



Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO)

Wednesday, February 23, 2022

Held VIA ZOOM

Minutes

Members, Associate Members, and Ex-Officio Members Present: Jackie Cassaniti, Tony Del Plato, Darby Kiley, Margaret Johnson, Roxy Johnston, Michelle Henry, Tee-Ann Hunter, Mary Jump, Bob Meek, Stephanie Redmond, Michael Reynolds, Mitch Rowe, Dave Sprout, Liz Thomas, Tom Vawter, Shawn Murphy, Seth Lutter, Kelly O'Hara

Stakeholders, Partners, and Committee Members Present: Nathaniel Launer, Aaron McKeon, Alex Patterson, Michael Boggs

Agenda Item 2 – Resolution to approve minutes and finance report.

RESOLVED that the CWIO approves the draft minutes of the 1/26/2022 meeting provided in the meeting package, and financial report ending 12/30/2022 with a balance of \$156,334.37

Moved: Don Slocum

Seconded: Kent Hubble

Vote: Unanimous

Agenda Item 3– Chair Report

DOS Grant to Identify Projects Within the Watershed: There will be a public meeting on zoom on Wednesday, March 16 to present the ranked projects assembled by Central NY Regional Planning and Development and ranked by the CWIO Project Advisory Committee. The CWIO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will review this list and take this into account as they proceed to advance projects. This project is funded by the NY Department of State.

Camp Barton Update: Mike Reynolds, the Town Supervisor from the Town of Covert gave an update on the future of Camp Barton. While not official, Mike and Liz believe the 39 acres along route 89 have been sold already. The Towns of Ulysses, Covert, and Village of Trumansburg are in negotiations with NYS Parks to preserve the remaining ~90 acres that adjoin the lake. The Boy Scouts would like to still use the camp for their activities and could help maintain the property. NYS Parks may be able to access funds to purchase the land but has no maintenance budget to contribute. The camp is about 2 miles north of Taughannock Park.

The Bob Brower symposium will be on Saturday 3/19 from 9:00 to noon focusing on the human factors affecting water quality.

Other: Liz brought attention to the document containing all the resolutions to date for CWIO from 2022. Once the website is up and running, these will be posted there.

Liz met with leaders at the Community Science Institute (CSI) including the new co-Director, Grascen Shindemantle who is excited about the possibility of working with CWIO in the future.

In person meeting: Liz asked if anyone would be willing to help organize an in person meeting possibly for April. Paul Kronenwetter gave her a lead on a location in Seneca County. Assistance welcome.

Agenda Item 4 - Committee Reports

Executive Committee –

Watershed Manager Hiring Process: Tee-Ann Hunter has been very helpful in moving this forward. She contacted Lisa Cleckner from the Finger Lakes Institute (FLI) about housing the WM there. FLI has space and also houses Ian Smith who works for the Seneca Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (SWIO). Liz reminded everyone that CWIO approved the WM salary and job description in January, but must still decide on where the person will be housed, the hiring process, who will supervise the position, etc. Liz asked the general CWIO membership how involved they would like to be in all these aspects of hiring the WM. Tee-Ann Hunter reminded CWIO of the interview team the Executive Committee has recommended but this has not been finalized: Darby Kiley, Tompkins County Planner and former WM for Cayuga Lake; Erin Peruzzini, Seneca County SWCD; Steve Lynch, Cayuga County Director of Planning; Liz Thomas, CWIO Chair; Ian Smith, WM for Seneca Lake watershed, and a person from where the WM would be housed (Lisa Cleckner if at FLI). They also suggest a larger group who could listen in to interviews and give feedback to the interview team. Tom Vawter suggested FLI would be a good location for the WM and that there is enough representation already in the southern part of the watershed.

Liz said CWIO itself needs to decide whether to delegate some of the hiring details or to run all decision-making details through the whole membership. Mitch Rowe suggested the Executive Committee be empowered to make most of the hiring decisions, especially since all committees are represented on the Executive Committee. Michele Henry suggested including someone who samples the creeks. Darby and Roxy fill that role.

Mitch Rowe made a motion to empower the Executive Committee to take the actions required to make a selection for a Watershed Manager on behalf of the full CWIO Membership provided that they the appointment stays within the salary range already approved. The motion was seconded by Tom Vawter with a friendly amendment that the final candidate be brought back to the whole CWIO membership for final review and approval. Margaret Johnson suggests the Executive Committee explain why the person is being recommended. Mitch Rowe accepted the friendly amendment, but in discussion, Liz reminded the group that in the email accompanying the February agenda package she stated there would be no actions taken at the February CWIO meeting, and she is hesitant to then take action after all. Plus delaying a vote on the motion will not affect or slow the hiring project. Mitch and Tom agreed to table their motion for reconsideration at the March meeting.

