

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL
BYLAWS

Adopted: March 20, 2001
County Resolution No. 51

Amended: March 5, 2002
County Resolution No. 40

Article I. Name and Purpose

Section 1. Name. The official designation shall be the Tompkins County Water Resources Council, abbreviated WRC or Council.

Section 2. Purpose. The purpose of the WRC shall be to advise County and local governments on matters pertaining to water resources in Tompkins County and to serve as Tompkins County's Water Quality Coordinating Committee. The WRC shall identify problems; recommend strategies to address problems; establish priorities; promote coordination of activities in the protection, development, and management of the water resources in Tompkins County; and provide a public forum for the discussion and resolution of issues and problems and for completion of proposed projects and programs, as outlined in Resolution no. 57 of 2000 (Restructuring of County Water Resources Council) and any future amendments thereto. The WRC exists at, and WRC members serve at, the pleasure of the Tompkins County Board of Representatives.

Article II. Powers and Duties

[Note: The following powers and duties of the WRC have been incorporated into these Bylaws verbatim from Resolution no. 57 of 2000. Bracketed information contained within these powers and duties is intended to provide further clarification of WRC powers and duties.]

Section 1. Powers and duties. The powers and duties of the WRC shall be to:

- (a) advise the County Board of Representatives, through the appropriate committee of the Board of Representatives, on matters affecting the preservation, enhancement, and use of water resources in the County;
- (b) develop and recommend programs to improve the coordination and effectiveness of water resources programs;
- (c) establish priorities among water resources projects as needed for funding sources;
- (d) develop and conduct a program of public information in the County that shall be designed to foster an increased understanding of the nature of water resources, related problems and issues, and their solutions;

(e) provide coordination by working in cooperation with public and private agencies focusing particularly on those matters relating to water resources that require intergovernmental action;

(f) maintain liaison with regional and neighboring planning agencies, and regional and neighboring water resources planning boards, with a view towards improvement of coordination;

(g) conduct studies, surveys, and inventories in accord with the general purposes of this resolution;

(h) recommend to the appropriate committee of the Board of Representatives plans and programs for water resources;

(i) draft an annual budget and work program [for the upcoming year] for submittal to the Board of Representatives [ensuring that the goals of the Water Quality Strategy Plan are addressed]; and

(j) act as the Tompkins County Water Quality Steering Committee under New York State guidelines, including preparation and update of [the Tompkins County] Water Quality Strategy Plan.

Section 2. Issues to be addressed. Issues for discussion and eventual action or inaction may originate with (a) the Tompkins County Board of Representatives; (b) WRC; (c) County agencies; (d) County municipalities; (e) the public, groups, and individuals; and (f) private organizations. Any issues referred to the WRC may, in turn, be referred to one of its committees for technical evaluation and development of alternative courses of action, and sent back to the WRC for final disposition. The WRC may also refer items to another agency of federal, state, county, or local government and request feedback on final disposition; dispose of the matter itself; or the WRC may take no action at all.

Article III. Membership

Section 1. Membership. There shall be three classes of members: voting members, non-voting ex officio members, and associate members.

Section 2. Voting members. The voting membership shall consist of those persons duly appointed by the Tompkins County Board of Representatives as provided by Resolution no. 57 of 2000, and any future amendments thereto.

Section 3. Non-voting ex officio members. The non-voting ex officio members shall consist of those persons duly appointed by the Tompkins County Board of Representatives as provided by Resolution no. 57 of 2000, and any future amendments thereto.

Section 4. Associate members. In order to encourage public participation, any individual interested in and/or knowledgeable about water resources may apply to the WRC to be an associate member. Once accepted/appointed, each such member may participate in WRC discussion and serve on committees. On the WRC

an associate member shall be non-voting and may not speak on behalf of the WRC, but on a WRC committee she/he may vote and serve as committee chair.

Section 5. Term. The term of membership is three years, coinciding with the calendar year, except that (a) the Board of Representatives seat shall be for one year, (b) initial appointments will be staggered so that one-third the voting membership expires every year, and (c) an associate member's term will end at the end of the second December after appointment.

