

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

March 18, 2024

Via Zoom

Final Minutes

Attendance

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

Guests: Peter Penniman, Liz Thomas, Isaac Walker

Call to Order/Agenda Review – Chair Cynthia Brock called the meeting to order at 4:16pm.

Privilege of the Floor – No guests requested to speak.

Discussion: Three-Year Update of the Water Quality Strategy

Darby Kiley provided an overview of the Water Quality Strategy (WQS), including its purpose, structure, and goals. She highlighted priority actions, noting progress on initiatives like tracking the watershed rules and regulations discussion, commenting on regulatory changes, and conducting educational programming.

The group discussed improvements to the WQS, including potentially adding a reference to the Great Lakes Action Agenda and making references to the Cayuga Lake HABs Action Plan more explicit. They also addressed the possibility of including standing committees in the WQS. Darby clarified that the focus is on the strategy, followed by the formation of committees to achieve outlined actions, allowing the WRC to adapt to changing priorities. Additionally, the group discussed revising the WQS purpose statement to emphasize collaboration and consistency.

Reporting back from the breakout rooms, members shared ideas for how the WRC could help advance water quality through the WQS. These included the need for balanced goals, securing resources, advocacy with legislators, targeted nutrient monitoring, utilizing data for action, maintaining water quality as a central focus, sustainable funding, promoting phosphorus management practices, public education, county-wide collaboration, investigating potential contamination sources, and addressing harmful algal blooms HABs.

Cynthia thanked everyone for their input and assured them that the Water Quality Strategy Committee would carefully review all the notes and evaluate the feedback.

Action: Recommend application for EMC representative –Membership & Nominating Committee

Linda Wagenet, on behalf of the Membership & Nominating Committee, presented Peter Penniman's application for consideration as the EMC representative on the WRC to the board. It was the committee's recommendation that he be appointed.

Action: Linda Wagenet made a motion, which Amanda Champion seconded, to recommend that the Tompkins County Legislature appoint Peter Penniman as the TC Environmental Management Council representative on the TC Water Resources Council. Motion carried.

Action: Approval of draft minutes – Cynthia briefly explained the process outlined in Robert's Rules for approving minutes. Amanda Champion pointed out that she hadn't been officially appointed to the WRC during the January meeting and requested her name be removed from that month's attendance list. After making the necessary amendment, the group approved the January and February 2024 meeting minutes.

Committee Reports

The Monitoring Partnership is currently setting goals for the year, which involves reviewing underutilized aspects of the Water Quality Strategy such as identifying project hotspots and fostering collaboration among primary watershed groups. Next steps include sharing CSI data with partners to match problem areas with potential solutions.

The Education & Outreach Committee discussed focusing on public education about MS4 SPDES permit requirements and best management practices for addressing phosphorus impairment in Cayuga Lake. They're also exploring strategies to disseminate information on local water quality issues, including generating news articles and engaging with the County Legislature, as well as planning the distribution of the next round of WRC clean boating maps.

The Municipal Training Committee is collaborating with Michelle Wright from the Town of Ulysses on a possible presentation to the Tompkins County Council of Governments regarding culvert prioritization and infrastructure asset management. Additionally, they're organizing a "Watersheds 201" training session in the fall as a follow-up to the "Watersheds 101" training held two years ago.

Chair and Staff Reports

No chair's report. Cynthia thanked committee chairs for submitting their annual reports and reminded those who have not yet done so to send their reports to Kristin as soon as possible.

Darby shared highlights from the Bob Brower Scientific Symposium in Plain English on "Effects of Climate Change on Owasco Lake." She also reported that next month the WRC will be meeting for a tour of Bolton Point led by member Steve Riddle.

Member Announcements

Roxy shared updates for three projects/initiatives in the Six Mile Creek watershed: the County Planning & Sustainability Department received a \$75,000 grant for a comprehensive stream assessment; the City received a grant for a build-out analysis; and the City is finalizing a contract with TC Soil & Water Conservation District to support up to four projects. As a CWIO update, Roxy noted their support letter efforts concerning the draft Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations. Following her update, CWIO's watershed manager, Isaac Walker, provided insights on ongoing projects, including discussions with Ulysses regarding culvert and ditch improvements.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 5:38pm.