303(d) Comments: Liz credited Roxy Johnston and Darby Kiley for their detailed review of the listing and delisting of waters within the Cayuga Lake watershed from the 303(d) lists. Those comments were submitted and were the final comments were included in the agenda package.

CAFO SPDES Permit comments: The DEC had a very short comment period on proposed changes to the Stormwater Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) general permit. The Executive Committee reviewed comments prepared by the Cayuga County Department of Health and asked the CWIO Ag Committee to comment as well. The final comments submitted were attached as part of the February agenda package and leaned heavily on the RPP and the HABs Action Plan goals and actions.

Nomination and Membership Committee

Tony Del Plato said he, Cynthia Brock, and Ann Balloni will split up the counties around Cayuga Lake and meet with the municipalities to show a 10 minute presentation and talk about the benefits of CWIO membership. Tony said there were a lot of questions about where to send the dues; that was not clear on the invoice. The dues should be sent to the Town of Ithaca, 215 North Tioga Street, Ithaca, NY 14850 (607) 273-1721, as they hold the CWIO finances. The payment should be in the form of a check, the town cannot accept electronic payments at this time. Deadline for 2022 dues is June 30, 2022.

Agriculture Committee

The Ag Committee provided comments on the CAFO permit with a very quick turnaround time.

EPPOC Committee

Roxanna Johnston and Hilary Lambert have done a lot of the preliminary work needed for the website and it has now been passed on to the EPPOC committee who are being very thorough and thoughtful in their consideration of the materials to provide on the site. The website deadline has been delayed slightly as a result but should be up and running by the end of June.

Technical Advisory Committee

This group met once, and appointed Darby as the person to report out to the CWIO membership. They are working on how to help with the 6-mile Creek project and the Covert salt storage building. Liz will connect with Supervisor Reynolds on that. They also shared ideas on how to update and add to the existing list, and if changed, how that list would be reprioritized. Darby will be reaching out to Lansing on the Salmon Creek project to see how they can help advance that project.

Liz added that the existing prioritized list is a guidance document only and whether a project moves ahead depends on a number of variables such as if the municipality or landowner is still interested in being involved, if the project needs grant funding, if a grant source is available, or how time consuming the project will be. The TAC also discussed how few projects are in Seneca and Cayuga Counties and how to have a better balance of projects across the region.

Agenda Item 5 – General announcements

Mitch Rowe said the Seneca County Health Department is gearing up to implement the new septic system inspection law and are currently doing training for these inspections. Darby noted that Tompkins County Health Department is looking to hire someone to update their sanitary code as well which would affect septic systems in Tompkins County.

Mitch said Sheldrake Creek has once again flooded. To date, the DEC has not allowed dredging to prevent future flooding, but Mitch hopes to be able to make headway on flooding remediation. Liz asks if the topic of dredging needs to be discussed more generally with the DEC since she has heard other municipalities comment that receiving permission from the state is difficult.

Margaret Johnson wondered if there are items in the NYS budget that would affect CWIO and should we be doing some advocacy on this topic. Liz replied that undoubtedly there are, and welcomes any member who might be able to take a lead on this. Margaret also suggests reviewing the Environmental Bond Act information. She also suggests networking more with the Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Protection (FLLOPA) since there is overlap of issues. CWIO is not a member.

Stephanie Redmond, Supervisor for the Town of Enfield said they just adopted a Drinking Water Protection Law and will share this with CWIO. They had help from a USGS aquifer study, the NY Rural Water Association, and the Tompkins County Department of Health. The law is not part of the zoning law.

Bob Meek brought up the importance of the Climate Leadership Community Protection Act. Comments are due by mid-April. See [climate.ny.gov](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIE4Uj93Vs4) regarding the scoping plan to implement the Act. See former Senator Jen Metzger's summary of the topic on YouTube for a good overview <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIE4Uj93Vs4>.

Michele Henry says the Tompkins is progressing with its Hazard Mitigation Plan and flood planning, and that it's important to weigh in.

Agenda Item 6 – Motion to adjourn

Moved: Tom Vawter Seconded: Dave Sprout.

Submitted by Jackie Cassaniti and Liz Thomas