

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 28, 2014 (Revised July 28, 2014, see red text under Agenda Item 5)

To: Members of the VCU Fluoride Commission – Dave Bengs (Chair), Mark Thiros (Co-Chair), Tim Daly, Judith Harrington, Jon Schoer, Kevin Steele, Jennifer Waldo

From: Stu Walesh, Facilitator

CC: Steve Poulos; John Hardwick; Mike Langer; Shihua Chen; Times; Post Tribune; Gary Foreman; William Hirzy; Ed Charbonneau; Mary Woodworth; Peggy Busse; James R. Miller, MD; Douglas M. Bush; Terry G. Schechner, DDS; Linda S. Orgain; Hollis Russinof; Ed Popcheff; E. Angeles Martinez Mier, DDS, MSD, PhD; Jim Powers; Michelle Greenhalgh; Jean Caster; Ron Ziolkowski; Eileen Curosh, RDH, BS; Isaac Zeckel, DDS; Christopher Gall, DDS; Robert Corns, DDS; Michael Pancini; Jillian Pancini; Paul Sechrist; Walt Breitinger; Dr. Tom Ludwig

Re: Summary of Meeting 5 on Wednesday, July 23, 2014

Participants: All members of the Commission; Steve Poulos, Utilities Director; Shihua Chen, Water Operations Manager; Stu Walesh, Facilitator; John Hardwick, Coordinator; Peggy Busse, Administrative Assistant; about 20 citizens; and James Wolf of the *Post*.

- 1. Welcome** – The meeting started at 5:05 PM with Fluoride Commission Chair Dave Bengs welcoming everyone, introducing the other Commissioners, and asking Stu Walesh to facilitate the meeting.
- 2. Purpose of the meeting and protocol** – Stu Walesh reviewed the charge to the Commission, that is, should the Valparaiso City Utilities/City of Valparaiso, through its treatment and distribution of the public water supply, continue to be the mechanism to provide fluoride to the general public via systemic fluoridation? He indicated that this meeting is the first time the Commissioners will be able to discuss among themselves whatever is on their minds regarding their charge -- instead of mostly listening to others. This is primarily a working meeting for the Commissioners. Finally, others in attendance at the meeting will be invited, at specific times/places, to comment if they wish.
- 3. Synopsis of Commission activity to date** – Walesh noted the following principal Commission activities: Kick off meeting on 5/21/14, tour of Flint Lake water treatment plant, provision of the Resources and References list, statements from experts and others in support and opposition, posting of about 150 items (agendas, meeting summaries, Commissioner's questions and responses from experts, and other documents) on the VCU website, and answering approximately 40 varied questions posed by Commissioners since the last meeting.
- 4. Individual responses to pre-meeting question** -- About one week before this meeting, each Commissioner was asked to begin thinking about his or her main concern/issue and be prepared

to share it during it this meeting. With that as background, the Commissioners shared the following concerns/issues:

- a) Do health “benefits” offset health “costs”?
- b) Are there other adverse effects, similar to fluorosis, such as an impact on bones?
- c) Is the public water supply the most effective way to provide fluoride, that is, might there be viable alternate means of distribution?
- d) Is this really a socio-economic issue?
- e) Should the City impose fluoride on everyone?
- f) Is there an adverse I.Q. impact?
- g) Are there possible environmental impacts resulting from introducing more fluoride into the water supply and, therefore, into the environment?
- h) Is fluoride “safe”?

Commissioners discussed each of the above concerns/issues and then comments were invited from citizens with the following results:

- Matt Nondorf, DDS, DHSc, stated that a number of health and dental organizations (ADA, AAPD, ADHA) are constantly reviewing the studies that are being published and continue to endorse water fluoridation.
- Gary Foreman said that the CDC has stated that fluoridated water should not be used for infant formula. Fluoridating the public water source is considered “medicating” the water, the public has no choice in the matter, and the dosage cannot be controlled. He also stated that fluoride accumulates.
- Terry Schechner, DDS stated that it costs the City \$.60 per person per year to fluoridate the water; however, repairing one cavity can cost \$125. Adverse effects in bones due to fluoridation have not been seen in the US. IQ levels have increased by 3 points in the last 4 decades. Fluoride in the water source is a balanced exposure.

