

To: West Valley Citizen Task Force  
From: Bill Logue, Citizen Task Force Facilitator  
Date: March 10, 2021  
Subject: **Summary of the January 27, 2021 Meeting**

## **Next Meeting**

Date & Time: **March 24, 2021 at 6:30 PM**  
Location: Zoom

## **CTF Members and Alternates Attending**

Clyde Drake, Heidi Hartley, John Hood, Lee James, Kathy McGoldrick, Tony Memmo, Joe Patti, John Pfeffer, Mary Reid, Pat Townsend, Ray Vaughan, Eric Wohlers, Ken Zittel. Facilitator: Loraine Della Porta.

## **Agency Participants and Observers**

**Department of Energy (DOE):** Bryan Bower, Martin Krentz, Bethany MacNeill, Moira Maloney, Carol Streczywilk.

**New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA):** Paul Bembia, Lee Gordon, Andrea Mellon, Peter Vlad.

**CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, LLC. (CHBWV):** Joe Pillittere, John Rendall, Kelly Wooley.

**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation:** Pat Concannon, Ken Martin, Lynn Winterberger.

**Neptune and Company:** Sean McCandless.

**Public:** Christopher Agle, Wayne Barber, Marissa Bell, Charley Bowman, Diane D'Arrigo, Anthony Giacobbe, Joanne Hameister, Garrett Maul, Charlotte Salmon, Shannon Seneca, Kelsey Shank, Lynda Schneekloth, William Townsend, Barbara Warrem, Jay Wopperer. (Other dial in only callers not identified.)

## **Introductions, Announcements, Administrative Business**

Bill Logue welcomed all present and reviewed the meeting agenda and materials<sup>1</sup>. He noted a recent obituary in the Buffalo News for long-time CTF member Lee Lambert. Bryan Bower of DOE informed the group that Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer is the nominee for Secretary of Energy and William "Ike" White will continue as the Acting Assistant Secretary for the Office of Environmental Management.

## **CHBWV Project Update**

Kelly Wooley of CHBWV presented a project update.

**Safety.** Mr. Wooley reviewed safety information noting that the last lost time case and recordable injury were in March 2019. This amounts to 652 days. In response to a question, he noted that although COVID had impacted work progress, a significant amount of work was accomplished safely.

**2020 Accomplishments.** He reviewed the 2020 accomplishments, Namely:

- Maintained DOE VPP Star level safety status
- Completed the demolition of the Main Plant Office Building, Utility Room building and Acid Recovery Cell airlock
- Completed deactivation of the below-grade rooms and cells in the Main Plant Process Building (MPPB) and completed removal of asbestos-containing material from the Fuel Receiving and Storage Facility
- Continued deactivation in the Product Purification Cell-South using Nitrocision® technology
- Completed significant infrastructure improvements: offsite railroad line repairs; underwater inspections, cleaning, and repairs to fire water storage tank; paving of the south parking lot and other roadways

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<sup>1</sup> Each is listed at the end of this summary and may be found at [www.westvalleyctf.org](http://www.westvalleyctf.org)

- Received a new heavy-duty fork truck with long-reach arm for future waste operations
- Initiated modifications to the Drum Cell building to support MPPB demolition Waste Operations

Some of the remaining work in the MPPB deactivation requires workers to be close together and has been suspended due COVID safety protocols. CHBWV and DOE are determining when that work can safely resume.

**Deactivation and Demolition Progress.** Mr. Wooley showed graphics of MPPB work completed and planned. The deactivation of the Fuel Receiving and Storage Facility is complete. The MPPB will begin demolition in 2021 and the Load In/Load Out Facility will be demolished in 2023.

Under Performance Based Incentive (PBI) #1, MPPB demolition preparations include:

- Acquisition of and training on a Taylor Reachstacker forklift that can lift box containers up to 90,000 pounds that will be used for loading and unloading railcars safely and efficiently.
- Installation of new long-reach arm on the 1250 excavator to increase reach to 86 feet and modifications to the excavator to allow the cab to tilt for the operator to view the arm during demolition of high areas.
- Acquisition of Rail King railcar mover that can operate on roads or rail lines to move railcars around the site without a switcher locomotive. This will be more versatile and cost efficient.
- A demolition area boundary fence of Jersey Barriers with wire fencing was installed surrounding most of the MPPB except for access points needed prior to the start of demolition.
- The General Purpose Cell (GPC), GPC Crane Room and General Operating Aisle were grouted.
- Vent Wash Room work was suspended due to COVID-19 safety protocols. Testing of the mini-Brokk and cutting head determined that it could not be maneuvered to fit in the area. Manual cutting options are being explored for the 40 cuts of pipes and ducts. Employees are assisting in the planning process. The entry is being enlarged to reduce worker dose and ease safe access for workers and equipment.
- In November decontamination work was suspended in the Product Purification Cell-South due to COVID concerns and social distancing needs. Resumption of work is being evaluated and when work resumes, workers will continue using protective suits with breathing air. The Nitrocision® process is producing better than expected results in reduction of source term on the walls.

