



VWAA STRATEGIC PLAN

Virginia Water & Waste Authorities Association

draft 12-08-2021

MISSION STATEMENT

Promote and defend the interests of Virginia's water and waste authorities by:

1. Monitoring Virginia General Assembly legislation affecting authorities
2. Providing a network for the effective dissemination of information to and from the membership
3. Becoming a strategic voice as an Association representing authorities regarding legislation, regulations, and other issues at the State level
4. Becoming a strategic resource as an Association representing authorities regarding legislation, regulations, and other issues that are precedent-setting at the local level
5. Becoming a strategic voice to proactively change and improve the Act so that we can be more responsive to customers and communities

VWWAA GOALS

Goal: PROTECT THE POWERS OF AUTHORITIES

Influence the Virginia General Assembly and the Executive Branch on legislative and regulatory matters affecting authorities including:

- Proactively defend and improve the Act so that we can be more responsive to customers and communities
- Increase the statewide voice of the authorities represented by the Association
- Partner with other associations to leverage our influence

Discussion: We should monitor and address legislative and regulatory issues to ensure that we are both proactive and effective in influencing legislation, rulemaking, and the implementation of policies. We will not survive as an organization unless we take a stronger role, move ourselves into position, and show that we have a presence. We must first do that with current resources and build our strategy as the organization grows.

Short Term Objective

Work with existing resources to develop and implement a strategy to enhance our current structure and efforts to create a greater legislative presence and expand our options, including:

- Better leveraging members to enhance our legislative presence
- Enhancing involvement with associate members
- Identification of concrete steps that can be taken now to achieve this goal
- Communicating what we do and what we have achieved regarding legislation
- Creation of a legislative committee

Long Term Objective

Upon appropriate membership growth, consider moving to an enhanced legislative strategy with year-round government relations

Strategies to Move Forward:

1. Develop and implement a government relations plan to enhance our current legislative structure and efforts

Some questions to consider:

- How can we build on what we have now?
- What elements of the plan that MWC suggested would be employable now?
- What strategies would increase our visibility and give us the most name recognition with current resources?
- What do we need to focus on?
- Would it be helpful to get a white paper that markets us to policy makers?
- How can we solicit broader input from members into legislative areas and issues that we should address to make sure that we are representing their interests?

2. Coordinate with other partners in a strategy to review and act on legislative and policy issues of concern (Note: Could be part of #1)
Specifically, consider convening to review issues, determine who is going to do what, and to lead or join in providing appropriate support to maximize the impact of our organizations and agencies on policy issues that are important to us

Goal: PROVIDE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

Effectively exchange valuable information for the benefit of members and communicate our value to sustain and grow the organization

Discussion: To protect the powers of authorities, we need to be aware of and use the powers we possess. It is thus critical that we effectively educate our members regarding these powers so that they can exercise them and help others understand them. In addition, we want to broaden our sphere of influence through greater membership. Effective marketing to current members and prospective members is critical to achieve 100% statewide membership of Virginia authorities.

Short Term Objective

Show existing and future members the value of the Association so that we can sustain and grow the organization, including use of a committee to support it

Long Term Objective

Sustain an effective long-term communications and marketing effort that insures desired membership and membership satisfaction

Goal B - Strategies to Move Forward:

1. Provide fundamental continuous education for our members, including:
 - Development of a white paper that will educate existing members and potential members on the powers of authorities so that they understand/appreciate what they possess (Note: "fact sheet" may also be needed)
 - Provide this tool (with instructions) to give directors an ability to communicate with county/city administrators and customers regarding the value of authorities
 - Will be able to tailor this document for other uses including the website and education of policy makers
2. Institute a stronger communication strategy to alert members regarding issues that are of concern to them
 - Get recognition by putting something in front of members on a regular basis
 - Make sure that the information is valuable and not bothersome
 - Post the direct e-mails that we send on our website
 - Give associate members an opportunity to educate (without propaganda)
 - Educate about the board and our legislative contacts/efforts
3. Institute a strategy to become a greater resource for members so that they come to us for information Consider:
 - We get inquiries now that we post to our members; consider keeping a running list of relevant questions and answers
 - Create an archive that is valuable to members
 - Develop a technical web-based repository for documents such as SOPs
4. Overhaul our website
 - This is critical if we are going to attract new members; research the options and determine feasibility for moving forward
 - Enhance feedback capability and interoperability; consider survey function
5. Determine how to communicate jointly with our partner organizations
6. Develop a regional outreach strategy tailored to reach the needs of members (likely a later strategy)
 - Purpose: to achieve more involvement and gain feedback regarding needs
 - Focus could include education, training, networking, webinars, or recruiting

VISION SUCCESS FACTORS

In 5 years, when our members think of VWWAA, they will say that the organization was invaluable and indispensable because . . .

- The Authorities Act has been defended and remains strong so that our legislative authority is intact.
- The Association has protected, preserved, promoted the unique and special characteristics of authorities.
- The Association protects the interests of authorities and provides an avenue for focused advocacy for issues unique to them.
- The General Assembly knows who the Association is as an organization and sees it as a resource.
- The Association exercises influence in policy making from the earliest stages and throughout the process.
- The Association has preserved the flexibility provided to authorities by the Act to operate in a business-like fashion.
- Our members understand and appreciate the powers that they have as an authority and use this ability to operate more nimbly.
- The Association has enhanced our abilities as managers to run focused, efficient, and effective utilities for our customers and communities.
- The Association provides a network of similar organizations that are actively engaged in education, sharing ideas, and assisting others in solving problems that are unique to authorities.
- The Association is valuable to its members because it has: 1.) Protected some element of the Act that was at risk, 2.) Advanced a need that authorities have vis-à-vis the Act, and/or 3.) Given managers tools to better employ the powers of the Act