Members may apply for reappointment without limit, but are not guaranteed reappointment.

Section 6. Voting rights. Only those persons so listed in Resolution no. 57 of 2000 and any amendments thereto shall vote at WRC meetings. No proxy voting or telephone polling shall be allowed, but participation in meetings via telephone or conference call is permissible.

Section 7. Duties.

a) Attendance. Voting members and appointed ex officio members are expected to attend all meetings of the WRC and to participate in committee work.

b) Constituency liaison. Members appointed to a seat representing a particular area or constituency are expected to keep persons in that constituency informed about the WRC and seek relevant input into the work of the WRC.

Section 8. Absences.

a) After the third absence from WRC meetings within a calendar year the member will be contacted by the Chair to see if there are problems which can be remedied.

b) After the fifth absence within a calendar year the WRC shall vote on whether or not to recommend to the Chair of the County Board of Representatives to declare that member's seat vacant and request replacement of that member due to non-attendance at WRC meetings. The member may appeal to the full WRC for reconsideration of any non-attendance recommendation due to special circumstances.

c) Members may also request a leave of absence from the WRC prior to any necessary prolonged absence. Such leave is not automatically granted, but will be decided by vote of the WRC based on the best interests of Tompkins County.

Section 9. Quorum. A majority of the authorized voting membership (as spelled out in Resolution no. 57 of 2000 or as amended) shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority of the authorized voting membership must vote in the affirmative to take any action.

Article IV. Officers and Staff

Section 1. Chair.

a) Selection and term. The WRC shall elect a Chair annually for a one-year term from among its voting membership.

b) Duties. The duties of the Chair shall be to:

i) preside at the general meetings of the WRC and the WRC Executive Committee;

ii) establish meeting agendas, together with staff;

iii) serve as the official representative and chief administrator of the WRC and primary liaison to the Tompkins County Board of Representatives;

iv) call the WRC to a special meeting or cancel a scheduled meeting, if deemed necessary;

v) appoint members of committees, subject to approval of the members of the WRC; and

vi) appoint members to represent the WRC to other public bodies, subject to approval of the members of the WRC.

Section 2. Vice Chairs.

a) Selection and term. At least two Vice Chairs shall be elected annually at the organizational meeting by the WRC from among the voting members for a term of one year. One shall be designated "First Vice Chair" and one "Second Vice Chair". Additional Vice Chairs may be elected annually for a term of one year from among the voting and non-voting ex officio members.

b) Duties. The duties of the Vice Chairs are divided among themselves and the Chair, to:

i) serve as Chair pro tem in the absence of the Chair, or, in the event of a vacancy, until the WRC elects a new Chair;

ii) coordinate the preparation of the annual workplan and the annual report, together with the appropriate WRC committees and staff;

iii) serve as WRC Parliamentarian;

iv) monitor the WRC's finances and report semi-annually;

v) assist in the preparation and submission of the annual budget, together with staff; and

vi) attend Board of Representatives meetings when necessary, present resolutions to the Board of Representatives when appropriate, and follow up on implementation of WRC resolutions requiring Board of Representatives action.

Section 3. Staff. The Board of Representatives shall provide for staff support as may be necessary for the conduct of the WRC's official business [Resolution no. 57 of 2000 section 7]. Designated staff should fulfill the duties of secretary, treasurer, and administrative coordinator. Initially, the Tompkins County Planning Department shall provide staff support as directed by the Commissioner of Planning.

