

**CAYUGA LAKE WATERSHED INTERMUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION**

**MINUTES OF Regular Meeting Wednesday, January 23, 2019 @ 7:00 p.m.**

**Ithaca Town Hall, 215 N. Tioga Street, Ithaca, NY**

**PRESENT:**

Tee-Ann Hunter (Chair), Town of Ithaca Board  
C.J. Randall, Planner, Town of Danby  
Roxy Johnston, City of Ithaca WWTP (alternate)  
Grace Bates, Village of Aurora Trustee  
Bill Foster, Discover Cayuga Lake (Floating Classroom)  
Michael Boggs, Town of Ulysses Board  
Joseph Wetmore, Town of Lansing Board  
Lynn Leopold, Discover Cayuga Lake Advisory Board  
Tom Vawter, Discover Cayuga Lake Advisory Board  
Darby Kiley, Tompkins County Department of Planning & Sustainability  
Becky Sims, Town of Enfield Board  
Mike Solvig, Finance Officer, Town of Ithaca  
Cynthia Brock, City of Ithaca Common Council  
Dave Sprout, Planning, Town of Dryden  
Jim Brophy, New York State Parks  
Elizabeth Cameron, Tompkins County Department of Health  
Robert Barton, Town of Hector

**BY PHONE:**

Katherine Hogle, New York State Department of State (NYS DOS)  
Stephanie A Wojtowicz, New York State Department of State (NYS DOS)  
Megan Phillips, Senior Policy Advisor for the Environment, Office of the Governor

Call to order. The meeting was opened at 7:04 pm.

**Action: Consider approval of minutes**

The motion passed.

**Chair Report**

Hunter reported that the Intermunicipal Organization (IO) has \$49,435 on hand with no invoices outstanding. Received contributions from members recently. Solvig prepared budget with breakdown over three-year period. Chair reviewed budget for fiscal year 2019 including expenditures for work Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board (CNYRPDB) will conduct on the NYSDOS Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) Restoration and Protection Plan (RPP) grant. The grant runs for three years.

**Action: Consider approval of Financial Report – Fiscal Year 2018**

Moved by Vawter, seconded by Boggs.

The motion passed.

**Action: Consider approval of Budget for Fiscal Year 2019 and discussion of contribution to Discover Cayuga Lake**

Moved by Hunter, seconded by Leopold.

Foster presented Discover Cayuga Lake (Floating Classroom) work plan for 2019. Majority of funds to Floating Classroom used to provide access and educational experience to the Lake to students. Floating Classroom has been supported by IO for 15 years; the 2019 request is \$10,000. The M/V Teal was launched last year, which means Floating Classroom now has their own boat. As not-for-profit, all money brought in to Floating Classroom goes to education and outreach. Floating Classroom is seeking funds to finish paying off boat and cover operations. The Floating Classroom goal is to provide access to every School District in the Cayuga Lake Watershed. Floating Classroom operations will largely be covered in the future from revenue brought in from programming; they anticipate revenue from tourism. Floating Classroom offices are moving into the new Tompkins Tourism Center for History and Culture on the Ithaca Commons when that opens this year. Floating Classroom goal is financial independence, soon. Vawter and Leopold disclosed their membership on the Floating Classroom Advisory Board and Vawter provided some background on how the Floating Classroom was created originally as part of the IO. Vawter says the Floating Classroom helps IO meet the mandate to provide outreach and education in the watershed. Hunter reviewed the Work Plan and Request for IO Support in 2019 (\$10,000), which includes information on the 708 students were taken onto Cayuga Lake by the Floating Classroom. Foster said goal is to get Union Springs School District and Seneca Falls School District students on the water this year as part of prioritizing access for communities on the north end of the Lake in 2019. Students receive STEM and science-based biological and geological history of Lake and work in mini-labs where they learn about water quality, sunlight penetration, and other elements of limnology. After-school and summer programs are offered as well; 1300 students are raising trout to be released into the streams this spring. Leopold said the Floating Classroom typically operates May 1 through the middle of October.

Kiley made a motion to amend budget to include \$10,000 for CTA/Floating Classroom – 2019 line item.

Moved by Brock, seconded by Vawter.

Hunter suggested amendment to motion to budget line item for CTA/Floating Classroom – 2019 be amended to \$5,000. Bates asked for clarification on how many days the Floating Classroom has students out on the water. Foster explained there is no short answer for how many days the Floating Classroom is operational; annually they plan to collect \$52,000 in tourist revenue; \$70,000 is break-even. Education is partly paid by clients and the rest by donations and other support. Bates asked how many visits to the north end of the lake. Vawter explained that the Floating Classroom did not have their own boat and that the last two years of trips service has been spotty. Bates mentioned Smithsonian Water Grants due in August and Foster acknowledged.

Hunter made a friendly amendment to include \$7,000 for CTA/Floating Classroom – 2019 line item now and an additional \$3,000 later in the season dependent upon member dues receipts. Solveig explained that the bank balance will be about \$45,000 if \$10,000 is contributed to Floating Classroom. Hunter concerned that CNYRPDB subcontract be paid with cash on hand for the work on NYSDOS LWRP RPP as reimbursement from NYSDOS. Hunter's concern is about covering cost of services, estimated to be \$40,000, while IO waits for reimbursement from NYSDOS. Bates asked about other FC fundraising efforts. Leopold says they have been soliciting donations from shoreline residents and raising via crowdsourcing.

