Asset Management Presentation Key Takeaways

Sam Paske from the Metropolitan Council in Minnesota shared how the largest regional wastewater utility serving Minneapolis and St. Paul is approaching asset management and utility improvement.

1. Asset Management is not one thing, but rather a way to make decisions, measure progress, understand and use risk, get people involved and more. It embodies new ways of linking together people and processes for success.
2. The purpose of asset management is to deliver the value our customers expect, better and better.
3. Asset management frameworks are very helpful but can under-emphasize change management. Engaging people internally and externally is critical to success.
4. Asset management is about thinking at a systems level.
   a. The water sector is made up of many functions. We source, treat, deliver, use, convey and reclaim water. Do we think of these as integrated inputs and outputs where one part affects the others? Do we sub-optimize by managing in silos?
   b. People function best when aware, aligned and energized. There are deliberate ways to ensure our staff succeed at any challenge. Do we design our initiatives for success?
   c. Assets are created, operated and decommissioned. Do we look at all phases early enough to optimize costs over the lifecycle?
5. Met Council Environmental Services has adopted several new practices on its asset management journey:
   a. A business model that ensures line of sight from top management to the front lines. That line of sight links customer levels of service to every day work through criticality analysis to deliver optimal financial performance while meeting customer expectations.
   b. A facility team structure that enables efficient, centralized services by creating a localized point of shared accountability. Facility-based teams contract with operations, maintenance and engineering to run each plant and the conveyance system successfully at an affordable cost while managing risks transparently.
   c. Benchmarking helps us know how we can improve and builds shared awareness. We use Uptime Elements and the International Water Association/WSAA Aquamark tools.
   d. Watershed approach links partners together for shared success. Met Council Environmental Services is a bit unique in that we are responsible for regional watershed planning. That role helps us balance point and non-point water quality management strategies. It has helped us contain wastewater system costs and improve water quality across the region, not just downstream of our outfalls.
6. Results are compelling.
   a. We have kept our promise to customers to keep our rate increases below 4%.
   b. Customer satisfaction and community trust are very good and paying dividends.
   c. Infrastructure is in good condition, zero exceedances/overflows. And we are no longer a combined system.
   d. We have been asked to acquire another plant owned by a local city.
   e. We have been asked to provide reclaimed water to industry.