Article V. Committees

Section 1. Executive Committee.

a) Selection and term. Each year the WRC shall form a five-member Executive Committee comprised of the Chair and Vice Chairs and up to two other WRC voting members who shall serve for one year.

b) Duties.

i) The Executive Committee shall meet as necessary to act on administrative and financial matters between regular WRC meetings or when it is impractical to convene the full WRC. All actions of the Executive Committee shall be in accordance with prior acts of the WRC. The Executive Committee shall report any actions taken at the next WRC meeting. All actions of the Executive Committee are subject to ratification, revision, or revocation by the WRC. *[If the WRC revokes an Executive Committee action, the action will be reversed to the extent possible.]*

Section 2. Standing Committees.

a) Nominating/Membership Committee

i) Membership. This committee shall consist of at least three WRC-seated voting members.

ii) Duties include:

a) Nomination of officers. Each November the Nom. Comm. Shall begin work on preparing a slate of officers (Chair and Vice Chairs), to be presented to the full membership at the Organizational meeting in January of the following year.

b) WRC Membership. Throughout the year and as necessary, the Nominating Committee shall be alert to and seek out community members interested in or with expertise relevant to the work of the WRC and encourage submission of letters of interest and/or applications for membership. The Committee shall work with staff to suggest and recommend to the Tompkins County WRC persons to fill vacancies.

c) Associate members. The committee shall be responsible for providing an application for associate membership, reviewing any applications for such membership, and recommending to the WRC persons for appointment as Associate Members.

b) Grants/Finance Committee.

i) Membership. This committee shall consist of at least five members, three of which are voting WRC members.

ii) Duties include:

a) Grant availability. This committee shall stay informed about the availability of water-resource-related grants from all sources, and maintain a file of such information and a calendar of relevant deadlines.

b) Grant application. This committee shall work with staff to identify and/or draft grant applications, and coordinate with other entities in the identification and drafting of grant applications, for purposes approved by the WRC for projects that enhance water resources and/or support the goals of the Water Quality Strategy Plan.

c) Financial reports. This committee shall track grant expenditures and requirements, and work with staff as need to update the WRC on financial matters.

c) Education/Outreach/Public Participation Committee

i) Membership. This committee shall consist of at least five members.

ii) Duties include:

a) Keep the public informed about the activities of the WRC.

b) Set up public participation meetings for the general public.

c) Review and inventory existing relevant educational materials.

d) Identify issues that the public should be aware of and bring them to public attention.

e) Solicit public input as requested by the WRC.

Section 3. Special Committees. The WRC may establish committees on an as-needed basis. Each such committee shall be given a specific charge at the time of its formation. Such committees serve at the pleasure of the WRC.

Section 4. Duties. Each standing and special committee shall elect a chair from among its WRC-seated voting members. Each committee should become knowledgeable about matters affecting the subject-matter area of the committee. From time to time, as required by the WRC, the committee shall report to the WRC on its activities and future plans, and shall bring matters of particular concern to the attention of the WRC. The tenure of a committee shall be as specified by the WRC. Each committee shall prepare a brief report to be included in the WRC Annual Report.

Article VI. Meetings

Section 1. Regular meetings. The WRC shall meet monthly in regular session, the place and time to be determined at the organizational meeting or by the Chair with notification made to the membership at least one week prior to said meeting.

Section 2. Organizational meeting. An organizational meeting shall be held at the first regularly scheduled meeting in the new year following appointments by the Board of Representatives.

Section 3. Special meetings.

a) The Chair may, when deemed necessary, call a special meeting of the WRC with notification at least five days in advance.

b) The Chair shall call a special meeting at the written request of five voting members. The request shall be submitted to the Chair, and copied to staff, by fax or paper communication.

Section 4. Conduct of meetings. The rules contained in the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the meetings of the WRC and its Committees in all cases to which they apply and when they are not superceded by the Bylaws, any applicable State or County laws, or any agreed-upon rules otherwise adopted by the WRC.

Section 5. Committee Meetings. Each committee shall keep the WRC informed of its meeting schedule.

Article VII. Records and Reports

Section 1. Minutes. The WRC shall record minutes of its regular meetings and committee meetings. Draft minutes of these meetings and all pertinent supporting materials shall, within ten days following each meeting, be distributed to each member of the WRC, the appropriate committee of the Board of Representatives, and the Board of Representative's office. The status of the minutes (draft or approved) and relevant date shall be indicated in the minutes.

