

**TOMPKINS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
BYLAWS**

**Adopted by Res. No. 103 of 1971 [Tompkins County Charter](#) and [Article 47](#) of the New York State
Environmental Conservation Law
Amended by Res. No. 476 of 1990
Amended by Res. No. 237 of 2024
Restructured by Res. No. 295 of 1999
Restructured by Res. No 322 of 1999
Restructured by Res. No. 238 of 2024
Added to Charter Local Law No. 1 of 2003 and amended in 2017**

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this advisory board to the Tompkins County Legislature is the TOMPKINS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL hereafter “Council”.

ARTICLE II: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the Council shall be as set forth in Article 47 of the Environmental Conservation Law, and in the Tompkins County Charter, together with such other powers as shall be given it by the County Legislature to enhance and preserve the natural and developed environment of the county.

The purpose of the Council shall include, but not be limited to;

1. supporting the Legislature, municipal bodies, and citizens on environmental and environmental justice issues;
2. raising public awareness of environmental and environmental justice issues through educational programs and resources;
3. developing long-term plans to protect the County’s natural resources and promoting the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of biodiversity in the County's lands and waters;
4. collaborating with other organizations working on environmental issues;
5. investigating and recommending sound environmental planning methods;
6. reviewing environmental impact statements, plans, applications, and reports when requested to do so;
7. responding to environmental problems in Tompkins County.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership: The Council shall be composed of 21 voting members, and any number of associate or non-voting members, comprised of:
 - a) Nine (9) at-large members who are county residents to ensure a broad-based representation of environmental expertise and interests within the county shall be recommended for appointment by the County Legislature to the EMC. All at-large members shall be residents of Tompkins County who

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have expressed interest in the improvement and preservation of environmental quality in Tompkins County.

- b) Two (2) high school or college student members who are county residents and at least 16 years of age shall be recommended for appointment by the County Legislature to the EMC;
- c) Ten (10) municipal members, one from each city or town in Tompkins County. If the municipality has established a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC), Conservation Board (CB), or similar committee, that municipality shall recommend a member of its CAC/CB for appointment by the County Legislature to the EMC.
- d) Any number of non-voting associate members may be appointed to the Council by the Executive Committee for project or committee work, who are awaiting voting-seat openings, or who don't meet the residency requirements for voting membership.
- e) Non-voting liaisons. Representatives from any appropriate Tompkins County department, board, or advisory committee may serve as liaisons and non-voting members of the Council. The Council will receive administrative assistance through the Department of Planning and Sustainability as funding permits
- f) There shall be one (1) non-voting County Legislator Liaison seat to the EMC selected annually.
- g) Any other County liaisons shall serve at the pleasure of the Legislature Chair.

2. Term of membership:

- a) At-Large members shall be appointed by the Tompkins County Legislature to serve a term that consists of two consecutive calendar years, expiring December 31.
- b) Student members shall serve a term of one year beginning September 1.
- c) Municipal members shall be appointed by the Tompkins County Legislature to serve a term that consists of two years, expiring December 31.
- d) Non-voting associate members shall serve for a term of one year, expiring December 31.

Appointments shall be staggered for two years, expiring December 31, except student terms, which shall last for one year and expire September 1 [See Appendix A for Restructuring Resolution]. The Office of the Clerk of the Legislature shall maintain a list of upcoming expiring terms of appointment and any vacancies that need filling. The Office of the Clerk of the Legislature shall notify board members whose terms are expiring. There will be no limit to the number of consecutive terms held by members.

3. Selection Process: Candidates for voting seats shall complete the appropriate application and file it with the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature for proper routing and approval by the County Legislature and in accordance with [Administrative Policy Manual: Policy 08-26: Advisory Committees and Advisory Boards Appointed by the County Legislature](#).

- a) At-large and student member nominees shall be selected by the Council's Executive Committee. These names shall be submitted for approval by a majority of Council members at a regular monthly meeting. Interested student member applicants should submit a letter of interest with their application.

