

**TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL**

Jan. 22, 2024 Via Zoom

Final Minutes

**Attendance**

Member		Seat	Member		Seat
Annie Bastoni	P	At-Large	Brian Rahm	E	Environment
Shawn Bossard	E	Agriculture	Stephanie Redmond	P	At-Large
Cynthia Brock	P	Recreation	Steve Riddle	P	Water Purveyor
Liz Cameron	P	Co. Environmental Health	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	A	Municipal Government	Roxy Johnston	P	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	A	Soil & Water Cons. District	Grascen Shidemantle	P	Associate
Holly Payne	A	At-Large	Tom Vawter	P	Associate
Frank Proto	E	At-Large			

**Guests:** None

**Call to Order/Agenda Review** – Chair Cynthia Brock called the meeting to order at 4:17pm. The vote to nominate the 2024 chair and vice chair was shifted to later in the agenda for scheduling reasons.

**Privilege of the Floor** – No privilege of the floor.

**Action: Consider Letter on Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations**

Roxy Johnston provided an update on the revised letter concerning the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations, emphasizing its focus on legal aspects related to safeguarding drinking water. She highlighted that the various committees involved in drafting the letter had reached a consensus on the current version. Additionally, Roxy informed the group about a lawsuit filed by the City of Auburn and Town of Owasco against the NYS Department of Health. Liz Cameron inquired about the basis of the lawsuit, leading to a brief discussion on legal grounds. Members offered feedback, suggested minor edits, and provided input on the recipient list. They also expressed gratitude to Roxy and her colleagues for their collaborative efforts in crafting the letter.

**Action:** Darby Kiley made a motion, with Liz Kreitinger seconding, to accept the revised Letter on the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations. Motion carried.

**Organizing for 2024**

Cynthia led the group in its annual assessment of WRC committees, emphasizing their connection to the Water Quality Strategy. She also announced the need to update the Water Quality Strategy itself and form a committee for this purpose. The Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, and Grants and Finance Committee were highlighted. Darby informed members about ongoing efforts by the County legislative clerks to standardize advisory board bylaws and assured that staff would keep them updated. Attendees were encouraged to make changes to their committee assignments through the chat function, email, or the Google Doc provided in the agenda packet. Cynthia Brock then invited brief updates from each committee.

**Committee Updates**

## **Education & Outreach**

The Education and Outreach Committee's achievements, particularly the updated boating brochure/map, were acknowledged. Lynn Leopold outlined plans to distribute brochures before Memorial Day, also mentioning potential media outreach to raise awareness of watershed protection efforts. Cynthia elaborated on recommendations for the Education Committee from the Water Quality Strategy report, suggesting collaboration with relevant organizations.

## **Watershed Rules & Regulations/Monitoring Partnership**

Roxy shared that the Watershed Rules & Regulations Committee hadn't met yet in 2024, so planning discussions will be more fruitful after committee convened. Steve Riddle concurred. Potential participation in Cornell's Drinking Water Source Protection Plan (DWSP2) was mentioned. Liz C. proposed renaming the committee to reflect a broader focus on source water protection. Rebecca Minas inquired about the draft TMDL, which Cynthia clarified falls under the Cayuga Lake Monitoring Partnership's oversight. Roxy detailed the committee's role in commenting on drafts and engaging in lake-related initiatives, often with Cornell.

## **Municipal Training**

Committee is still deliberating on potential training topics for the upcoming year. Darby highlighted past training sessions, including one on stream intervention featuring experts like Tom Mallory and others. Lynn Leopold suggested exploring flood hazard mitigation training for municipalities facing infrastructure challenges due to increased stormwater runoff. Darby noted the relevance of that topic for highway departments dealing with practical challenges on the ground. Cynthia commended the insights shared by the committee at the December WRC meeting and proposed the idea of presenting the training at Tompkins County Council of Governments for wider access to elected officials. Darby expressed logistical considerations regarding the length of the presentation but acknowledged the potential value of reaching a broader audience.

## **Water Withdrawals/Regional Watershed Coordination**

The Water Withdrawals Committee did not formally convene in 2023, and it is not expected to meet in 2024. Darby recalled prior discussions on conducting a survey about residents' water supply, citing the ongoing survey by the Town of Ulysses and proposing potential countywide initiatives. Liz C. supported the idea, stressing the significance of data for Community Block Development Grants applications. Becky Sims mentioned past town surveys for drinking water source protection plans. Cynthia asked about groundwater protection programs, sparking a discussion on their scope and involvement of public water systems. Darby highlighted the role of the New York Rural Water Association in conducting town-wide drinking water source protection plans. Shifting to the Regional Watershed Coordination Committee, Darby reviewed previous meetings focusing on regional collaboration, particularly regarding watershed issues. Darby mentioned ongoing engagement with Seneca and Cayuga counties and the possibility of providing feedback on the Finger Lakes Action Agenda.

## **Water Quality Strategy**

Cynthia shared that the Water Quality Strategy Committee needed to be formed, highlighting the need for updates to the strategy every three years. Darby emphasized the importance of a systematic review of each section and chapter for accuracy and relevance. Volunteers were called for the committee, which will meet monthly to review and propose changes.

In other related business, Darby mentioned an upcoming opportunity to provide feedback on DEC wetlands regulations, and Roxy corrected an error in a previous email regarding the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO) meeting date. Roxy will be serving as chair of CWIO this year, and Isaac Walker has been hired as the new watershed manager. Last, Roxy mentioned a Land Use Leadership Alliance

training for municipal officials and Darby highlighted an upcoming CWIO meeting featuring DEC representatives discussing the 303d list and TMDL process.

**Action: Approval of draft minutes** – The December 2023 meeting minutes were approved (moved by Patrick King, seconded by Liz Cameron) as submitted with minor edits. Motion carried.

**Action: Election of 2024 Officers** – Linda Wagenet, Membership & Nominating Committee  
Linda Wagenet presented the slate of officers for 2024, with Cynthia Brock, Frank Proto, and Liz Cameron agreeing to serve again as chair, first vice chair, and second vice chair, respectively. Additional nominations were solicited from the floor, but none were forthcoming.

**Action:** Linda Wagenet made a motion, seconded by Annie Bastoni, to elect Cynthia Brock as chair, Frank Proto as first vice chair, and Liz Cameron as second vice chair of the Tompkins County Water Resources Council for 2024. Motion carried.

### **Chair and Staff Reports**

There was no chair's report. Darby, in her staff report, requested committee chairs to submit their 2023 annual reports to Kristin McCarthy within the upcoming weeks. She mentioned that traditionally Cynthia presents the 2023 WRC Annual Report to the County Legislature's Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality (PEEQ) Committee during their April meeting. Additionally, Darby informed that Annie Koreman will continue as the chair of PEEQ, and Amanda Champion will represent the County Legislature on the WRC for 2024.

### **Member Announcements**

Liz K. mentioned that the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network has successfully enlisted volunteers to monitor the sampling site for the Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program near Taughannock State Park. Grascen Shidemantle added that the Community Science Institute is currently seeking volunteers to monitor Buttermilk Creek. They have also secured funding from the Legacy Foundation to provide free rain gauges as part of the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network's Precipitation Monitoring Program.

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 5:32pm.