**Balance of Site Facilities (BOSF).** Forty-four of 46 BOSF have been removed and areas restored. The South Parking Lot was repaved. Brush was cleared from the on-site railroad tracks. Drum cell modifications have begun to support waste operations. Upcoming work includes completion of removal of CPC-Waste Storage Area gravel and restoration and removal of the Schoolhouse septic tank and well followed by restoration of the area.

**Community Support.** Donations include: West Valley Fire District #1 \$80,000; Bertrand Chaffee Hospital \$5,000; Mercy Flight \$5,000 and United Way \$15,016. The annual food drive collected and volunteers delivered 125,000 pounds of food to nine food pantries.

**2021 Goals.** Mr. Woolley listed the following goals for the year:

- Complete all work safely and compliantly
- Complete demolition, disposition, and restoration of the remaining balance of site facilities (Chemical Processing Cell - Waste Storage Area, Schoolhouse septic system)
- Complete installation and testing of new water treatment system to support MPPB demolition
- Complete deactivation activities in the MPPB, and complete disposition of the waste
- Complete remaining MPPB demolition preparations and readiness activities
- Begin demolition of the MPPB and ship 4 million pounds of debris
- Begin rail shipments from WVDP for MPPB demolition debris

The MPPB demolition is being reviewed as part of a Baseline Change Request and will likely start in July at the earliest. The MPPB is approximately 130 ft wide, 270 ft long, 70 ft tall at its highest point and is 35,000 ft<sup>2</sup> in area.

The February 24 Quarterly Public meeting will address MPPB Deactivation and Demolition, MPPB Characterization and MPPB Monitoring.

A CTF member asked about the process for determining the barrier fence location and water treatment during MPPB demolition. Mr. Woolley stated that the barrier fence location is based on modeling for the facility with strict criteria for levels based on dispersion for the boundary.

During demolition berms will capture water and route it to storage tanks where it will be sampled and treated for constituents. The water treatment system is targeting treatment of potential radiological contamination as well as asbestos and sedimentation particulates using physical filters, settling tanks and resin filter systems. Following the meeting Mr. Woolley clarified that radionuclides that will be removed include Cs-137, Sr-90 and to a much lesser extent alpha-Pu isotopes. Treatment system influent concentrations could be as high as (anticipated worst case):

- Cs-137: 0.014 uCi/ml (1.4E-02)
- Sr-90: 0.0081 uCi/ml (8.1E-03)
- Total Alpha: 0.00047 uCi/ml (4.7E-04)

Another CTF member asked about sampling related to the Nitrocision® process. During the process direct surveys are taken of the walls and to date achieving an over 90% reduction in source term, at times 98-99%. The “fines” (debris removed) are also sampled. Core samples may be done in the future. Because of COVID protocols the work has been intermittent.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has provided comments to DOE on the MPPB demolition plan, DOE has addressed the comments and believes all comments have been resolved.

### **NYSERDA SDA Fieldwork Preview**

Andrea Mellon of NYSERDA presented a preview of 2021 fieldwork for the State-Licensed Disposal Area (SDA). By way of context, she summarized the results of the investigation studies and recommendations concerning water infiltration in the Trench 14 (T-14). In brief, surface water flowing from rain and snowmelt on the NRC-Licensed Disposal Area (NDA) hardstand is infiltrating T-14 through a permeable layer of organic material and peat. To stop the infiltration, a sheet pile wall will be driven perpendicular to the bentonite slurry wall and a geomembrane cover will be placed on over the NDA hardstand. The measures will route the water as clean water for discharge from the site. Work will take 6-8 weeks and start in April or May.

Core samples will be taken to better delineate the peat areas on the north slope of the SDA where some cracks exist. The north slope has some unconsolidated soils from the construction of the trenches in the 1960's. Additional monitoring locations will be installed and increased frequency of monitoring for slope movement will be instituted. She noted that in addition to the SDA construction, the area had been used for farming, so soil disturbance had occurred and the some of the characteristics are not what was anticipated. Following the work, a progress report will be given on the slope monitoring and installation of the sheet pile wall and geomembrane cover.

