

## Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (I O) Meeting Minutes 2/26/2020

Attendance: Tee Ann Hunter, I O chair, T Ithaca; Guests of ZOOM – Kevin Olvany, Canandaigua Lake Watershed Council (CLWC); Robert Hayes, Environmental Advocates of NY (EANY); (also on ZOOM, Michael Allinger, T Newfield;) Deborah Dawson, Tompkins County; Ronny Hardaway, V Lansing; Elizabeth Thomas, T Ulysses; Roxanna Johnston, C Ithaca; Darby Kiley, Tompkins County; Charlie Ripley, Cayuga County; Becky Sims, T Enfield; Bronwyn Losey, T Lansing; Ingrid Sydenstricker, Tompkins County; Michael Murphy, V Dryden; Bud Shattuck, V Union Springs; Erin Peruzzini, Seneca County; Lynn Leopold, V Lansing; Rich DePaulo, T Ithaca; Jason Haremza, T Danby; Tony DelPlato, V Interlaken; Grace Bates, V Aurora; Cynthia Brock, C Ithaca; Jennifer Karius, Ithaca College, Independent work for the I O; Jackie Cassaniti, T Caroline

The I O is in the process of reorganizing and Tee Ann has invited other organizations to show their form to our group; so Tee Ann invited Kevin Olvany from CLWC to make a presentation on “Canandaigua Lake Integrated Watershed Management Success and Ongoing Challenges.”

1. There is an updated management plan from 2014 that is in effect now.
2. There are many organizations in the effort to keep Canandaigua Lake clean for the 5 water purveyors, landowners and tourism: Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association, Canandaigua Lake Watershed Commission and CLWC among others.
3. Kevin was hired in 1998 from the State College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry in Syracuse to create a strategy to show benefits of getting together to keep the lake clean.
4. There are 14 municipalities (munis) in the Canandaigua Lake watershed (unlike the 42 around Cayuga Lake) and most of the land around the lake is privately owned.
5. Some of the criteria for the funding formula are: gallons of water used (ex. by the City of Canandaigua), % of muni in the watershed, population density, watershed assessed value, tourist dollars...all per muni, ranked 0 -10, then a weight as a multiplier...the City of Canandaigua pays about 250 times more than the smallest town of Bristol; but they have equal votes; this is voluntary membership for the overall lake health.
6. They use organizations such as CSLAP, FLCC, Nature Conservancy, Finger Lakes Hub, DEC, DOS and ESF Syracuse.
7. He gave numerous examples of how they were able to mitigate flooding problems on Sucker Brook, West River, Fall Brook and farm fields; and what they hope to do in the future.
8. The downside is the occurrence of blue-green algae and quagga mussels. There was a large bloom in 2015, then in 2017 there were some blooms, 2018 it was green algae, but in 2019 it was more and started earlier; the cost is in the recreational season and toxins in the lake that can effect water at beaches and intake pipes.

Questions: 1. Tony asked: If there is water runoff, it seems something must be wrong? Kevin said he doesn't want to blame farmers, they are doing nothing wrong; they ask farmers, don't tell farmers what could be better, but there needs to be better funding strategies for answers. They work on the sub-watersheds (ex. Sucker Brook) to find answers for the lake, and they try to use muni's equipment and know-how instead of hiring a large contractor. Sometimes they buy the land to work on for a common good.

2. Deborah: What's the total budget for a year? Kevin: \$132,000. They have grant proposals for \$600 to \$650,000 from the DOS and the watershed commission has its own projects of \$120 to \$130,000 a year.

3. Tee Ann: When you write grants, who holds the grants? Kevin: It is usually the City of Canandaigua or another muni, and could be paid back 6 to 9 months later.

