

# Advisory Council on Wells and Borings Meeting

## WELL MANAGEMENT SECTION

**Date** June 4, 2025

**Location** Hybrid Meeting

**Attendees** **In Person:** David Duffey, Tannie Eshenaur, David Henrich, Bruce Johnson, David Kill, Richard Lamb, Ed Lenz, Jordan Mayer, Danny Nubbe, Roger Renner, Gabe Sweet

**Virtually:** Don McKeever, Mike Steffl, Steven Traut

**Others Present:** Kara Dennis, Avery Guertin, Mark Malmanger, Kelly Medellin, Jon Olson, Teresa Purrington, Jenn Weier

**Absent:** Kelly Gribauval-Hite, Joe Stevens

## Call to Order

David Henrich, Chair, called the meeting to order. Kelly went through roll call.

## Approval of meeting agenda

Danny Nubbe made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Bruce Johnson seconded the motion. David Henrich asked the council to vote on the motion to approve the minutes with those in favor say “aye” and those opposed say “nay”. Motion carries.

## Approval of last meeting minutes

Roger Renner made a motion to accept the Advisory Council minutes from March 5, 2025. David Kill seconded the motion. David Henrich asked the council to vote on the motion to approve the minutes with those in favor say “aye” and those opposed say “nay”. Motion carries.

## Old Business

### 12-inch PVC adaptor couplings

Mark Malmanger reported on 12-inch PVC adaptor couplings. He gave some well code background specifically ??? Plastic transition couplings must meet (slide info). MDH spoke with Spears (?) around 1990, slide 4 info. Others stated they wouldn’t make a coupling this large or for this use. Mike Steffl asked if other specific questions were asked, and Mark stated that they weren’t. David Henrich clarified that the discussion is if we can do this and how we would do it. The council discussed how and if they could do this. David Henrich asked how MDH would like

us to proceed. Teresa Purrington responded that there needs to be more conversation. Mark Malmanger suggested contractors use a dresser coupling. Mike Steffl made a motion to table the discussion. David Kill seconded the motion. Motion carries.

## New Business

### MDH Announcements

#### Water Policy/Clean Water Fund updates

Tannie Eshenaur reported on the Minnesota Drinking Water Action Plan. The plan is complete, covering from 2024-2034, with measures for the goals. Planned to launch in first week of May, but governors' office asked them to put it on hold. Waiting for the budget to be worked out with a plan to launch it with an event.

Tannie Eshenaur reported on the SE MN Nitrate Response phases. Currently, there at Phase II, with a completion date of June 30, 2025. Phase II is being led by MDA and MPCA. There will be an open house in July to release their recommendations. MDH is working with public health intervention partners, including Tap In, group for safe drinking water for SE MN. They're working on free water tests, mitigation, well inventory, and outreach.

Tannie Eshenaur reported on private well testing result data (slide 9). The big surprise is lead at 42% detected.

- Slide list

MDH is coming up with suggestions for private well owners. David Henrich asked if MDH has any idea what's driving this increase. Tannie responded that MDH is looking into how to provide outreach. There's no corrosion control in private wells. Gabe Sweet asked if there were good controls at the point of the sample. Tannie responded that homeowners did the sampling and instructions were included. David Kill asked if there's plans to go back and resample. Tannie stated there aren't plans at this time. Gabe asked if there will be data evaluations. Tannie stated ?? David Henrich responded that the issue could be the groundwater quality and age of the well. Jordan Mayer asked how the location data was gathered. Tannie stated they asked for their address and unique well number. Tannie stated there are plans to hire a data analyst to join the Water Policy Center team. David Kill asked how the data was gathered. Tannie stated that the homeowners provided their water quality result reports to MDH.

Tannie Eshenaur reported on the well inventory (slide 10). MDH will hand off data to MGS.

Tannie Eshenaur reported on water treatment system installations (slide 11). In the process of having an interagency agreement with Olmsted County. David Nubbe asked if MDH concerned with private septic systems. Tannie responded that with a properly constructed SSTS, there should be limited issues?

Tannie Eshenaur reported on the Clean Water Fund, that the bill is passed and signed (slide 12).

Tannie Eshenaur reported on the Advisory Task Force on the Future of Minnesota's Water being created by Attorney General Keith Ellison. Members include (slide 13): ??. David Henrich stated that contractors as water supply experts should have been included as members.

Tannie Eshenaur introduced the Water Policy Center new promotional materials, and passed them around for the council to see.

### **Rulemaking updates**

Avery Guertin reported on rulemaking updates for the Submerged Closed Loop Heat Exchanger (SCLHE) rulemaking (slide 16). Rule was published in the State Register on May 19, 2025. If there are any suggested changes, Avery asked the council to reach out to her.

### **Legislative updates**

Teresa Purrington reported on legislative updates, including the governor's recommended operating adjustments beginning in fiscal year 2026. She thanked the MWWA for their support letter.

Teresa Purrington reported on the Gas Technical Advisory Committee. The team sent recommendations to the legislature on January 15, 2025 (slide 19). Need to wait to see what will happen, but it's leaning towards recommendations not accepted. If there are no changes, we have no authority over gas wells, but we do over gas exploration. We'll be moving forward with expedited rulemaking. Gabe Sweet asked if this would be stop-order for exploration. Teresa Purrington stated they'll be able to construct with no oversight.

### **eLicensing updates**

Teresa Purrington reported on eLicensing updates, including that the launch date has been changed to September-November 2025. Rich Lamb and Diana from Searles Well Drilling have offered to volunteer as test users.

### **Education Topic: GPS/GIS**

Jordan Mayer reported on GPS/GIS. MGS is concerned with everything from the ground and down. Small amount of appropriation money from the education committee because of the University of Minnesota. Grants and Clean water fund support most of the funds for MGS. Jordan presented on the history of MGS.