A CTF member asked if the peat and organic layers within the SDA could provide a pathway for contaminated liquids to migrate out of the trenches and be released. Ms. Mellon stated that since the SDA geomembrane cover was installed there has been a slow downward migration of leachate in the trenches, and that the groundwater monitoring wells that surround the SDA do not show a migration of leachate out of the trenches to the organic/peat layer. In addition, the groundwater movement is towards the trenches, not out of the trenches. Finally, Ms. Mellon mentioned that the leachate will need to be evaluated from a long-term perspective and that no decisions regarding the leachate have been made.

### **DOE Budget Update**

Carol Streczywik, DOE Program Manager, gave an update on the budget for the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP). She noted the three simultaneous budget phases: the budget in execution – currently FY 2021; the Congressional Formulation Phase that begins at the start of the calendar year with budget outlooks presented to Congress and submission of the president's budget to Congress in February, which is followed by committee hearings in the house and senate prior to passage and submission to the president for signing – currently the FY 2022 budget; and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Agency Formulation Phase – currently that generally begins in March of each year – this work will begin soon for the FY 2023 budget.

Ms. Streczywik showed comparisons between the 2020 and 2021 enacted budgets for Environmental Management at DOE. Defense environmental cleanup was down 20.33%, Non-Defense Environmental Cleanup

down 13.59% and the Uranium Enrichment D&D Fund down 8.49%.

The 2021 enacted budget allocation for WVDP is \$88.113 million for non-defense environmental cleanup and \$4.298 million from the defense portion of the budget for safeguards and security. The total funding for WVDP for FY 2021 is \$92.411Million up from \$79.611 million in FY 2020. Ms. Streczywik noted that the increase shows that WVDP is a top priority for DOE.

She reviewed the funding highlights:

- Continue to provide Physical Security and Cyber Security.
- Manage and maintain site infrastructure, and conduct environmental monitoring.
- Maintain the underground storage tanks, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission-Licensed Disposal Area, and the Permeable Treatment Wall.
- Complete deactivation of the Main Plant Process Building (MPPB).
- Begin demolition of the above grade portion of the MPPB.
- Continue removal of excess facilities.

Mr. Bower noted that the WVDP Reauthorization Act references funding of \$75million/year through 2026. Later in the meeting a member suggested the group consider advocating for the site in the near future while the 2023 budget is being developed within DOE and OMB.

### **CTF Annual Organizational Meeting**

The facilitator noted that prior to the meeting the group received draft copies of their 2020 Annual Summary of Activities and Annual Survey. There were no comments or edits.

**Membership Analysis.** The group discussed community representation. The facilitator stated that he was working with the agencies on outreach to the West Valley Central Schools for when the new superintendent is appointed and would be reaching out to New York State Senator Borrello’s office. After discussion the facilitator agreed to summarize historical representation on the CTF and the current gaps and review that with the agencies and perhaps an ad hoc workgroup prior to bringing recommendations back to the full group at a future meeting.

**Review of 1998 Final Report.** A CTF member suggested that the group review its 1998 Final Report and discuss the implications for a preferred end-state for the site. There are four original CTF members on the CTF. Following discussion, it was agreed that the facilitator would convene to the four original members to review the report, identify the steps that helped achieve consensus that could inform the SEIS comment process and present their thoughts to the full CTF for use in review and discussion of the 1998 Final Report.

**Outreach.** Mary Reid suggested that education and outreach could be coordinated with some of the community work and studies that she and colleagues are conducting on public health issues. Flowing from this was discussion of presentations being planned by the agencies and CHBWV to the county legislatures for Cattaraugus and Erie Counties and local boards. A member noted that with elections the need to continue regular education is important. Several CTF members indicated that they would be willing to participate in those presentations.

**Future Meeting Topics.** The group will discuss the recently released GAO Report on West Valley and discuss the implications for advocacy on the issues for congressional action. Another topic is a discussion of the level of detail in SEIS comments from the group and what that may mean for having presentations on some of the underlying technical issues. An ad hoc technical work group may discuss this.

### **Observer Comments**

Observer questions have been addressed in the above summary.

### **Action Items**

Action	Who; When
Convene work group to review 1998 Final Report	Logue
Identify historical membership categories and current gaps	Logue

## **Meeting Documents Available on the CTF Website**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Generated by; Date</b>
Meeting Agenda	Logue; 1/27/21
CHBWV Project Update	CHBWV; 1/27/21
DOE Budget Update	DOE; 1/27/21
CTF 2020 Summary of Activities	Logue; 1/27/21
News Clippings Since the Last Meeting	NYSERDA; 1/27/21