Johnston seconded.

The motion with amendment failed.

Hunter made a motion to include \$7,000 for CTA/Floating Classroom – 2019 line item now and an additional \$3,000 in September 2019 dependent upon member dues receipts. Wetmore mentioned there is no schedule of work for CNYRPDB in terms of how much to spend in a year. Hunter said she is not willing to throttle CNYRPDB's progress.

Vawter seconded.

The motion passed.

### **Review of subcontracts with CNYRPDB and Cayuga Lake Watershed Network**

Hunter explained these two documents will be reviewed at the Town of Ithaca Board agenda on Monday, January 28th. NYSDOS (by phone) did not have any comments on the contracts, but requested electronic copy of executed contracts. Hunter mentioned progress report requested by John; Stephanie says send progress report of work done so far including project kick-off meeting. There were no questions on the two contracts.

### **Location of Wednesday, February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting**

Hunter reported she is going to Seneca County SWCD next week to meet with District Manager Erin Peruzzini. Hunter asked Vawter about asking Wells College about hosting a meeting there. Wetmore suggested carpool from Ithaca to an alternate meeting location. Hunter will discuss with Seneca County SWCD on Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup> and send an email to IO list afterwards. Hunter said she will not attend the March meeting.

Hunter moved February 27, 2019 meeting time be changed at to 6 pm; seconded by Boggs.

The motion passed.

### **Chairperson of Intermunicipal Organization**

Sims nominated Hunter as Chair; Brock seconded.

The motion passed.

### **Vice-Chairperson of Intermunicipal Organization**

Vawter suggested Kiley; Kiley said she is not sure whether the County Work Plan includes IO.

Hunter nominated Brock as Vice Chair; Boggs seconded.

Brock made a motion to nominate Johnston as Vice Chair; Hunter seconded.

The motion passed.

### **Review of a Case for Watershed Protection / Management District in New York State document from Lake George Park Commission**

Johnston mentioned she had previous conversations with Venetia Lannon, previous representative from NYS Governor's office regarding expeditious funding for watershed projects for the twelve priority lakes in the state. Concern was about implementing Cayuga Lake Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan in a short time frame. Johnston described efforts for watershed protection / management districts,

similar to Upper Susquehanna Coalition or Finger Lakes/Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FL-LOWPA), which have clear line items in the NYS budget. Lake George Park Commission (LGPC) is working on executing MoUs within the Lake George watershed and suggested contact with FUND for Lake George Executive Director Eric Siy. Phillips said she was unsure whether the formation of a new district is necessary to expedite funding; Watershed Management Protection Districts are not necessarily something the State will entertain at this time. Johnston asked about getting funding out more quickly. Phillips said that the framework outlined in the Lake George Park Commission would not necessarily make funds available more quickly. Hunter explained there is not the planning capacity in municipalities around Cayuga Lake to write and administer grants. Phillips said this RPP will assist the smaller municipalities without the planning capacity and that the State is hoping the framework that comes out of the project will improve chances for additional funding. Hunter said the concern is that an individual muni has to be asked to hold the grant with NYSDOS.

Johnston mentioned FL-LOWPA, district has a line item in state budget, a staff person, and they handle the more complicated interactions, and Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) prepare narratives to relieve member municipalities' reporting workload. Kiley mentioned the possible complexity of creating a watershed district in every Town and Village in the watershed. Phillips mentioned the taxing authority model in Saratoga Lake Protection and Improvement District model (SLIPD). Johnston asked about capacity building for smaller municipalities and concern about streamlining the process. Hunter mentioned that is not just personnel, but concern is about mechanism of grants' reimbursement; she gave an example of a municipality with a \$400K budget being unable to front the money for a significant project and wait for reimbursement. Phillips mentioned the Community Coordinator model for NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities (CEC) and NYSDEC Climate Smart Communities (CSC) programs might be a good model to apply to watershed issues. Kiley said Terry Carroll at Cornell Cooperative Extension worked closely with municipalities through every step of those respective programs' processes. Sims said Town of Enfield would not have received \$50K from CEC without the proactive coordinator assistance and would likely not even have known about the funding opportunities. Hunter asked about the recently appointed Seneca Lake Watershed Manager. Phillips suggested IO contact Senator Pam Helming who secured \$200,000 in the 2018 New York State budget for the Town of Geneva to establish the position of Seneca Lake Watershed Manager through Finger Lakes Institute. Phillips said she heard Helming speak today at Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Public Hearing on waste management and water protection and suggested IO make contact with Helming. Phillips also suggested circuit rider position to assist municipalities.

### **Update from Jennifer Karius on Cayuga Lake Water Quality Projects Overview**

Karius is not able to attend meetings unless they are held earlier in the evening, but Karius did provide written progress report. Hunter mentioned that she has reached 80% of watershed municipalities, who have provided a good amount of the information requested. Hunter anticipates another update at the February 27, 2019 meeting.

Hunter moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by C.J. Randall