

Upper Cape Fear River Basin Association  
 Joint BOD/TAC Meeting - Virtual-Only via Microsoft Teams  
 January 24, 2023, 9:30 AM – 11:30am

---

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting

NAME	AGENCY	CONTACT INFO
Maya Cough-Schulze	TJCOG	mcough-schulze@tjcog.org
Grace Messinger	PTRC	gmessinger@ptrc.org
Charlie Cocker	City of Durham	charles.cocker@durhamnc.gov
Jonathan Baker	City of Durham- Stormwater	jonathan.baker@durhamnc.gov
Morgan DeWit	Town of Pittsboro	mdewit@pittsboronc.gov
Elijah Williams	City of Greensboro	elijah.williams@greensboro-nc.gov
Alicia Goots	City of Greensboro	alicia.goots@greensboro-nc.gov
Bob Patterson	City of Burlington	bpatterson@burlingtonnc.gov
Michael Rhoney	City of Asheboro	mrhoney@ci.asheboro.nc.us
Steve Tedder	Tedderfarm Consulting	tedderfarmconsulting@gmail.com
Tonya Mann	City of Graham	tmann@cityofgraham.com
Mark Vander Borgh	NC DWR Coalition Coordinator	mark.vanderborgh@ncdenr.gov
Amanda Hill	City of Mebane	achill@cityofmebane.com
Michael Glass	City of Randleman	wwtp@cityofrandleman.com
Sharon Wagoner	City of Burlington	swagoner@burlingtonnc.gov
Amanda Hancock	Meritech, Inc.	amanda.hancock@meritechlabs.com
Chris McCorquodale	Town of Siler City	cmccorquodale@silercity.org
Wil Lawson	OWASA	wlawson@owasa.org
Michelle Slaton	PTRC – Workforce Development	mslaton@ptrc.org
Donald Smith	Town of Cary	donald.smith@townofcary.org

The meeting opened at 9:30am. No revisions on the agenda were noted.

**Organizational Report**

---

Grace Messinger shared organizational updates:

- UCFRBA’s new contract with Meritech will start next fall. We will work with Meritech to align the next contract with the fiscal year cycle. Parameter costs may increase beyond the usual annual increase. We have projected a draft budget accordingly; as the contract is being finalized the budget values will be updated.
- Invoices received; one outstanding, Grace to follow up
- Siler City membership – would like to remain a Corporate member despite additional cost

- Collecting samples as part of new permit
- Michael Rhoney brought up that 1,4 dioxane monitoring was introduced in Asheboro's new permit.
  - The public comment period extended through Friday 1/27/2023
  - Michael has submitted comments
  - No need for Coalition to submit comments

Alicia Goots shared the QA/QC report:

- Only WQ standards exceedances were for turbidity, at several sites
- Two data notations errors - phosphorus values transposed at two sites - corrected

## **Open Discussion: Utility Workforce Development and Employee Retention**

Resources:

PTRC Workforce Development Program: <https://www.ptrc.org/services/workforce-development>.

- Michelle Slaton presented on PTRC's workforce development offerings:

Workforce Development Board has broad-reaching programs:

- County career centers: Helps people with resumes, job applications at county level
- Business services team: Connects people to industry, chambers of commerce, etc. – anyone looking to make workforce more robust.
- Work-based learning opportunities for businesses for candidates of varying levels of experience + NextGen Youth Services
  - Can reimburse companies some of costs for new hires' training
  - Companies need to be enrolled in federal program to be eligible

TJCOG Public Pipeline Program is a pilot program starting this summer with 5 local governments.

- Maya asks on behalf of TJCOG organizers: What skills are you not seeing in applicants?

Wil Lawson, OWASA:

- Applicants don't know what we do. When they find out, they don't want to be involved in water or wastewater services.
- Started internal apprenticeship program to get folks exposed to the industry itself, plus some cooperation with local school systems (high school age)
- Maya: This echoes a national challenge – communication about utility services when things are going well, not just when there is an issue

Kristine Williams, Greensboro Water:

- We're hiring folks with no experience for entry-level crew positions. Hired many at an on-the-spot hiring event at a job fair.
- We are having a harder time filling positions for more qualified candidates

Charlie, Durham: Durham has a 17% vacancy rate, down about 50 staff in water management

- Few applicants – takes months to get 3-4 applicants
- Applicants that look promising on paper don't know about wastewater

Michelle Slaton, PTRC: If someone wasn't in wastewater treatment but you were looking to draw them from another industry, what could be some good transferrable skills?

- Elijah: For plant operations, if someone has worked with different types of plants and understands some kind of process, that could translate.
  - Would like to see more programs at community colleges for water/wastewater plant operators

- Currently partner with Guilford apprenticeship program
- Michael Glass: Mechanical skills
- Elijah: Yes – maintenance can be harder to fill – lower pay grade than mechanics
  - If we can get high school grads through mid-20 year olds who are interested in wastewater, they learn how much opportunity there is.
  - We’ve been lucky to hire some in this age group who like the job
- Charlie: Experience working with equipment or instruments.

