

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

Sept. 16, 2024

Via Zoom

Final Minutes

Attendance

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

Guests: Fernando Figueroa, Emily Timkey, Michele Wunderlich

Call to Order/Agenda Review – Chair Cynthia Brock called the meeting to order at 4:15pm. No changes to the agenda.

Privilege of the Floor – No members of the public spoke during privilege of the floor.

Presentation: Cayuga Lake Hydrilla Treatment and Future Funding– *Cathy McGlynn, NYS DEC; Mike Voorhees, Richard Ruby, USACE*

Cathy McGlynn from NYSDEC, and Richard Ruby and Mike Voorhees from USACE, presented updates on Cayuga Lake's Hydrilla treatment and funding. Cathy outlined treatment efforts in the lake's southern end, including timelines and costs, and discussed the ongoing development of a New York State Hydrilla Management Plan. Richard shared treatment results, challenges, and plans. Mike addressed funding, explaining that Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funds would decline soon, but USACE was exploring alternative sources and cost-saving methods. He explained USACE's efforts to secure additional funding through the Water Resource Development Act and collaborations with federal agencies. Cathy highlighted challenges in securing DEC funding and the need for long-term monitoring and interagency collaboration. The presentation concluded with a Q&A discussion covering multiple topics, including climate change's impact on Hydrilla growth, the need for adaptive management, and the importance of continued funding and collaboration.

Action: Consider sending a letter to the governor on NYSDOH Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations

Roxy led a review of the draft letter to Governor Hochul, crafted by the Monitoring Partnership Committee, regarding the NYSDOH's slow response to proposing changes to the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations. The letter addressed the lack of clarity and transparency in the process. The group discussed the letter, incorporating suggestions and edits from members, including grammar improvements and rephrased comments, some of which had been submitted previously via email. Key factors such as water filtration,

volunteer programs, local community buy-in, and enforcement mechanisms were explored. The benefits of Watershed Rules and Regulations, funding options, and involvement of Village of Groton and Tompkins County were also discussed. Litigation related to the issue was noted, and revising the letter to reflect this was suggested. Members emphasized the importance of transparency, requesting more information from NYSDOH, and focusing on specific questions. The group debated whether the focus should be on data or process transparency and decision-making criteria. Various perspectives were shared, including the need to address HABs, contingency plans, and final authority. Ultimately, the discussion was postponed to the next WRC meeting.

Consider submitting comments on the NYS Freshwater Wetlands Maps and Classification proposed rulemaking

Group discussed submitting comments on the proposed New York State Freshwater Wetlands Maps and Classification rulemaking. Darby presented a draft letter outlining simple comments she had prepared. Her comments highlighted concerns about the need for education following adoption, particularly regarding the 90-day approval process for wetland-related activities. Following input from Cynthia Brock and Frank Proto, the group debated whether to submit comments collectively as the Water Resources Council or individually. Ultimately, they decided that, given Darby's expertise and position in the Planning & Sustainability Department, she should submit the comments as a staff person before the Sept. 19 deadline.

Action: Approval of draft minutes

The July 2024 draft minutes were approved as submitted.

Committee Reports

Monitoring Partnership – Darby provided an update on the recent release of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and 303(d) list for the Cayuga Lake Watershed. She noted that the 2020/2022 303(d) list, for which the Council submitted comments, had delisted all waterbodies for silt/sediment but added listings for pH in the Cayuga Inlet and Fall Creek, also iron in Fall Creek. As for the TMDL, she highlighted that some new language and sections had been added but the overall assessment remained unchanged. She also mentioned that Tony Prestigiacommo from NYSDEC attended the recent Monitoring Partnership meeting and is open to presenting on the TMDL at future WRC or other watershed group meetings. Cynthia asked about the delisting of sediment, to which Darby explained that it was due to the lack of an applicable water quality standard for silt and sediment.

Chair and Staff Reports

There was no chair's report. Darby provided an update on the County budget process, announcing that all departments have been directed to propose a 5% spending reduction for 2025. As a result, membership dues for CWIO were impacted. To address this, Darby submitted a request for an additional \$8,000, exceeding the target, to reinstate CWIO's dues. Roxy attended the Expanded Budget committee meeting to answer questions as needed. Last, Cynthia inquired about the budget's potential impact on the Environmental Health Division.

Member Announcements

Members discussed the potential impact of reduced funding for the Hydrilla control program on their community. They explored various strategies to advocate for continued funding, including drafting a historical overview of the County's efforts to address Hydrilla and forming a joint letter with stakeholders. Additionally, they discussed the importance of incorporating agricultural language into their approach and the possibility of lobbying for increased funding at the state level.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 6:09pm.