

**TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL**

Dec. 18, 2023

TC Whole Health Department, Rice Room, 55 Brown Rd Ithaca

Also via Zoom

Final Minutes

**Attendance**

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

**Guests:** Barry Goodrich, Brett Hayhurst, Becky Sims (Z)

**Call to Order/Agenda Review** – Chair Cynthia Brock called the meeting to order at 4:35pm. No changes to the agenda.

**Privilege of the Floor** – None

**2023 Year-end Committee Accomplishments**

**Executive Committee**

Cynthia reported on the committee’s activities in 2023 on behalf of the WRC. These included writing letters to the NYSDEC urging them to finalize the Clean Water Plan and draft TMDL for Cayuga Lake as well as another outlining questions raised by news of a speculative sale of the Cargill salt mine and the need for a thorough environmental review of the site. In addition, the committee provided feedback on the draft NYS solid waste management plan, particularly in the context of biosolids, and penned a letter of support for the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network’s proposal for funding through the Finger Lakes Watershed Grants Program.

**Education Committee**

Cynthia commended the committee for its hard work updating the Clean Boating Map. Shawn elaborated on the process and shared some of the committee’s ideas for future initiatives, including a series of informative articles on water quality monitoring and reaching out to local media for broader outreach. The discussion transitioned to concerns about local media coverage of water quality. Several members expressed disappointment that a recent *Ithaca Journal* article on harmful algal blooms solely focused on their negative impacts, neglecting to acknowledge local monitoring and mitigation efforts.

**Municipal Training Committee**

Darby and Kristen reported on the committee’s activities in 2023, especially focusing on a fall training given related to online planning resources and GIS spatial tools. Twelve participants attended that training, with good

representation across municipalities countywide. In addition, a follow-up session was offered to anyone interested, and a recording of the training, slides from the presentation, a comprehensive resource guide outlining relevant federal, state, and local tools will be posted online for further reference. They also shared work the committee did related to the “Stormwater Good Housekeeping” program for local implementation. There had been plans to co-host a training on FlexiMats technology for ditch management with Jon Negley and Angel Hinickle of the Soil and Water Conservation District, but the timing did not work to invite others during the installation. Darby then “re-enacted” the training for the WRC guests assembled, except that live demos were not included as they were in the training. These resources included static maps and dynamic map viewers available through the Mapping Tompkins website, such as the Environmental Health view. The presentation also covered state resources, such as the DEC Info Locator, with Kristen taking over to cover the NYS Riparian Opportunities Assessment. Federal tools highlighted included FEMA maps, StreamsStats, USDA Web Soil Survey, Model My Watershed, and Climate Explorer. Q&A discussion touched on issues with outdated precipitation data, further research on interplay between manure applications and stormwater runoff and intensity, and other topics. Possible next steps include developing a list of guiding questions to use when planning future trainings, taking a deeper dive into specific tools at a future WRC meeting, and brainstorming ways to synthesize and publicize this information effectively to the target audience.

### **Monitoring Partnership, Watershed Rules & Regulations, Regional Watershed Coordination Committees**

Darby shared highlights from these three committees’ work in 2023. The Monitoring Partnership was the source of several of the WRC’s letters (e.g., TMDL, NYS Solid Waste Management Plan). That committee is currently hammering out letter related to the state’s response to the draft Owasco Watershed Rules & Regulations. Likewise, the Watershed Rules and Regulations Committee has been focused on developments related to Owasco as well as the various water purveyors’ Drinking Water Source Protection Plans. Finally, the Regional Watershed Coordination Committee met early in 2023. One of their intentions had been to focus on the Great Lakes Action Agenda, but the document did not come out until later in the year. It is possible this committee could pick it back up as a work item in 2024.

**Action: Approval of draft minutes** – November 2023 meeting minutes were approved (moved by Frank Proto, seconded by Shawn Bossard) as submitted. Motion carried.

### **Chair and Staff Reports**

No chair’s report. The staff report focused on the upcoming 90-day FEMA appeal period for the new flood maps, which begins in mid-January. The municipalities and County are collaborating on public outreach efforts to inform residents about the appeal process. Questions arose about how to reach residents in affected areas, particularly those with limited internet access. While the city and some villages are primarily impacted, other areas like Freeville and Dryden have experienced changes in flood zone designations. Darby shared that Mike Thorne, representing the city, stated their own study aligns with FEMA’s findings and they will not be appealing the map. Individual homeowners have a separate appeal process for specific properties. Targeted outreach already includes postcards to municipalities, public meetings, and mailing campaigns to affected residents.

### **Member Announcements**

Liz K. shared news about the Cayuga Lake Hydrilla Task Force’s year-end public information session. A recording will be available on the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network’s website soon.

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 5:45pm.