

Strategic Water Supply Plan Public Meeting #1  
**Minutes**

June 25, 2012  
7:00-9:00 PM  
Council Chambers

Attendance:

- Presenters: John Rehring of Carollo and Ken Komiske of City of Norman
- Council Members: Mayor Rosenthal, Gallagher, Griffith, and Lockett.
- Staff: Scott Aynes, Mark Daniels, Bryan Hapke, Chris Mattingly, Debbie Smith, Charlie Thomas, Kathryn Walker, Gay Webb and Geri Wellborn,
- Ad-Hoc Committee Members: Al Atkins, Steven Tyler Holman, Matthew Leal, Amanda Nairn, Mike Pullin, Bob Thompson and Judith Wilkins

Presentation:

Mayor Rosenthal welcomed everyone to the first of four public meetings for the 2060 Strategic Water Supply Plan. She said there is nothing more important to the future of our community than water. The public meetings will be an opportunity for the citizens to provide guidance and input on the choices we will make in the future. Consultants along with a citizens advisory committee will help determine what water supplies we will draw upon, what options are available, what they will cost and help determine how we can make good decisions about our water future. The Mayor thanked the Strategic Water Supply Plan (SWSP) Ad-Hoc Committee Members for their help and read their names:

- Al Atkins/Bob Thompson
- Sandy Bahan
- Roger Frech
- Jim Gasaway
- Stephen Tyler Holman
- Samantha Kahoe
- Matthew Leal
- Joe Love
- Curtis McCarty
- Lynne Miller
- Amanda Nairn
- Mike Pullin
- David Sabatini
- Andy Sherrer
- Judith Wilkins

Mr. Komiske presented slides providing background information about Norman's surface and ground water supply system, water supply issues facing Norman, water conservation practices implemented, the potential for non-potable reuse, and briefly discussed the findings of the previous SWSP adopted by Council in 2001 and how it has been implemented to date.

Mr. Rehring presented slides on the goals of the SWSP, why a water supplier needs a SWSP, and future steps to be taken as the process moves forward to completion. He discussed historical and projected water demands, water supply sources to be evaluated, how the sources will be evaluated based on both economic and non-economic criteria, and emphasized the need for public input throughout the process of selecting a portfolio of water supply options that best serve the needs of Norman.

The presentation concluded after about an hour. A copy of presentation is attached.

### Public Discussion and Input:

After the presentations, members of the audience provided input regarding water supply options and asked questions of the presenters/staff. The following is a synopsis of questions or comments with the response provided by the consultant or staff:

- It was asked if Congressman Cole's bill allowing water to be imported from Lake Atoka in SE Oklahoma into Lake Thunderbird would help. Mr. Komiske answered it would help if passed. The Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District (COMCD) has examined the potential impacts (water quality and quantity, environmental, etc.) that might result if out of basin water were imported into Lake Thunderbird. This bill, supported by the COMCD study, is approved by the House of Representatives (and is awaiting Senate approval) and will provide opportunity for future importation of out of basin water into Lake Thunderbird.
- It was asked if the COMCD is seeking permission for discharge of highly treated effluent from Norman and Moore into Lake Thunderbird? Mr. Komiske answered yes, but there are many hurdles to be cleared before treated effluent reuse can be implemented.
- Regarding usage of the Garber Wellington aquifer (GW) and private wells during a drought situation, have we communicated with the University of Oklahoma (OU) and that OU and Norman will both need to reduce usage? Mr. Hapke commented that the GW is much larger than OU/Norman and extends from Guthrie to Noble. Mr. Komiske commented that all cities are allowed to utilize ground water according to their permit; OU uses its non-potable water wells for landscape irrigation. Norman cannot require their neighbors to restrict water usage. John Harrington of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) answered similarly; he indicated that taking water from the aquifer is a property right that can't be mandated by Norman but you can ask for voluntary reductions in usage. The question was then asked more specifically: Has Norman talked to OU about restricting usage of their wells? Mr. Komiske answered "No". Additional discussion regarding the GW study continued and that it appears temporary permits of 2 acre-feet per year (AF/YR) will likely be reduced to 1.5 or 1 AF/YR. Recharge is actually only 2 to 4 inches per year but Oklahoma law allows the aquifer to be mined, i.e. the withdrawal rate is more than the recharge rate.
- It was asked how Norman's ground water supply would be affected if the permitted amount was reduced to 1.5 or 1 AF/YR. Mr. Komiske indicated that Norman is allowed to permit all platted lands within the city limits and that the existing permitted area would allow all existing wells to continue pumping as they do currently even if the allowable rate was reduced to 1 AF/YR rate.
- It was asked how long would the 2 AF/YR rate continue once they determine the new limit on usage of the GW? Mr. Harrington answered he guessed it would be 2 to 3 years.
- Mr. Harrington was asked to explain difference between permitted rate of aquifer use and recharge rate for an aquifer. Mr. Harrington mentioned that, temporary permitted use is 2 AF/YR but he expected a new rate of 1 AF/YR. This assumes mining the GW over a defined period of time. Mr. Harrington indicated that aquifer recharge from rain events has been studied and recharge is believed to be 2 to 4 inches per year in the GW.
- A citizen suggested that we should restrict yard application of fertilizers and pesticides to protect Lake Thunderbird from further degradation before we continue with the development in the north side of Norman, i.e. the Little River drainage basin. Canada has already passed such legislation.
- A citizen commented that since we already discharge effluent to the Canadian River which flows to Lake Eufaula, why shouldn't we discharge to Lake Thunderbird? Does a