Michelle: If you have position descriptions, send them to me at [mmlaton@ptrc.org](mailto:mmlaton@ptrc.org). I can look at some of our data to see what we can do to help.

Bob Patterson, Burlington:

- Alamance Community College used to have a wastewater school; a utility director led it; when he retired, the program went away for lack of an instructor. We talked with ACC a few years ago and they said they would be interested in restarting it if there was an instructor.
  - Amanda Hill: I would be interested in helping with the Alamance Community College program if they're able to re-start it. Feel free to contact me when the time comes [achill@cityofmebane.com](mailto:achill@cityofmebane.com)
  - Elijah: Several steps would have to be met to restart ACC training. I know a few individuals that do training that ran into issues. We’d have to work with the Licensing Board. Martie Groome is still a member - we can elicit her help.
- Bob: When we try to hire, we get applicants, but the challenges are:
  - General maintenance: Can usually fill. Consider whether those people have aptitude to potentially get operator certification in future.
    - Sometimes we have great operators who can’t pass an exam
  - Fieldwork jobs: We hire people with some experience being laborers or operating construction equipment and hope that they stay
  - Some people don’t like shift work so leave

Michael Glass: We are so small our folks have to do everything and be on call. That scares off young folks.

Charlie, Durham: We have assigned shifts of 8-4, 4-12, and 12-8, and people are on that shift for life unless they want to change. We don’t lose many people except to retirement. I think we need to consider how shift work affects peoples’ lives.

Elijah: The city gave a stipend to night shift workers last winter. This gave us a boost.

Michelle Slaton: In manufacturing, regarding shift work, there has been discussion about if you can do more regular or shorter shifts, that works better for people.

### **Next Steps and Future Meeting Schedule**

---

Please send any requested topics for discussion or speakers we can bring in to Maya Cough-Schulze, [MCough-Schulze@tjcog.org](mailto:MCough-Schulze@tjcog.org) and Grace Messinger, [gmessinger@ptrc.org](mailto:gmessinger@ptrc.org).

**(Break)**

---

## Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting

Elijah Williams opened the Board Meeting at 10:30am. No revisions on the agenda were noted.

Michael Rhoney moves to approve July 2022 Meeting Minutes, Michael Glass seconds. No changes noted.

New BOD contacts for FY22-23:

- Grace has noted Reidsville staff changes; has a final BOD rep been approved?
  - o Elijah: Think not

Michael Glass: We are without a city manager at the moment.

### **10:35 – 10:45 FY22-23 Budget Review: Budgeted vs Actual**

Grace Messinger presented on year-to-date expenses for FY22-23. At about halfway through this fiscal year, we have spent less than half the projected budget.

<b>UPPER CAPE FEAR RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION, INC.</b>				
<b>ANNUAL TASK COST CALCULATION TABLE</b>				
<b>FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023</b>				
				7/1/23 to 6/30/24
	<b>FY 2022-2023 Approved Budget (11/2022 update)</b>	<b>FY 2022-2023 Year-to-Date Actual as of 12/31/22</b>	<b>FY2022-2023 Est. Balance for Budget</b>	<b>FY 2023-2024 (draft) PROPOSED Budget Keep ALL SAME (keep SC, w/ Durham full fee, subtract Stormwater)</b>
<b>Revenues</b>				
Membership Dues	\$149,288.00	\$148,088.00	\$1,200.00	\$155,797.71
Interest Earned	\$109.36	\$0.00	\$109.36	\$112.64
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$149,397.36</b>	<b>\$148,088.00</b>	<b>\$1,309.36</b>	<b>\$155,910.35</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Meritech	\$102,471.36	\$51,072.98	\$51,398.38	\$105,545.50
Database Management	\$1,625.00	\$1,625.00	\$0.00	\$1,625.00
Insurance	\$2,701.98	\$2,727.00	-\$25.02	\$2,809.00
TJCOG	\$23,000.00	\$0.00	\$23,000.00	\$23,000.00
PTCOG	\$23,000.00	\$12,194.33	\$10,805.67	\$23,000.00
CFRA Membership Dues	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$300.00
General Operations*	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,200.00
Bank Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CPU Services & Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Legal Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$153,098.34</b>	<b>\$67,919.31</b>	<b>\$85,179.03</b>	<b>\$157,479.50</b>
Net to/from Contingency	(\$3,700.98)			(\$1,569.15)
<b>Contingency Balance</b>	<b>\$181,225.57</b>			<b>\$181,225.57</b>

\*Combine Bank Fees, CPU Services & Fees and Legal Services into General Operations line + add in-person mtg expenses (food)

**Scenario Recommendation & Discussion**

Expenses:

- Assume Meritech costs may increase by 3% over last year, because their costs typically increase by 2% annually, and David Merrit said that station costs have not been updated since 2015
- Database management: Cost is the same
  - o Discussion for April: Does our current database allow us to access data easily enough? Other coalitions have other database solutions. A better database would cost more.
- TJCOG and PTRC administration stays the same this year as it is the second of a two-year contract
  - o TJCOG will submit invoices to PTRC 2x/year in future, for 6 months each
- General operations: When we do have in-person meetings, it's nice to be able to cover the cost of food for meetings.
  - o Recommend adding costs of refreshment to General Operations line.