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- b) Municipal members serve at the pleasure of their municipality. Municipal members are expected to attend their local conservation advisory commissions/conservation board meetings, bring information on environmental activities or concern back to the Council, and update their conservation advisory commissions/conservation boards on Council activities.
 - c) Committee associate members may be appointed by the Council Chair for special projects and committee work; such members may vote in committee only and do not require County Legislative approval.
4. Residency: Members of the Council must reside in Tompkins County and be United States citizens, as outlined in the [Administrative Policy Manual: Policy 08-26: Advisory Committees and Advisory Boards Appointed by the County Legislature](#).
 5. Vacancy: In the event of the death or resignation of any voting member of the Council, a successor shall be recommended as soon as possible to fill out the remainder of the seat's term and shall follow the selection process previously stated. Vacancies created midterm of the voting positions listed in Section 1 of this Article shall be filled by action of the Executive Committee, and subject to confirmation by the County Legislature to fill out the remainder of the term.
 6. Qualifications: The membership should be comprised of representatives from a diverse background and perspective of a broad cross-section of Tompkins County. Residency within Tompkins County is a requirement for voting members serving on the Council. Each member will be bound by the [Tompkins County Code of Ethics](#).
 7. Voting: Each seated voting member shall have one vote for official Council action.
 8. Removal: After three consecutive unexcused absences (which consists of no notification before missing a meeting), in accordance with Tompkins County Local Law No. 2 of 2004, by a Council member as determined by the Council Chair, the committee member shall be deemed to have resigned their appointment.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

1. Officers or Executive Committee: The Council shall have one Chair and three Vice-Chairs, who are considered 'executives'
2. Chair: The Chair shall be elected annually by a majority of the seated members of the Council. The Chair shall lead the body by setting agendas, presiding over meetings, and calling them to order. The Council Chair shall serve as the primary liaison between the Council and the Tompkins County Legislature, reporting on the Council's work to the assigned Legislative Committee and preparing and submitting an annual report.
3. Vice Chairs: The Vice Chairs shall be elected annually by a majority of the seated members of the Council following the election of the Chair.
4. Vacancies: If a vacancy of an Officer occurs, it shall be filled at the next meeting in accordance with the regular nominating procedure.
5. Nominations: A Nominating Committee, chaired by a member of the Council and consisting of not fewer than two voting members, a majority of whom shall not be all members of the Executive Committee, shall be appointed by the Council. The Nominating Committee shall report to the Council on nominees for executive positions. Nominations may also be made from the floor during the vote proceeding. Officers shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee at the December Council meeting. Council members may submit the names of additional nominees for office to the Nominating Committee or Planning & Sustainability Department staff assistant prior to the December Council meeting.

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6. Appointment: Executives shall be elected by a majority of voting Council members attending the December meeting. While the election of Vice-Chairs is final, the selected nominee for Chair shall be submitted to the County Legislature for final approval.
7. Terms of Office: Executives shall serve one (1) year terms of office beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31. Executives can serve any number of consecutive terms.
8. Dismissal: Vice-Chairs may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of members attending a regular meeting, provided that prior to the vote, the officer has been advised in writing and has been given the opportunity to present their case to the Council. Notification shall be included in the agenda for that meeting. The Chair may be dismissed only by the County Legislature.

ARTICLE V: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities of the Council and its members as defined in the establishing/aforementioned legislation are incorporated in these bylaws, as follows:

The Executives of the Council shall undertake the duties commonly associated with their positions. The Chairperson shall preside over Council meetings, and in the event of the absence of the Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson shall preside. In the event of an extended absence of the Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson shall serve as Acting Chairperson.

The roles and responsibilities of the Council Chair are to:

1. Serve as the official representative and Chief Administrator of the Council;
2. Preside at the General and Executive Committee meetings of the Council;
3. Call the Council or Executive Committee to a special meeting or cancel a scheduled meeting, if deemed necessary; and
4. Serve as the Council's primary liaison to the Tompkins County Legislature.

The roles and responsibilities of the Executive Committee, which consists of the Chair and Vice-Chairs, are divided among the Committee members:

1. Perform a project review function by evaluating new issues as they arise, and recommending to the Council issues which warrant Council attention;
2. Prepare the agenda for general meetings;
3. Make time-critical decisions on behalf of the Council between meetings;
4. Appoint members of committees, and appoint members to represent the Council to other public bodies;
5. Monitor the progress of committee work by receiving regular reports from all committees;
6. Appoint a Vice-Chair to serve as Chair pro tem in the absence of the Chair, or, in the event of a vacancy, until the Council vote and the County Legislature confirms a new Chair;
7. Appoint a Vice-Chair to serve as Council Parliamentarian and act as the appeals committee for process concerns;

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8. Coordinate the preparation of the necessary reports to County or State entities;
9. Coordinate with the County Planning and Sustainability Department on the Council's finances and annual budget requirements;
10. Attend County Legislature meetings when necessary, present resolutions to the County Legislature when appropriate, and follow up on actions affecting the County;
11. Approve the recruitment and participation of student members, associate members, and other temporary assistants in the Council's work; and
12. Perform such other executive functions as may be needed to further the interests of the Council.

ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES

1. Number of Committees: The Council shall create and dissolve any number of administrative or standing Committees, or task groups to carry out Council duties. All standing Committee meetings are open to the public. Committees shall be established by Council vote on an as-needed basis. Committees will be temporary in nature and exist if there are Council-approved tasks to undertake. The term of Committee members shall be one year or until the assigned task is completed.
 - a) Executive Committee: The Executive committee shall be composed of the Chair, and the three Vice-Chairs. Planning & Sustainability Department staff will assist this committee as time and resources allow. This committee shall be responsible for the routine administrative functions of the Council, including the preparation of the monthly meeting agenda. The duties of the Executive Committee are divided among themselves as outlined in ARTICLE V: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.
2. Authority: Committees have no authority to act independently of the Council or to make policy or other decisions on behalf of the Council, except for the Executive Committee, whose responsibilities are defined herein. Committee decisions constitute recommendations to the Executive Committee, and committees shall make reports of their activities and plans on a regular basis.
3. Selection of Committee Chairs: Each committee shall be comprised of at least one voting Council member. The Committee shall appoint a Committee chair or co-chairs to convene the Committee meetings, set Committee agendas, compile reports, and report to the Council.
4. Committee Membership and Selection: Committee membership is open to all Council members and interested non-members, subject to appointment by the Council Executive Committee. Non-Council members shall become eligible once they attend three consecutive meetings or otherwise demonstrate commitment to the work of the committee.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

1. Schedule: The Council shall meet monthly at least 10 months out of each year in regular session, unless extenuating circumstances cause the Executive Committee to reschedule. Regular Council meetings are open to the public. The place (remote or in-person) and time are to be determined by the Chair, and notifications made to the membership at least one week prior to said meeting. The Organizational Meeting shall be held at the first regularly scheduled meeting in the new year following voting member Council appointments by the County Legislature.
2. Special Meetings: Special meetings shall be called by the Chair or upon the written request of five members of the Council. Notices for all special meetings shall specify the time, place, and agenda items, and be distributed

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in a timely manner. No business other than that specified in such notice shall be transacted at any such meeting except by unanimous consent of the Council members present.

3. Notice: Staff shall send a written notice and agenda to each Council member approximately one week prior to a regular meeting.
4. Quorum: A quorum for conducting business, as defined in the Tompkins County Charter, shall mean a majority of the total number of Council seats as if there were no vacancies or disqualified voting members. A quorum is required for the transaction of official Council business. If a quorum is not present, the Council business conducted at that meeting will be subject to approval by a majority of members at the next Council meeting.
5. Decisions and Voting: Decisions shall be made by a majority of the total number of seats of the Council.
6. Minutes: Minutes shall be recorded at each meeting and emailed to Council members prior to the next regular meeting.
7. Privilege of the Floor for Visitors: At the beginning of each Council meeting, there shall be a period of time designated as Privilege of the Floor. The Chair may give the floor, for up to five minutes, to each visitor who wishes to address the Council on any matter of environmental concern. The Chair may allow moving the discussion into the regular meeting at the top of the agenda if further discussion with the Council is warranted. Issues raised during this Privilege of the Floor may be placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting or Council may vote to take immediate action.
8. Parliamentary Authority: Parliamentary authority for all meetings is guided by the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, revised, except where it is in conflict with these Bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

1. Amendments to the Bylaws may be made by the Council at any regular meeting, provided that the proposed amendments were read at the previous meeting or included in the agenda for the meeting at which action is to be taken. Therefore, the proposed amendments will be sent in writing to the membership five business days prior to the meeting. Amendments to the Bylaws shall require a two-thirds vote of all voting Council members.
2. Amendments will become effective upon approval by the Tompkins County Legislature.

ARTICLE IX: ADOPTION

These Bylaws, when approved by the Tompkins County Legislature, shall become adopted.