5. “What If?” discussions – This hypothetical exercise was intended to enable the Commissioners to express a wide variety of thoughts without necessarily indicating their preference relative to the Commission's charge. The hypothetical aspect of "What If?" frees individuals to “think out loud” without committing themselves – unless, of course, they want to take a stance. A form of brainstorming was used in which idea sharing, without analysis, was encouraged.

Part 1: “What if” the City decides to **stop adding fluoride to the water supply**, then what should the City do? The collective responses of first the Commissioners and then some of the citizens in attendance were as follows:

- a) Explain why, drawing on the Commission’s report
- b) Determine who wants to continue to get fluoride
 - i) Inform them about other sources
 - ii) Provide more dental hygiene education to offset termination of fluoridation – focus on school age children – start/strengthen a broad public education program
 - iii) Provide financial assistance to those who cannot afford various means of acquiring fluoride
- c) Phase the elimination of fluoride
- d) Benefit from reduced chemical, equipment, and labor costs
- e) Sell fluoridation equipment
- f) Attract more dental professionals
- g) Start a long-term monitoring study to determine possible positive/negative effects of stopping fluoridation – e.g., student performance, dental caries
- h) Deal with ambient fluoride, i.e., possibly remove it
- i) Join with cities that are taking similar actions -- Be perceived as bold, a leader, embracing change

Citizens provided the following input in response to the preceding “What If?” results:

- Dr. Tom Ludwig, pediatrician – This may be perceived as a bold move – maybe not in a good way. Are there enough compelling issues to make this kind of change?
- Walt Breitinger – The public would need to be informed. Maybe phase it out, not stop altogether.
- Carolyn Foreman – Ending fluoride in our water would not be bold since so many other communities are doing this around the country and the world. She also said that we would not be first in the state of Indiana.
- Gary Foreman – The City would need to provide more health and nutrition education to the community.

- Jim Powers, IN Dept. of Health – More analysis of current studies.

Part 2: “What if” the City decides to **continue adding fluoride to the water supply**, then what should the City do? The collective responses of first the Commissioners and then citizens were as follows:

- a) Explain why, drawing on the Commission’s report
- b) Revisit the fluoridation issue in 5 to 10 years possibly with another temporary fluoride commission
- c) Experience continued and possibly increased chemical, equipment, and labor costs associated with fluoridation
- d) Provide more/better dental education
 - i) Inform parents about infant dental care – e.g., the ADA recommends that infants be seen by a dentist at one year in order to provide guidance to the parents.
 - ii) VCU could supplement a community-wide dental education program – e.g., refer to ADA guidance in VCU annual reports

The preceding prompted the following citizen input:

- Walt Breitinger – How were the members of the Fluoride Commission chosen and by whom? Answer: Utilities Director Steve Poulos and Mayor Jon Costas chose community members with diversified backgrounds, professions, and educations.

6. Possible extended discussion – Commissioners discussed the possibility of taking a straw poll. This included recognition that the Indiana Open Door Law requires that the complete results of any voting must be made public as in “who voted for what?” The Commission decided to defer any voting until the next meeting, or later, to give Commissioners more time to ask questions and study the available materials. Commissioners noted that the outcome of the fluoridation study and its health implications may have an effect on attracting businesses/residents to the City.

7. Closing comments/next steps – Stu Walesh thanked the Commissioners and the citizens for their participation. He urged Commissioners to share additional questions they may have with the support staff who will, in turn, seek answers from various experts. The support staff will seek additional studies/papers from Dr. Mier and Dr. Hirzy as requested. As soon as the next meeting is scheduled, everyone (Commissioners and individuals on the email contact list) will be immediately notified).

8. Adjourn – Chair Dave Bengs thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at about 7:00 PM.

Next scheduled Commission meeting – After polling Commission members shortly after Meeting 5 to determine their availability, the next Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 7, 5:00 PM, City Hall. An agenda will follow.