Jordan presented on the geologic atlas which includes C-series maps and showed visuals for the council. MGS uses well logs, physical rocks, and contractors submit cutting samples. MGS uses the County Well Index (CWI) to manage the data and Minnesota Well Index (MWI) to present that data. Not all Sealing Records go into CWI. MGS uses MNDOT soil boring records for CWI. There are many end users of CWI (see slide, we need access). The unique well number ties everything together. Locations need to be accurate for MGS to use geologic materials encountered. Prior to 1990, locations weren't digitized but plotted on maps. MGS created a CWI viewer to view CWI data separate from MWI (link in presentation) to run more elaborate queries than MWI offers. This is trial GIS system to access data that's been preloaded into the system, it's not real-time data.

Jordan encouraged contractors to include as much location information as possible. He included a QR code survey asking the question, what features would you like to see in MWI that are not currently there? Gabe Sweet asked what the confidence rating is and if that's called out

in MWI. Jordan responded that it's not called out, but there is a digitized date. If the date is June 1, 1990, it's been digitized with a topomat. Kara Dennis asked if we have updated location information, what's the best way to get that to MGS. Jordan responded contact Emily Bauer.

### Chair Topic: SCLHE Rulemaking discussion

Jennifer Weier reported on SCLHE rulemaking discussion. Jennifer Weier reported that these wells require multiple screens and MDH has accommodated that by variance, slide 62. Discussion in rule meetings is to remove the second requirement (slide). MDH has concerns on how they would verify if removing this requirement. Jennifer asked for the council's advice on approaches to ensure the protection of the aquifers. Gabe Sweet suggested using a survey tool like an acoustic televiewer to characterize the geology. David Henrich asked if we get rid of this rule part, what would need to be added to ensure the protection of the aquifer. Jennifer asked Jordan from MGS if gamma logging is an efficient tool to use with unconsolidated sediments. She stated there are other types of logging that could be used. Jordan responded that the gamma log could be a tool, but it shouldn't be the only tool. Other suggestions were test borings and bagged samples by a third party??

### Advice Topic: Licensing study materials/exam questions

Kara Dennis asked the council for advice on licensing study materials/exam questions. She reported on the number of company licenses through the years, exam information. She also reported on the findings from the 2019 Licensing Committee, slide 68. She reported on challenges, with 38 applicants since from the beginning of the year, to maintain 8 different license types and provide study materials. Complaints include that gaining applicable experience is difficult. She asked the council for advice on study materials and how to rethink the exam to make them more challenging to answer complex problems. Roger Renner responded that her CEU course is very valuable as an education tool, and suggested Franklin Electric as a tool. Steve challenged everyone on the council to take the practice test in the eLearning course and suggested including the oral interview, and others agreed. David Duffey suggested giving them a practice exam. Kara Dennis responded that she has created a practice exam and randomly creates questions. David Henrich stated that the materials in the MDH Learning Center are a good resource, and it's a great way to catalog and retrieve the information. David Henrich stated that the general knowledge questions should be removed. Danny Nubbe suggested there are some things that contractors should know, and those questions should be weighted as a priority if they don't answer correctly. David Henrich stated that things that are searchable online or can be googled, shouldn't be included and critical thinking questions should be considered. David Henrich stated some of the questions should be looked at for accuracy and validity. David Kill stated there should be a wait time before retaking the exam. Danny Nubbe stated we should refer the applicant ways to study so that they do pass after failing. Avery Guertin stated there are some proctoring exam staff that go over incorrect questions. Kara Dennis reported there are 30-60 questions to choose from for each exam. David Henrich stated the pool of questions should be greater than the number of exams. Don McKeever asked if short answer questions are written questions that are evaluated by proctor. Kara Dennis stated that there are key words that the proctor looks for in the answer. Don McKeever responded that the short answer questions should be part of the oral exam, and that

an open book portion of the exam might be beneficial, to make sure they know how to find the answers they're looking for. Kara Dennis asked if there would be interest with this group to review exam questions. Roger Renner stated that he would be interested. She asked if she puts together an eLearning course, would anyone like to review. Roger Renner and Danny Nubbe responded that they could. Roger Renner stated he has a portfolio of exams that he could share with Kara. Steve asked how we go about getting the oral exam back. David Henrich stated we'll table this to a future meeting. Teresa Purrington stated that we could work on this through the AC SharePoint site.

## Council Member Open Forum

The council discussed industry hot topics, including product/material review process and the council's involvement.

- David Henrich reported on product/material review process and the council's involvement. He asked what role we should use the council for. David Kill stated that in the past, this group was significant in new product discussions. Teresa Purrington asked what our rule says regarding these requirements. David Henrich responded that in the past, we've had lists of approved products, but there are other things that are industry specific that would need to go through an MDH review. Mark Malmanger responded that this evaluation process isn't in rule and is sometimes created as part of a variance. Teresa Purrington responded that we need to update our rules, as the products aren't the issue. Jennifer Weier responded that we weren't approving products but verifying that they meet the rule requirements. Jon Olson stated that our rules/statutes do not allow us to approve products. Teresa Purrington responded that we need to open the rule to account for new products/materials. Jon Olson stated that he's been part of rulemaking projects that are performance based, this requires research to see if there's comparable standards in other states but would be a better opportunity to keep up with technology. David Henrich asked if the council agrees that new product be brought in front of this group, as it has been in the past as it's been a while.

## Next meeting

Date: September 3, 2025

Time: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Location: MPCA

## Adjourn

Danny Nubbe moved to end the meeting. Don McKeever seconded the motion. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned.

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03/05/2025

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