- larger distance between the discharge and the lake itself make it ok? Mr. Komiske indicated that the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) realizes “unintentional” indirect potable reuse is ongoing but has not yet come to terms with “intentional” indirect potable reuse. Mr. Komiske indicated that the distance does make a difference in the natural ability of a stream to improve the water quality.
- It was asked if storm water runoff could be used to re-charge an aquifer and if we can collect and reuse instead of allowing to drain back into the lake. Mr. Harrington and Mr. Komiske both answered yes. There has been a recent shift in public policy from quickly releasing storm water from development to rivers and streams, to capturing and storing or treating storm water flows prior to release at a much slower rate. Storage promotes infiltration into the underlying soils and ground water recharge.
  - It was asked if raising the Lake Thunderbird dam was a way to capture more runoff and increase supply. Mr. Komiske answered that would increase storage capacity but not the dependable yield of the lake. If the dam were to be raised, costs for land acquisition would be very high because of the shallow nature of Lake Thunderbird.
  - Mayor Rosenthal commented that our proposed evaluation criteria should also include a “public value” for public uses, such as recreational opportunities and aesthetics, for reservoirs rather than just the value as a water supply. Public use could be viewed positively or negatively.
  - A concern was noted regarding the rate of growth anticipated, that all growth was not good, and if the SWSP would move to regulate the pace of growth. Mr. Rehring and Mr. Komiske indicated that the SWSP would attempt to match the full build-out water demand as defined in the Norman 2025 Land Use Plan. The Land Use Plan drives the SWSP; the SWSP does not drive the Land Use Plan. The SWSP would define improvements needed to meet certain demands and that actual water demands will trigger the timing of future improvements. Both the SWSP and the Land Use Plan are dynamic in nature and will need to be updated every 10 years or so to assess changing conditions and assure the plans are consistent with community desires.
  - It was asked if we would consider ground water recharge into the brackish saltwater aquifer found below the GW similar to Florida where they created a usable aquifer where seawater intrusion had been occurring. Mr. Harrington indicated that he was not aware of this technology being implemented in aquifers such as the GW. He indicated that seawater is 10,000 parts per million (ppm) salt and that ground water beneath the fresh water in Oklahoma ranges from 100,000-200,000 ppm making this technology unusable now. Mr. Rehring indicated this technology would be examined for use during the initial screening process.
  - A citizen asked how the final recommendations of the SWSP would be implemented. It was also asked what would happen if we don’t follow our recommended plan like when the riparian restrictions suggested in the Storm Water Master Plan were not implemented last year? Mr. Komiske indicated that Council would hopefully adopt the recommended solution from the SWSP but that the voters will ultimately need to approve any water rate increase associated with implementation of the SWSP.
  - A citizen asked about levels of mercury in the SE Oklahoma lakes where it is reported that fish are not allowed to be consumed. It was also asked why Norman would want to import water containing pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCP’s). Mr. Rehring indicated all water quality issues would be addressed by the recommended treatment technology and would be considered in the ranking process. He also indicated that PPCP’s are currently unregulated and are typically detected in reuse water in minuscule amounts.

- It was suggested that the OWRB indicated Norman had unlimited ground water supply in the GW through 2060 and there was no need to import other water. Mr. Harrington indicated that no such study exists and the use of the GW needs to be reduced.
- A citizen asked about staff being critical about the recent Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP). Mr. Komiske indicated the OCWP implied there was plenty of water within the larger basin where Norman is situated. This statement was based on several factors including a lower water supply need, continuation of temporary ground water permits at 2 ACFT/YR, and use of the Canadian River as a water supply. Staff disagreed with OWRB's position because it did not account for higher projected demands, a future reduction in the rate of withdrawal from the GW aquifer, future regulation of metals in the GW, or for the lower water quality within region and the increased cost to treat local waters.
- Mr. Kyle Arthur, formerly with the OWRB and in charge of preparing the OCWP, commented that the OCWP was prepared as an overview of each basin and was not intended as a substitute for individual plans such the SWSP. He is glad the SWSP will further evaluate local sources such as the Canadian River and GW. He suggested Norman might consider obtaining rights to the GW outside the city limits of Norman.
- It was asked why staff was considering Kaw Reservoir as a viable option when staff previously said it was too salty? Mr. Rehring and Mr. Komiske indicated that there are pros and cons to all water supply sources and each will be evaluated and ranked during the SWSP process.
- It was asked how tribal water rights and State water rights would be evaluated in our water supply selection process. Mr. Rehring indicated availability and certainty of water rights is a factor and will be evaluated and weighted based on its timeliness and viability.
- Adjourned at 9:00 PM