Section 2. Annual report. The WRC shall also submit an annual report, to the appropriate committee of the Board of Representatives, no later than the 1st day of April of each year, concerning the activities and work of the WRC.

Section 3. Reports and recommendations. From time to time, the WRC shall submit to the Board of Representatives such other reports and recommendations as are necessary to fulfill the purpose of Resolution no. 57 of 2000 and any future amendments thereto.

Section 4. Water Quality Strategy Plan. With the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee requested that County Water Quality Coordinating Committees develop County Water Quality Strategies (Strategies). The purpose of these Strategies is to: "identify and set local priorities for nonpoint source pollution prevention". The minimum content of the Strategies includes: (a) a summary of individual agency and organization roles; (b) a list of prioritized water quality concerns; (c) a list of goals and objectives for informing the public, for ongoing

problem assessment and verification, for addressing watershed specific and county-wide issues, and for overall program evaluation; (d) a list of tasks for achieving each objective including who is responsible for completing the task, estimated timeframe for completion of the tasks, potential sources of funding, and estimated costs; and (e) a description of the Water Quality Coordinating Committee's role in implementing the Strategies. *[Memo to County Water Quality Coordinating Committees from Dave Pendergast, NYSSWCC and Phil DeGaetano, NYSDEC dated February 28, 1992.]*

The WRC will periodically review and update the Tompkins County Water Quality Strategy Plan and garner public support for its implementation.

Section 5. Annual workplan. The WRC shall draft a tentative workplan for the next year by December of each year, and no later than February of each year the reconstituted WRC shall finalize and submit to the appropriate committee of the Board of Representatives an annual workplan that summarizes the WRC goals and objectives for that coming calendar year.

Section 6. Annual budget. The WRC shall draft a tentative budget for the next year, by December of each year, and no later than February shall submit to the appropriate committee of the Board of Representatives an annual budget that supports the annual workplan. In July of each year, the WRC shall report to the appropriate committee of the Board of Representatives the financial status of its budget and make any recommendations necessary to meet its goals. This budget and report shall reflect grant money awarded to the WRC as well as all in-kind contributions of WRC members toward WRC-supported goals and objectives.

Section 7. Two-year effectiveness report. The WRC, within two years of its establishing resolution dated March 21, 2000, shall submit to the appropriate committee of the Board of Representatives a report on the effectiveness of the Council and recommend any changes necessary to increase its effectiveness.

Article VIII. Policies and Procedures

Section 1. Open meetings. All meetings of the WRC and its committees shall be open to the public, insofar as possible according to the New York State Open Meeting Law.

Section 2. County code of ethics. The County Code of Ethics, including the conflict-of-interest clause, shall apply to all WRC members.

Section 3. Public notice. The WRC shall provide public notice of the date, time, and location of all its regular and special meetings.

Section 4. Policy sheet. Policies and procedures for the operation of the WRC, not otherwise covered by the Bylaws and within the discretion of the WRC, may be created by the WRC and updated or modified from time to time and kept in easily accessible form on a Policy Sheet. *[Examples: tracking results of WRC resolutions;*

reimbursement for relevant expenses; appointments of alternatives or backup delegates to other groups; and designation of an official spokesperson.]

Article IX. Bylaws Adoption and Amendments. *[Note: Resolutions no. 57 and 211 of 2000 include the full list of 21 “authorized” seats; “seated” refers to those actually appointed, and recognizes that at any given time there may be fewer than 21 appointed members.]*

Section 1. Adoption. These Bylaws shall be adopted at a meeting of the WRC by a 2/3 vote of the *authorized* membership provided that the draft Bylaws have been made available in writing to each WRC member at least two weeks in advance. Upon approval by the WRC, these Bylaws shall be filed with the Board of Representatives.

Section 2. Amendment. These Bylaws may be amended at any WRC meeting by a 2/3 vote of the *seated* members, provided that the amendment has been made available in writing to each WRC member at least two weeks prior to the meeting. For this purpose only, a written absentee ballot for each proposed change shall be acceptable. Upon approval by the WRC, these amendments shall be filed with the Board of Representatives.