

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

May 20, 2024

TC Public Works Facility, 170 Bostwick Rd, Ithaca

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	A	At-Large
Liz Cameron	E	Co. Environmental Health	Steve Riddle	E	Water Purveyor
Amanda Champion	P	County Government	Becky Sims	E	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	P	Associate
Liz Kreitinger	E	Watershed Organization	Elaine Quaroni	P	Associate
Jon Negley	P	Soil & Water Cons. District	Grascen Shidemantle	E	Associate
Holly Payne	E	At-Large	Tom Vawter	E	Associate
Peter Penniman	E	Environmental Management Council			

Guests: Devin Cox, Paul Gier, Harry Greene, Megan Kirby

Call to Order/Agenda Review – Chair Cynthia Brock called the meeting to order at 4:16pm. No changes to the agenda.

Privilege of the Floor – No members of the public chose to speak.

Presentation: Soil & Water Conservation District 2024 program work plan forecast – Jon Negley, TCSWD

Jon presented the Soil and Water Conservation District’s 2024 work plan, highlighting core programs like the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) initiative and its achievements. These accomplishments include completing AEM Tier 2 resource assessments for farms, which may lead to grant-funded projects, and securing funding through programs like the Climate Resilient Farming Program. Jon introduced staff members, acknowledged absent team members, and expressed hopes to expand the team as resources allow. He emphasized the district’s mission to assist citizens and local government units in managing soil, water, and natural resources. His presentation included detailed descriptions of each program, covering their inception, core concepts, and alignment with strategic plans. He highlighted funding opportunities, including grants and projects through the Climate Resilient Farming Program, outreach initiatives like the NYS Envirothon for youth, annual tree sale, and collaborations with County Environmental Health on septic system workshops, along with ongoing initiatives like the Watershed Protection, Stormwater Coalition, and Hydrilla Eradication programs. Looking ahead, Jon stressed the importance of continued collaboration with other agencies and organizations, hoping to align the district’s work with the goals of the Water Quality Strategy. The presentation concluded with a Q&A session, addressing questions about AEM program success metrics, funding allocations, integration with hazard mitigation projects, and other topics.

Discussion: Water Quality Strategy update – actions activity

Darby facilitated a discussion of actions related to the Water Quality Strategy. The attendees were divided into smaller groups to outline milestones for the next three years and determine available resources and

commitments. The discussion covered various topics, including advocacy efforts, engagement with governmental bodies, public outreach strategies, partnerships with NGOs and private organizations, metrics for success, and the role of the Water Resources Council as a hub for various groups. Amanda emphasized the importance of advocating for increased support and funding. Suggestions for expanding outreach included creating story maps and utilizing case studies for education. Concerns were raised about the effectiveness of current communication methods and the need for better metrics to gauge engagement.

Action: Approval of draft minutes

Kristen Hychka made a motion, with a second by Cynthia Brock, to approve the April 2024 minutes. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

The Education & Outreach Committee plans to distribute the clean boating maps and explore collaborating with Soil & Water Conservation District staff on MS4 outreach. They're also considering a reprint of the arsenic in well water brochure. The Municipal Training Committee is developing the Watershed 201 training program, and Michelle Wright from the Town of Ulysses will be giving a presentation on culvert management to the Tompkins County Council of Governments in July. The Monitoring Partnership report referenced data collection by the Community Science Institute and Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, while the Watershed Rules & Regulations Committee discussed connecting with other communities to learn from their experiences using DWP2s and will be reviewing their own existing regulations. Additionally, the group discussed PFAS testing results, challenges in communicating to the public about PFAs, and the revised EPA lead and copper rule.

Chair and Staff Reports

Cynthia reported on her presentation of the 2023 WRC annual report to the Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality (PEEQ) legislative committee. Amanda was asked for input on what would be useful for her and her legislative colleagues. More frequent updates to the PEEQ committee and informing legislators about funding priorities for water resources work were suggested. Darby informed group that budget requests for 2025 are due May 31. The group then briefly discussed the draft 2025 County budget.

Member Announcements

Members were encouraged to review Liz Kreitinger's email containing Cayuga Lake Watershed Network events.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 5:58pm.