Informal Report
to Mayor and Council

Participation in Water Research Foundation Tailored Collaboration Project

City Council Meeting Date: 06-05-12

ISSUE
Provide an update on staff’s proposed participation in a Tailored Collaboration Project with the Water Research Foundation.

DISCUSSION
Arlington and other areas have experienced a significant amount of natural gas well development. With this increase in the activity of hydraulic fracturing, there is a need to confirm and update our understanding of any potential impacts on surface water quality and drinking water and wastewater treatment operations.

An approach to validating or improving our current processes is to engage the Water Research Foundation in a Tailored Collaboration research project. The Water Research Foundation is a member-supported, international nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. Formed in 1966, it is the nation’s only research foundation devoted to drinking water research and governed by water utilities. With more than 950 subscriber members who provide water to 80 percent of the U.S. population, the Water Research Foundation has funded and managed more than 1,000 research projects.

The proposed research project is a collaboration of seven (7) water utility partners from Texas, Pennsylvania and Colorado and the Water Research Foundation. The project scope includes identifying chemicals associated with fracturing fluids, flowback and produced waters. While there are some lists available (such as FracFocus), this project will aggregate the information into a format useful for water utilities. The research will also comprehensively identify the physical and chemical properties of the chemical constituents in fracturing fluids, flowback and produced waters. The research will tie these properties to a range of physical and chemical properties of interest to water utilities.

The research will also help Arlington Water Utilities department:

- Confirm or update the identification of the potential pathways that need to be protected for drinking water supplies by consolidating the available information on this subject.
- Evaluate the ability of treatment facilities to address flowback and produced waters.
- Allow utilities to standardize the components of a monitoring plan, including having a reasonable list of chemical constituents, define frequencies for sampling and identify indicator parameters for monitoring.
- Address emergency preparedness for spills and response to customer inquiries.

Arlington will contribute $24,000 toward the research project. The other Utilities and Water Research Foundation will also participate so that the total research budget including cash and in-kind contribution will be $260,200.

ACTION
Unless otherwise directed, the Arlington Water Utilities department will participate in the research and utilize the results to enhance its water quality monitoring procedures.
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