



HAMILTON COUNTY
**First
Suburbs
Consortium**

Membership Meeting

July 18, 2012
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Meier's Winery
6955 Plainfield Road
Silverton

Meeting Notes

Attending

Dan Brooks, North College Hill; Amy Stenger, North College Hill; Amy Bancroft, North College Hill; Angie Buettner, Mt. Healthy; Kelly Harrington, Blue Ash; Jim O'Reilly, Wyoming; John Smith, Silverton; Gerri Harbison, Montgomery; Frank Davis, Montgomery; David Krings, Lockland; Alan Zaffiro, Golf Manor; Donna Faulk, Golf Manor; Loretta Rokey, Glendale

MaryLynn Lodor, MSDGC; Cheri Bush, MSDGC; Todd Kinskey, HCP&D; Brian Wamsley, HCP&D; Andy Dobson, HCP&D

1. Welcome and Introductions

John Smith opened the meeting and had everyone introduce themselves. Since we haven't had a membership meeting for a while, it was a good opportunity to get to know or reacquaint everyone.

Poor weather kept several people from attending. Severe thunderstorms and widespread power outages clogged up just about every highway in town.

2. Update of first suburbs membership roster

Andy Dobson briefly described the new membership roster and demographic summary of our member communities. It was included with the agendas handed out at the start of the meeting. He also described the new Build Hamilton County website project that Planning and Development staff are working on. This will be a one-stop online building and development gateway that will provide information and guidance for developing any property in the County.

3. Treasurer update

Jim O'Reilly presented a Treasurer update. FSC has \$1,600 in an active checking account. The group has invested this year in the shared services summit and Planning Partnership sustainability series. FSC has around \$10,000 in investment accounts (CD's).

4. Shared IT services presentation

David Horine, Exec. Director of Hamilton Clermont Cooperative Association gave his presentation over the shared IT services his organization offers. David is a retired school superintendent, which fits well with HCCA's public school district market. David distributed handouts of his slide presentation.

HCCA formed as a shared service provider in 1991. It once only served school districts but with change in state law can now market its services to local government organizations. HCCA is already working with Hamilton County on email exchange hosting for 750 email accounts, and some joint projects with Hamilton County Communications Center and the Hillcrest School.

HCCA provides a range of business applications and computer technology (and expert support) to its customers. Their largest customer base are schools, but they are signing up more and more local government organizations.

According to David, HCCA has one of the best IT fiber networks of all the IT co-ops across the state. This network is very reliable, very fast, and offers Tier 1 service because of two redundant data centers in Mt. Healthy and Blue Ash. Data backups are stored in another location. Customers are taking advantage of their VOIP, email, and voice mail products.

In case of problems, their network redundancies and reliability have things back up very quickly. Customers may not even notice the downtime.

A lot of HCCA work is back office financial functions—payroll, accounts receivable and payable, using State Board of Education software which is available for free and standardized across school districts. In this case, the only cost is administration and hardware.

HCCA sees a growth area in providing similar financial management services to groups of communities that agree to use a standard software package. David sees that they could provide more continuity than private software vendors that change versions, go out of business, etc. Document management systems are another service HCCA can provide communities.

In terms of costs to customers, David stated that if HCCA can't provide a service more cheaply than a private vendor, then they're doing something wrong because they are a non-profit organization and should be able to come in with a lower bid

The demand for IT and increasingly sophisticated software is always growing. Municipalities may have trouble affording keeping up with hardware and personnel expertise. HCCA provides

high-end hardware, software, and expertise 24/7 to its customers. They understand the needs for confidentiality, secure storage, protection from hacking and malware, and can offer more assurances than free services like Google and Microsoft online systems.

Questions and Answers

Jim O'Reilly:

The government reform task force made a recommendation for county offices to consolidate back office functions -- can HCCA be a partner in pushing for these changes to happen?

Todd Kinskey:

E-mail service from HCCA under Board of Commissioner departments is a test program to discover savings potential -- once we have some data we could make the argument for other departments and offices to come on board

Organizations still need to have some IT staff in-house, just not as many and don't have as many challenges to deal with – HCCA takes care of the big problems.

