

Work Session Summary

October 29, 2010
10:30 AM-12:00 PM
Wayne County Park Street Complex

Attendance: Edward Coar (Chairman), Brian Smith, Chris Barrett, Donna Labar, Bob Muller, Michele Stahl, Gene Linscomb, Steve Price, Joann Hudak, Ed. D.

Work Session Summaries – Chairman Coar asked if everyone had a chance to review the work session summaries for the previous months. There were no comments on the summaries and it was decided to post the summaries on the Gas Task Force website.

Sub-Committee Reports –

Environment – Bob Muller reported that the ‘Common Waters’ Marcellus dialogue group continues working on development of information for release. It is expected that information will soon be released on the ‘Common Waters’ website. The sub-committee spent time discussing the methane migration issue. Mr. Muller indicated that Pennsylvania is one of only two states that have no water well construction standards, the other being Alaska. The lack of standards is thought to be a contributing factor to well water problems. A question was raised in regard to whether or not Penn State accepts water samples for testing. Penn State does accept samples, but for a fee. It was pointed out that a water well testing seminar, which was hosted by the Penn State Cooperative Extension, was held in June in Wayne County. It was mentioned that Hess is conducting water well testing out to 5,000 feet from the well bore. As such, they are testing beyond the 1,000 feet that is typically required. The industry has indicated that E. coli and methane have been encountered in some of the testing that has occurred. It was not clear if the methane was biogenic or thermogenic. Testing is typically done out to 1,000 feet from the well bore because that is the presumption of guilt distance. It was mentioned that some residents did not want their well water tested. This is not advisable since the presumption of guilt on the part of the gas company would no longer be valid if the well water was not tested. It was remarked that the gas migration is largely attributable to poor cement jobs. The testing of concrete is something that is not required. Mr. Muller indicated that his sub-committee would continue to monitor the gas migration issue.

Mr. Coar mentioned to the Task Force that he attended a floodplain management meeting in Williamsport. The afternoon sessions of this meeting focused on Marcellus drilling as it relates to floodplains. It was reported that the floodplain maps are being updated across Pennsylvania. The new mapping will result in the adoption of new floodplain management ordinances. The meeting discussion, in regard to the Marcellus shale, centered on how gas wells in floodplains will be managed. Mr. Muller and the Wayne Conservation District staff are working with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development to complete the floodplain mapping revision project, which also includes assisting municipalities with their floodplain ordinances. It was indicated that the municipalities must participate in this program in order to be eligible for Federal funding in the event of flooding.

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Workforce – Joann Hudak, Ed. D., reported on very good news that the Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board (WIB), which includes the Counties of Carbon, Monroe, Pike and Wayne, is now included in ShaleNet. ShaleNet is a federal grant of nearly five (5) million dollars that will be distributed to WIBs across the State for the purpose of gas industry job training. This means that the Pocono Counties, including Wayne County, are now eligible for a portion of the five (5) million dollars of ShaleNet funding. The funding, which is specific to gas and oil jobs, will be directed through the local job training offices. The training focus will be on derrick and rotary drill operators, service unit operators, roustabouts, welding and truck drivers.

On November 2nd at 1:00 PM at the Wayne County Area Agency on Aging, Frank Thompson, Director of the Northern Tier Workforce Investment Board (NT WIB) will be giving a presentation on the job training funding opportunities available through ShaleNet. The County Commissioners, Workforce Wayne and the WIB members have been invited to participate in that event.

Safety – Steve Price reported that the Wayne County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has been invited to a meeting in Wyoming County on November 22nd. The meeting will be attended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and other county EMAs.

Mr. Price announced that the last free well training course for first responders has been set for December 7th and 8th at Lake Ladore Lodge. A handout was passed out for the upcoming course, which is titled ‘*Well Control Incident Management: Effective Strategies & Tactics For Municipal Responders*’. For more information on this course, see the ‘Events’ page of the Task Force website at www.wcpaolandgastaskforce.info/events.php. With the expected attendance at this next training course, the total number of first responders that have been trained to date should exceed 275.

Mr. Price has also been working with Emergency Medical Services of Northeastern Pennsylvania (EMSNP), which is the government agency for emergency services in Wayne County. He is trying to get an updated class or course together that will be offered to local paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). The course that will likely be offered would be ‘Traumatic Injury Management’. The training could either be set up for an individual to complete online or it could be in a group setting. The training would likely occur sometime after the first of the year.

In regard to gas drilling, the main focus of the State Police at this time is the enforcement of safety regulations associated with truck traffic. It was mentioned that Hess is in the process of setting up voluntary truck inspections with the State Police. As reported, nearly all of the State roads are now posted for weight limits. A map, which illustrates the Wayne County posted roads, is available at <http://www.dot.state.pa.us/pennidot/Districts/district4.nsf/MarcellusD4PostedRoadsMaps2010.htm>. It was also indicated that Hess’s road upgrade plan was recently approved and they are looking to improve some roads prior to use.

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Outreach – Michele Stahl reported on the ‘Marcellus Drilling 101’ public meeting, which was held on the evening of October 19th at the Wayne Highlands High School. The meeting went very well. Mr. Coar thanked Mr. Linscomb of Hess Corp. for participating in the question and answer portion of the event.

Michele Stahl questioned if another radio spot should be done after completion of the next public safety course that was discussed earlier. It was suggested that the radio spot could summarize how many first responders have been trained through the courses. The radio announcement will be set up after the December 7th / 8th program is completed so final attendance numbers will be known. It was mentioned that emergency response training is something that Hess spends a lot of time on. Mr. Linscomb indicated that Hess is planning on doing some in house drills at a drill site and he inquired whether or not, and to what extent, the County would be interested in participating in these types of events. Mr. Price indicated they would most definitely like to be involved. It was suggested by several members of the Task Force that this would be a good opportunity to bring together the different types of first responders and it would allow them to become familiar with the coordination of an incident response.

A question was raised in regard to future potential topics for the next public meeting. It was discussed if the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) should be the focus of a future public meeting. Several Task Force members indicated the DRBC could provide information on their charter and the forthcoming new regulations that pertain to gas drilling in the Delaware basin. It was decided that the Task Force would wait until after the first of the year to schedule the topic and date of the next public meeting.