4. Michael Murphy: How do you get grants so successfully? Kevin: We have a showcase of past successes. The Consolidated Funding Application is harder to get now because of all the new requirements. You need someone to be the administrator and watch the grants; should be a hybrid approach, home rule authority is critical, and FLCC helps. It helps to have a resource person to minimize problems, Kevin is learning but is not a

professional engineer, but he is learning from each project. 5. Grace: How do you prioritize your projects? Kevin: I see where problems are during rain events and/or ask farmers to help, and instead of changing culverts, look upstream to solve the problems because it costs less. 6. Rich: Are a lot of your projects with private land owners and not muni? Kevin: It helps that FLCC is owned by Ontario County, and that we get the Nature Conservancy to get the land. When we work with large farmers, we hope they are willing to donate some land. 7. Michael Murphy: Do you compensate private landowners? Kevin: YES, some land is donated, some are easements, some land is bought, and the Finger Lakes Land Trust helps as well. We also have a 9-Element Plan and that helps get grants from the DEC. We are looking at Owasco Lake, but we don't have CAFO farms, I have to remember that my bosses are the farmers! 8. Michael Murphy: It seems like most of your projects are big, but not huge. Kevin: we have 10 separate projects under 1 grant, it's difficult, but it helps to get grants because smaller grants are harder to get from NYS, and try to get public works dep't to help. 9. Becky: Have you collected stormwater documentation to show projects are working? Yes, on the Sucker Brook 20-acre project, and school flooding has stopped, also on West River, flooding has been reduced. 10. Cynthia: Will you share this power-point? Kevin: Yes, PDF or another method. I will send it to Tee Ann. 11. Tee Ann: Thank you, and can we work together and ask questions again? Kevin: Yes, and if you want to meet, the Finger Lakes Institute is a good place.

Next the I O had Robert Hayes from EANY make a presentation, also on ZOOM. He said that there is a crumbling infrastructure for water which results in drinking water and sewage problems. In 2017 there were clean water infrastructure improvement acts in NYS, in 2018 there was \$2.5 billion in the budget, but in 2019 it was not in the budget. We want it back in the budget for 2020. Over 4 years there was \$1.2 billion awarded outside NYC (in 57 of the 62 counties), there is a backlog of shovel-ready projects so about 50% are not getting money, hopefully they will be funded in the next grant cycle. EANY worked with 17 areas last year and are doing it again this year. Robert wants more support from the I O in Albany, by writing a letter to our governor and senate and assembly members.

Questions: 1. Becky: What if the muni has no water or sewer infrastructure can they still get help? Robert: There is a lot of clean water information, like septic system replacement projects and source water community funding. 2. Cynthia: When can we get help? Robert: NYS applications are due in March, call Robert with questions about applications....Deborah said Lansing applied. It was passed that letters will be sent by the I O.

Other business: Tee Ann said that if the TMDL passes (for all of Cayuga Lake now) the I O won't need a 9-Element plan. The minutes from January 2020, and the \$60,330.67 in the January Financial Report were approved. Tee Ann asked again if anyone wanted to be on the Membership Committee, but no one came forward. She said the newly formed committees should set up their own meeting times and report to the I O in March. Tee Ann said that Roxy and Bud will speak in Springport on March 9th about benefits of I O membership; the I O should see if other newly elected muni officials around Cayuga Lake want to join. Erin brought some proposals for possible funding and grants and passed around a list of them, from Seneca County soil and water, such as climate resilient farming and there will be a harmful algae blooms and quagga mussels discussion on 3/31/20 at the Seneca Falls Community Center (registration required). Charlie said he was assigned to the Cayuga County soil and water district. Deborah said legislatures should look to the soil and water work plans rather than the summary of specific grants. Tompkins County still has a need for a water engineer, but may not be offering enough at \$70,000. Roxy said that soil and water districts don't have a lack of staff, but a lack of operating

capital. Is it possible to borrow money from the Tompkins County legislature and pay it back when the funds come in? Tee Ann said Lobby Day in Albany is March 4th and she wants more people to attend...Association of Towns, Association of Counties, Conference of Mayors...stop the grant applications, just give the money! We need a dedicated funding stream for water projects; Roxy: what about bond acts? Bud said go to the morning meetings, but make an appointment to talk to your representative in the afternoon. Also, Kathy Bertuch is back at work and wants to review water criteria and finalize and reach out for project ideas. March 11th is her date. Jennifer Karius has submitted a proposal to get the I O meetings hosted around Cayuga Lake by presenting "planned and/or executed water quality project...and invite prospective I O members <from the area> who could stay for a concise business meeting....with food." This could possibly be done for the April meeting. Shawn Murphy from the Cortland County soil and water district sent thanks for the septic ed and guidance report; and the letter sent helped him get a grant for septic systems (testing?). He would like another letter of support for a grant for a Fall Creek project.

Submitted by Jackie Cassaniti