5. Project Groundwork presentation

MaryLynn Lodor from MSD gave a presentation and slideshow over the Project Groundwork initiative. MSD has been operating under a consent decree from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This decree requires MSD to make all necessary changes to its infrastructure and operations to stop the 2 billion gallons of sewage overflows into the Mill Creek. These overflows happen during heavy rain when the storm sewer system and combined sewer system is overloaded. Storm water mixes with sewage and is discharged directly into local streams and the Mill Creek through combined sewer overflows (CSOs).

MSD has worked intensely for three years on the Lower Mill Creek Partial Remedy Study, where problems with CSOs are the worst. The traditional approach to this problem would be to increase the capacity of the treatment plant, build more separate storm sewer infrastructure, and construct a massive underground tunnel that would stretch for miles along the Mill Creek. This tunnel would hold overflow from storm surges and slowly release it into the main treatment system.

An alternative set of strategies, generally known as green infrastructure, would first consider drainage conditions across the entire watershed leading to a particular creek or stream. Then, working with and restoring natural drainage and water storage functions of the landscape, this approach reduces and controls storm water runoff and minimizes the amount entering the sewer system. For many reasons, not the least of which is an estimated \$200 million cost savings, MSD is pursuing this alternative strategy. Ultimately, what is developed will likely be a hybrid of “grey” and “green” infrastructure.

EPA required some proof-of-concept data before considering this alternative, and MSD provided it with the Lick Run Watershed Strategic Integration plan. This conceptual proposal illustrates how MSD investment in the South Fairmont neighborhood can be leveraged into wholesale community redevelopment and revitalization.

When comparing alternatives, factors that must be considered include:

- Cost to ratepayers
- How much water will be diverted from CSOs
- How clean the water reaching streams and rivers will be
- Long-term sustainability of different alternatives
- Adaptability of different alternatives to new development, changes in land use

MSD continues to modify its modeling to predict and get better data on how a hybrid/green alternative will behave in the real world. As this work continues, the accuracy increases of the estimated amount of water that can be treated and how much the plan will cost .

December 31, 2012 is deadline for submitting a proposed solution to EPA for evaluation. MSD continues to work closely with Cincinnati planning, Hamilton County Planning and Development, and local residents and community officials. Two town hall meetings are scheduled in August:

Thursday, 8/16/12
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
MSD Administration Building
1081 Woodrow Street

Thursday, 8/23/12
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
MSD Wastewater Collection Division
225 West Galbraith Road

Questions and Answers

Jim O'Reilly:

Jim raised a question about percentage increases ratepayers will pay under each of the alternatives. The earlier elected officials can get this information from MSD the better, because they will have to address concerns from their constituents.

MaryLynn responded that rate increases are difficult to determine at this point because policymakers have not decided with alternative to use. She mentioned rate studies that estimated 8% annual increases.

Dan Brooks:

Dan Brooks (Mayor, North College Hill) pointed out that constituents will have two questions that need ready answers: how much will this raise my sewer bill, and will it stop sewage backups. MSD has to have a ready answer to both of these questions—an actual dollar amount. People will accept increases if the number is accurate, and if they know it will solve problems.

David Krings:

David discussed how the tunnel option was always estimated to result in double-digit rate increases. Anything that could reduce that should be supported. Rate payers are going to have to carry the cost and MSD can't be blamed for funding cutbacks from federal and state governments for infrastructure projects.

Frank Davis:

Frank mentioned that the models for overflow treatment volumes seem to be shifting around as more data becomes available. What is EPA expecting MSD to build a solution around? MaryLynn responded that MSD is working closely with EPA to keep up-to-date with new modeling data.

6. Other business

Jim O'Reilly distributed information regarding hydrofracking and what communities may be able to do through zoning regulations to prevent waste injection wells being constructed in their community.

Loretta Rokey distributed information from OKI about the history of transportation infrastructure across the region, and twenty-seven projects that are coming up on the OKI agenda.

John Smith announced that the next executive committee meeting will be August 6th, 2012 from 8:30 - 10:00 am.

MEETING ADJOURNED