

MINUTES

WATER PROVIDER LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE

NOVEMBER 8, 2018

The Water Provider Legislative Task Force met Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 151, State Capitol, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Legislative Task Force members present: Senator Alan Clark, Co-Chair and Representative Justin Boyd.

Non-Legislative Task Force members present: Mark Bennett, Dr. Bob Blanz, Jack Critcher, Judge Rick Davis, Daniel Dawson, Jennifer Enos, Alan Fortenberry, Tom Fox, Barry Haas, Dale Kimbrow, Jean Noble, and Dennis Sternberg.

Other members present: Representatives Vivian Flowers, Jack Ladyman, Austin McCollum, Reginald Murdock, Clint Penzo, Jana Della Rosa, and Danny Watson.

**Call to Order**

Senator Clark called the meeting to order.

**Opening Remarks by Committee Co-Chairs**

Senator Clark told Task Force members Representative Lemons was unable to attend the meeting. He said that discussion of Agenda Item C would be deferred and the Task Force would move to Agenda Item D.

**Continued Drafting of the Water Provider Task Force Vision Report, Action Report, Suggested Best Practices for Providing New Services, and Other Areas as Specified in Act 1056 of 2017 [Exhibit D, D-1]**

Senator Clark advised Task Force members that the Vision Report is now in a format commonly used by a legislative task force. Task Force members discussed the following:

**Recommendation 1 D**

- Tentative wording change suggested – creation of a Utility Board/Commission is strongly recommended in municipalities large enough to support such Boards/Commissions and where a portion of the water provider's customers are outside the municipal limits

**Recommendation 1 E**

- Tentative wording change suggested – Specify the name of a state agency when the term “state agency” appears in a recommendation

Task Force members discussed the need for continuing education and training for members of governing bodies of utilities to provide a basic understanding of management and operational issues of a water/wastewater utility. The discussion

included implementing mandatory education requirements and stipulating specific training elements.

Recommendation 2 E

- Tentative wording change – remove the word “reparation” at the end of the recommendation

Recommendation 2 F

- Tentative wording change – Replace the wording, “Water Commission” with “Those who oversee the management of a water provider”, and
- Add the wording, “All who serve shall participate in ongoing education as indicated in 1 E above”

Recommendation 3 A

- Tentative wording change – remove the last sentence: “Some utilities may have some type of assistance programs or procedure for the most impoverished part of their customer base, but in most cases, the cost of water is priced so that anyone can afford it”

Task Force members asked BLR staff to read portions of suggested wording changes and additions:

Recommendation A

- A – “While retaining local control, strongly encourage regionalization or consolidation where appropriate”

Recommendation B

- B – “To review statutory requirements that discourage regionalization”

Recommendation C

- C – “The General Assembly will incentivize successful providers to assume operational control of less successful providers”

Recommendation D

- D – “Reorganization of rate structures for rural extension areas may need to be different”

Recommendation E

- E- language yet to be determined

Senator Clark announced that the Task Force will meet November 20, 2018 in Room 151. This will be an all-day meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.