

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

Oct. 16, 2023 Via Zoom

Final Minutes

Attendance

Member		Seat	Member		Seat
Annie Bastoni	P	At-Large	Brian Rahm	P	Environment
Shawn Bossard	P	Agriculture	Stephanie Redmond	P	At-Large
Cynthia Brock	P	Municipal	Steve Riddle	P	Water Purveyor
Liz Cameron	P	Co. Environmental Health	Linda Wagenet	P	At-Large
Susan Currie	P	County Government	David Wolfe	P	Environmental Management Council
Jenna DeRario	P	Cooperative Extension	Douglas Barnes	P	Associate
Kristen Hychka	P	Municipal Government	Roxy Johnston	E	Associate
Darby Kiley	P	County Planning & Sustain.	Lynn Leopold	P	Associate
Patrick King	P	Business & Industry	Rebecca Minas	P	Associate
Liz Kreitinger	P	Watershed Organization	Elaine Quaroni	P	Associate
Jon Negley	E	Soil & Water Cons. District	Grascen Shidemantle	P	Associate
Holly Payne	E	At-Large	Tom Vawter	P	Associate
Frank Proto	P	At-Large			

Guests: Anne Koreman, Mike Sigler, Elizabeth Thomas, Rassil Sayess

Call to Order/Agenda Review – Chair Cynthia Brock called the meeting to order at 4:18pm.

Privilege of the Floor – Tompkins County Legislator Mike Sigler commented on the Cargill salt mine resolution. Kristin asked if group would mind if she recorded monthly meetings going forward to assist with minutes taking.

Presentation: PFAS and Biochar

– Johannes Lehmann, Professor, Dept. of Global Development, Cornell University

Johannes Lehmann gave a presentation on biochar and PFAS. He discussed the pyrolysis process and how it can be used to destroy PFAS in solids. He also discussed the absorption of PFAS by biochar from liquids. Lehmann noted that there is still a lot of research needed on the treatment of PFAS in liquids, but that the path towards a viable technology is promising. He also explained that pyrolysis is an exothermic process, which means that it generates energy. Lehmann noted that the state of engineering is a moving target, but that there will be quite some movement in the coming years due to the urgent need to address PFAS contamination. His talk and the subsequent Q&A discussion covered numerous topics. These included prior and upcoming soil health and sustainability events at the Soil Factory, pyrolysis applications in agriculture and wastewater treatment, costs and operational factors associated with small-scale pyrolysis systems, climate change mitigation as a policy driver, manipulating production conditions such as feedstock ash composition and pyrolysis temperature, and strategies for optimizing biochar applications. Next steps for Johannes and his team involve developing a white paper on pyrolysis and creating a fact sheet on PFAs and pyrolysis.

Action: Approve draft letter to Gov. Hochul re: Cargill salt mine – Before handing reins over to Darby to lead group in review of draft letter to Gov. Hochul regarding the Cargill salt mine, which was developed and written by a working group composed of Darby, Doug Barnes, Liz Cameron and Liz Kreitinger, Cynthia recapped the various materials submitted by County advisory boards and other stakeholders related to the topic and expressed hope that members had reviewed items in the agenda packet. The working group also consulted with retired USGS hydrogeologist Bill Kappel, who assisted in formulating some of the questions listed in the letter to Hochul. The group's primary concerns were the lack of an environmental impact statement and difficulty

accessing publicly available information. Darby presented the draft letter, highlighting key points with a focus on documentation and the sale of the mine. The group acknowledged the difficulty of formulating resolutions as a smaller entity without the authority to take action. Frank commended the working group's efforts, adding that asking questions was in line with the WRC's mandate. Plans to enclose the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization resolution as background information were discussed. Annie and Susan reported that the Climate and Sustainable Energy (Case) Advisory Board resolution had passed PEEQ with minor edits. Annie clarified that the resolution would now come from PEEQ instead of Case. It is scheduled to be sent to the Legislature on Nov. 8, allowing more time for feedback from the WRC and other groups. The revised "resolves" from the PEEQ resolution were shared. Members discussed recipient list for Hochul letter. Frank proposed sending the WRC letter before November 8 and addressing it to Cargill as well. Susan concurred and suggested sending the resolution to individuals like NYS Assemblywoman Anna Kelles. Questions arose regarding SEQR and whether DEC is responsible for its enforcement. Frank raised concerns about segmentation, emphasizing that the group should not wait indefinitely for a response to all their questions. Brian Rahm recommended sending a formal invitation to a NYS representative to speak to the WRC.

Action: Frank Proto made a motion, which Shawn Bossard seconded, empowering Cynthia Brock to sign the letter as chair on behalf of the Water Resources Council once edits are finalized after the meeting. Per member consensus, Darby will add a sentence to the letter requesting confirmation of receipt and an anticipated response date. Motion carried.

Action: Approval of draft minutes – September 2023 meeting minutes were approved (moved by Brian Rahm, seconded by Frank Proto) as submitted. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

Lynn provided an update on the clean boating map. The edits are complete, and the map will be going to the printer soon. Kristen announced that the municipal training subcommittee is putting together a training on online tools for planning boards. The training will be held via Zoom on Nov. 13 from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM.

Chair and Staff Reports

No chair's report. Darby Kiley discussed the PFAS Disclosure Act, raising concerns about its practicality, potential public perception issues, and the need for public education on PFAS chemicals. Other concerns included the act's impact on small systems, the agriculture industry's exemption from monitoring, the lack of input from wastewater management professionals, and the burden being placed on end users rather than manufacturers. Darby then provided an update on the Owasco Watershed Rules and Regulations, reporting that the state not only disregarded the new recommendations but also weakened existing protections. She mentioned that the Cayuga County Board of Health has provided a letter template for individuals to voice their concerns. Liz C. clarified that the new regulations are less stringent than the current ones, but the existing ones remain in effect. Last, Darby reported on board recruitment and current vacancies, which include one municipal government, recreation, and at-large seat each. She encouraged attendees to spread the word.

Member Announcements

Community Science Institute is hosting a "Water Quality Data Jam" event on Nov. 3 at Tompkins County Public Library. Town of Enfield is holding an event on waste diversion/circular economies on Oct. 30. Members also reported that NYSEG received approval for their rate increases, and hydrilla was found in Myers Park area. NYS DEC is hosting a meeting with stakeholders next week.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 5:54pm.