APPENDIX A

A Staggering of Terms of the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council (EMC) Beginning January 1, 2025

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council (EMC) was restructured by the Tompkins County Board of Representatives by Resolution No. 1999-295, and Resolution No. of 1999-322, and

WHEREAS, the EMC has updated its bylaws by Resolution No. 2024-XXX, and

WHEREAS, the terms of membership on the EMC are two-year appointments, except for Student Members, and

WHEREAS, EMC bylaws require the terms of members be staggered so that roughly half of all seats expire on the last day of one year, and the other half expire on the last day of the following year, and

WHEREAS, all seats shall be staggered for appointments beginning January 1, 2025, and

WHEREAS, the staggering shall affect both municipal and at-large appointments, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on the recommendation of the Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality (PEEQ) Committee, That the nominees for the Environmental Management Council member positions will serve for terms as follows:

Seat	New Expiration
Town of Caroline	December 31, 2025
Town of Danby	December 31, 2025
Town of Dryden	December 31, 2025
Town of Groton	December 31, 2025
Town of Newfield	December 31, 2025
Town of Ulysses	December 31, 2025
At-Large	December 31, 2025
At-Large	December 31, 2025
At-Large	December 31, 2025
At-Large	December 31, 2025
City of Ithaca	December 31, 2026
Town of Ithaca	December 31, 2026
Town of Lansing	December 31, 2026
Town of Enfield	December 31, 2026
At-Large	December 31, 2026
At-Large	December 31, 2026
At-Large	December 31, 2026
At-Large	December 31, 2026
At-Large	December 31, 2026
Student 1	September 1, 2025
Student 2	September 1, 2025

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Appendix A: Staggering of Terms of the County Environmental Management Council Beginning January 2025

RESOLUTION NO. XXX – To replace Resolution 322. TO STAGGER TERMS OF THE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL BEGINNING JANUARY 2025

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council (EMC) has been restructured by the Tompkins County Board of Representatives by Resolution No. 295 of 1999, and Resolution No. 322 of 1999, and

WHEREAS, in the EMC is updating its by-laws in 2024, and

WHEREAS, the terms of membership on the EMC are two-year appointments, except for Student Members, and

WHEREAS, EMC By-laws require the terms of members be staggered so that roughly half of all seats expire on the last day of one year, and the other half expire on the last day of the following year, and

WHEREAS, all seats shall be staggered for appointment beginning January 2025.

WHEREAS, the staggering shall affect both municipal and at-large appointments, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on the recommendation of the Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality (PEEQ) Committee, nominees for EMC positions will serve for terms as follows:

Seat	New Expiration (Dec)
Town of Caroline	2025
Town of Danby	2025
Town of Dryden	2025
Town of Enfield	2026
Town of Groton	2025
City of Ithaca	2026
Town of Ithaca	2026
Town of Lansing	2026
Town of Newfield	2025
Town of Ulysses	2025
At-Large	2025
At-Large	2026
At-Large	2025
At-Large	2026

At-Large	2025
At-Large	2025
At-Large	2026
At-Large	2026
At-Large	2026
Student 1	Sept 2025
Student 2	Sept 2025

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Internal EMC use only

Seat	Current - (who will take)	Current Expiration (Dec)	New Expiration (Dec)	
Town of Caroline	Steve Nicholson	2025	2025	
Town of Danby	Peter McDonald	2025	2025	
Town of Dryden	Steve Bisson	2025	2025	
Town of Enfield	Peter Penniman	2024	2026	will need a new muni resolution or email
Town of Groton	Barry Siebe	2025	2025	
City of Ithaca	-- (in process)	2025	2026	
Town of Ithaca	Ingrid Zabel	2024	2026	will need a new muni resolution or email
Town of Lansing	Ed Dubovi	2024	2026	will need an email from mayor and email from Ed saying ok to use previous application
Town of Newfield	--	2025	2025	
Town of Ulysses	Chris Collins	2025	2025	
At-Large	Susan Riley	2025	2025	
At-Large	Louise Bruce	2025	2026	Leg clerk will send renewal
At-Large	Jack Zinda	2025	2025	
At-Large	- (Ron Szymanski)	2024	2026	new Application for At large - leg clerk will send
At-Large	- (Dan Antonioli)	2025	2025	Leg will transfer to at-large internally for '25
At-Large	- (Cait Darfler)	2024	2025	new Application for At large
At-Large	Elaine Tietjen	2024	2026	Leg clerk will send renewal
At-Large	Brad Will	2024	2026	Leg clerk will send renewal
At-Large	--	2024	2026	
Student 1			Sept 2025	
Student 2			Sept 2025	