Revenue options - Membership dues:

- Based on our projections of expenses for next year, and the current UCFRBA membership, we should be able to cover expenses without using contingency balance.
- This means that no one's dues should increase by more than ~\$30-\$300 this year

Elijah: Contingency balance – last year we discussed that the contingency balance is high; do we want to use some this year to offset any dues increase?

Charlie: The idea was that it would provide a buffer to not see increases in dues for quite some time

Elijah: We are still recovering from the pandemic and our costs have gone up astronomically

Michael Glass: We just lost a major water user that was 25% of our budget.

Charlie proposes: If we held everyone's dues the same, we could take contingency to cover that, until we reach one year's worth of operating expenses, and don't consider raising dues until then

Alicia Goots: We had some of the contingency fund saved for metals sampling – dissolved metals, are these coming back?

Mark Vander Borgh: No, EPA hasn't forced us to move forward on dissolved metals, but has pushed us to include emerging contaminants in permits. That's where I would be hesitant to get rid of contingency balance. But that's a lot of money if it does come up and you need to do that.

Charlie: Even if we want to bring it down from \$181,000 to \$150,000, that would be several years of monitoring.

Elijah: Not for PFAS – that would be a couple of months of sampling. It's very expensive.

Mark: Would not ask the UCFRBA to pay for analysis, maybe just collection. While Meritech is out there, you might be able to collect a sample and hand off to another lab.

Elijah: That's part of the cost – there are so many regulations regarding how you take the sample.

Mark: Those are changing – the contamination has been with analysis not collection. We are working on

those methods, and the sampling method isn't as stringent as first thought. We do trip blanks and field blanks but have to work at a different level of regulation.

Alicia: Who's doing your analysis?

Mark: Contract with Gel (?) and doing some in house, using the 1633 method. We don't have the staff capacity yet that we want.

Amanda Hill: Lindsay Boone from PACE is coming to Labtech Day to talk about EPA's roadmap for PFAS and discuss sampling methods.

Michael moves to keep dues same as last year by taking the difference out of contingency funds, Charlie seconds. None opposed.

Charlie: If our contingency balance could make us money, that would be good.

Grace: Our contingency balance is in a cash account and doesn't make interest. Yadkin-Pee Dee RBA keeps their contingency balance in a Money Market account, which earns a couple hundred dollars a year.

Charlie: A SECU CD account might earn us 3% for 6-month term or 3.1% for a 12-month term . Recommends a \$100,000 6-month term CD, a \$70,000 12-month term CD and \$11,000 in First Horizon for cash on hand if needed.

Elijah: Once you lock it into a CD, you can't access it.

Charles: If you need it and have to pay a penalty, you still would make money. I recommend a 6-month CD, so it's not locked in for too long.

Grace and Maya will explore the options for April meeting.

Motion for budget: Michael Glass moves, Elijah seconds. All in favor.

Timeline/process for budget committee review? No need for subcommittee review this year.

**Additional budget-relevant discussion:**

Jonathan Baker, in the chat: Since Durham County will be covering the cost of the Northeast Creek site at Sedwick Road starting in FY24, would it be possible for City of Durham - Public Works/Stormwater to fund another monitoring site in Durham? Not sure if it's feasible for Meritech to add another monitoring site on that sampling day. If it's feasible, Public Works/Stormwater may be interested in covering the full cost of another site.

Mark Vander Borgh: Would that be a new station you are interested in getting data from or an existing station?

Jonathan Baker: Mark - a new station. Interested in getting more data for Northeast Creek or Third Fork Creek (both monitored by the coalition). Not sure where though. Just wanted to see if it's even a possibility.

Amanda Hancock: I am sure we at Meritech could work something out to get an additional site sampling on same day if you all decide to add on.

Mark: You can always add stations, just let me know where and I can get it done.

Jonathan will bring this topic back up at the April meeting for discussion.

**11:05 – 11:15 Updates from around the Upper Basin**

South Durham finally got a new permit, with monthly 1,4 dioxane in it, and PFAS sampling that will start 6 months after EPA determines method

**11:15 – 11:30 Next Steps, Closing Remarks and Future Meeting Schedule**

Future meeting dates: April 25<sup>th</sup> in-person – location TBA

- Charlie will let us know if Durham can host.

The meeting adjourned at 11:26 am.

Contact Administrators:

Maya Cough-Schulze, [MCough-Schulze@tjcog.org](mailto:MCough-Schulze@tjcog.org)

Grace Messinger, [gmessinger@ptrc.org](mailto:gmessinger@ptrc.org)