

Regular Meeting
Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (IO) Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Held Via ZOOM

Minutes

Voting Members Present: Liz Thomas, IO Chair; Kelly O’Hara, Town of Aurelius, Tee Ann Hunter, Town of Ithaca; Tony Del Plato, Village of Interlaken; Roxanna Johnston, City of Ithaca; Ronny Hardaway, Village of Lansing; Stephanie Redmond, Town of Enfield; Don Slocum, Town of Genoa; Bronwyn Losey, Town of Lansing; Grace Bates, Village of Aurora; Bud Shattuck, Village of Union Springs; Michelle Henry, Town of Newfield; Jackie Cassaniti, Town of Caroline

Stakeholders Present: Doug Kierst, Cayuga County Soil and Water, Paulette Rosa, T of Ithaca; Ian Smith, Seneca Lake Watershed Steward, and part-time for the IO; Greg Colucci, Senior Planner for Cayuga County; Robert Meek, Ovid resident and member of Delaware River Keepers; Darby Kiley, Tompkins County Associate Planner; Shawn Murphy, Cortland County Soil and Water; Jennifer Karius, Ithaca College; Margaret Johnson, Ithaca; Ona Ferguson, Consensus Building Institute (CBI); Sofia Soto Reyes, CBI

Liz thanked Tee Ann for being the IO chair for many years and now knows how much work goes into that job.

Agenda Item 2 - Approval of the February minutes and financial report

Resolved that the Cayuga Lake Watershed IO approves the minutes from their meeting on 2/24/21 and also the January financial report.

MOVED: Liz Thomas

SECONDED: Roxy Johnston

VOTE: Unanimous

Agenda Item 3: Update on Organizational Assessment – Ona Ferguson and Sofia Soto Reyes

The Consensus Building Institute (CBI) conducted interviews of stakeholders and municipal members to find out how the IO is viewed and what the IO can do to improve. They used the phone, focus groups and surveys; sixty one people provided input. The summary will be shared in the next few weeks. Topics were Context Opportunities; Context Challenges; Findings: Impressions and Perceptions; Findings: Challenges Facing the IO; Suggestions for the IO. There were 6 main suggestions for the IO: 1. Be explicit about what the IO does 2. Maintain laser focus on watershed-wide scale 3. Bring people together and build priorities 4. Support members individually 5. Support members together at the watershed level. 6. Advocate at the state level. Many expressed the need for paid staff, not volunteers make faster progress. Others were not familiar with the HABs Action Plan for Cayuga Lake and the Cayuga Lake Restoration and Protection Plan—both key guidance documents. The next steps are 1. Planning, 2. Development, 3. Discussion, 4. Revise operating documents and procedures. The final report on the interview findings will be released soon.

Tony asked how much people who are not in the IO know about it? Are some people uncomfortable about what the IO and DEC do? Sofia: Interviewees want the IO to work with lots of people, but need to know the role of the IO, they want it to be supplemental, not take over from other organizations. Ona: It is normal for organizations to re-invent themselves periodically.

Agenda Item 4 – Central N Y Regional Planning and Development Projects (CNYRPD) Update. There are 29 projects on the table; they were ranked on 3/15/ will be ranked again on 4/12 and again on 5/17. If any municipality has more project ideas, this list is not final and should be updated annually. Tee Ann was a lot of help.

Agenda Item 5 – Watershed Manager Report – Ian Smith

Ian looked through Kathy Bertuch's, CNYRPD, projects to see what could be done first and what is "doable" in a short time frame. One was above and below Slaterville Road at Six Mile Creek Winery (SMCW); both city and town of Ithaca would be involved as part of the required grant match, and there is a reasonable time frame to submit a grant. Ian said the SMCW problem is chronic, and excessive runoff continues to go down to Six Mile Creek. The fix would be to increase the storage capacity above the road and re-establish the floodplain on the SMCW side. In April the IO should know if this project can be done. Roxy said that the IO can help get the City of Ithaca and the Town of Ithaca to work together to contribute to this project.

Ian is also looking into several ditch management projects for the IO.

Agenda Item 6 – CLWIO acronym – should it be changed? There are other intermunicipal organizations or IO's now working together so differentiating the Cayuga Lake IO would be helpful. Seneca Lake's IO is called SWIO. Perhaps paralleling with CWIO would be good or CLIO, and they are both pronounceable! (Also, we need a song!) We can vote on this change in April.

Agenda Item 7 – Finger Lakes National Heritage Region - Tee Ann Hunter said she is still getting information, Steve Butko on Seneca/Keuka Lake is a big proponent of this, Tee Ann will speak with Hilary Lambert of CLWN. What would be the focus? Who would take responsibility for it? Check with Cindy Kimble from the Finger Lakes Tourist Alliance, we have more time before this is due. Liz asked if the IO should support this and write a letter of support by the April meeting, the designation is due 6/1/21.

Agenda Item 8 - Chair's Report – Liz talked to Stephanie Wojtowicz and asked about the capacity building grant she had mentioned that could help pay for a watershed manager.

The IO gets lots of information about water quality; Liz asked the municipalities how often they would like emails from her; once or twice a month or a different amount? And how would they like the minutes delivered; the long version or short version done by Grace Bates and Cynthia Brock? Ronny Hardaway suggests emails no more than twice a month.

Agenda Item 9 – Committee Reports –

Executive Committee - Liz Thomas

They discussed aspects of the Fair Funding Fee (FFF), worked on the marketing PowerPoint (PPT) and assisted with the organizational assessment. Many also interviewed stakeholders for the assessment.

RESOLUTION FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE Regarding the Fair Funding Formula – adopted on 3/23/21

WHEREAS the purpose of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CLWIO) is to bring municipalities together to work collectively and collaboratively on monitoring, protecting, and restoring the health of the watershed, and

WHEREAS to achieve this purpose the CLWIO needs funding for staff to coordinate efforts, write grants, identify problem areas, educate, and generally assist municipalities as well as funding to help pay for priority projects identified by the CLWIO membership, and

WHEREAS currently all municipalities pay the same amount in dues regardless of their size or how much of their municipal land is within the watershed, and

WHEREAS other watersheds within the Finger Lakes use a formula that more fairly calculates dues based on logical mathematical factors.

Therefore be it

RESOLVED that the CLWIO Finance Committee approves the attached Fair Funding Formula (FFF) which is similar to that used for decades in the Canandaigua Watershed, and further

RESOLVED that the FFF is based on each municipality within the Cayuga Lake watershed's 1) acreage within the watershed, 2) miles of land adjoining Cayuga Lake, 3) population density, 4) gallons of water consumed, and 5) taxable assessed value (x3), as calculated in the attached document, and further

RESOLVED the CLWIO Finance Committee sends this adopted resolution to the Executive Committee for their consideration and approval before the FFF is sent on to the general CLWIO membership for approval again as specified in the CLWIO bylaws, and further

RESOLVED the CLWIO Finance Committee recommends the new dues based on the FFF be requested from all municipalities within the watershed before August 2021 when budget requests for most municipalities are being considered.

Moved by Dave Sprout,

Seconded by Michael Allinger

Unanimous approval by the Finance Committee: Dave Sprout, Michael Allinger, Tom Vawter, Ronny Hardaway, and Liz Thomas

Adopted: 3/23/2021