

### **Construction Day 2022**

Another great Construction Day was held on August 3, 2022 in the Durham/Dover area. It was a day filled with informative presentations and camaraderie with fellow water workers. Thank you to our hosts and presenters for making this event possible.



Above: Rob Little from Woodard & Curran started us off with an introduction to the UNH/Durham Treatment Plant. Below: Mike Sullivan and Joe Geary continued with the presentation and tour of the plant.





We visited the site of a new PFAS treatment plant under construction in Dover and listened to a presentation from Tom Page of Underwood Engineers about the project.



We finished the day with a lunch at Hilton Park at Dover Point where a much appreciated cool breeze was blowing off the water!



NHWWA Journal Vol. 2 - Fall 2022

### **NHWWA Young Professional Committee News**

As summer nears its end, the YPs are reflecting on the exciting events they hosted over the past few months as well as all that is to come in the next few months!

In June, the YPs hosted a Treat and Meet with Pennichuck Water Treatment Plant! Several water folks came out to learn about the plant with a tour and caught up with a social hour at Able Ebenezer Brewing Company in Merrimack afterwards. Thank you, Pennichuck, for having us for another successful tour!

In August, the YPs hosted their annual Fisher Cats outing at Delta Dental Stadium in Manchester along with New Hampshire Water Pollution Control Association (NHWPCA). The YPs saw their best attendance yet, with over 100 tickets sold and a list of generous sponsors! Before the game, the YPs



and NHWPCA hosted their first annual "Brown vs. Blue" softball game, where wastewater and water folks battled it out in a friendly game at Manchester's Wolfe Park. The water team came out on top and their trophy can be seen at the NHWWA office in Concord!

This fall, the YPs celebrated Source Water Protection Week with a reservoir cleanup and celebration in Concord. The YPs also encouraged folks from across the state to cleanup their watersheds, awarding prizes to photo contest participants! The YPs are also looking ahead to the NHWWA Expo and Tradeshow where they will be exhibiting and hosting a YP lunch — can't wait to see you there!



### NH DRINKING WATER EXPO & TRADE SHOW

### October 20, 2022

### **Grappone Conference Center**

### 70 Constitution Ave., Concord, NH

8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Our annual Expo & Trade Show is coming up fast! We will have 10 seminars on a variety of drinking water topics. Seminars will be held two-at-a-time throughout the day. Earn up to 5 TCHs. Coffee, Danish and hot lunch provided.

\$125 NHWWA Member / \$150 Not Yet Member

Download the EVENT BROCHURE from our website for a full schedule.

### Welcome to our 2022 Exhibitors!

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### NHWWA Growth and Development Planning – Stronger Service for our Sector

### Scott Kelley, NHWWA Director

The Association's mission and scope of work has been steadily increasing for the past several years. As we home in on the critical ways we support the public water sector, our leadership team has identified ways to make us an even stronger and more effective business partner.

Using proven business development techniques, we will analyze and pursue growth opportunities for FY2023 and beyond. The following outlines our approach, with the central tenet of communicating with you to learn what you need so we can best provide critical services.

Currently, our principal offerings are Operator training and license certification, legislative advocacy, public visibility through our various advertising platforms, and being the Statewide voice for public drinking water. Our vision is to improve our existing services and provide even better tools to ensure public water's expected high level of service.

If you think of our services as "products", the Ansoff Matrix helps prioritize areas to expand existing support and create new areas of value-added service.

We plan to pursue the following growth opportunities, listed from easier to more difficult.

 Legislative Supporter (help fund legislative advocacy): Our increasingly effective legislative advocacy shapes the laws that

become regulations.
We will contact
members that are not
currently Legislative
Supporters and explain
the value of this addon service.

 Expand Support from Existing Members: Communicate opportunities for



- advertising and sponsorships to reach the water industry. Learn what is most valued and provide those services.
- Increase Membership (new utilities, service companies):
   Communicate with sector partners that are not currently members and solicit their support.
- New Businesses Outside Industry: Identify large water users in the state that may contribute and support the Association.

The Association's recent growth is fueled by a well-crafted Strategic Plan, aligned bylaws, and growing engagement and support from water sector leaders. We are optimistic that, with your help and focused effort on our part, we can raise more resources to provide even better services to address current and future challenges facing our industry.

Please contact me directly if you have any questions or ideas about working together or mutual success.

Scott

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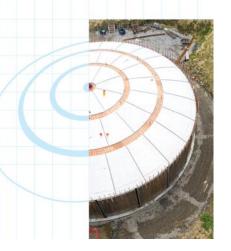
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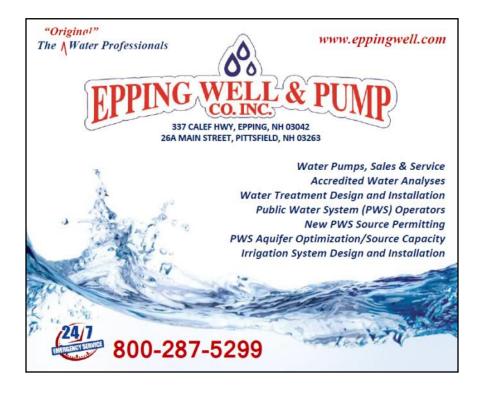


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