

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

Jan. 27, 2025
Zoom Meeting
Final Minutes

Attendance

Member		Seat	Member		Seat
Annie Bastoni	P	At-Large	Elaine Quaroni	P	Municipal Government
Shawn Bossard	P	Agriculture	Stephanie Redmond	P	At-Large
Cynthia Brock	P	Recreation	Steve Riddle	P	Water Purveyor
Liz Cameron	E	Co. Environmental Health	Becky Sims	P	Municipal Government
Amanda Champion	E	County Government	Vacant	X	Business & Industry
Brett Hayhurst	P	At-Large	Vacant	X	Cooperative Extension
Kristen Hychka	P	Municipal Government	Vacant	X	Environmental Mgmt Council
Darby Kiley	P	County Planning & Sustain.	Douglas Barnes	P	Associate
Liz Kreitingner	P	Watershed Organization	Roxy Johnston	P	Associate
Andrew Murphy	P	At-Large	Lynn Leopold	P	Associate
Jon Negley	P	Soil & Water Cons. District	Rebecca Minas	E	Associate
Eileen O'Connor	P	Environment	Grascen Shidemantle	E	Associate
Holly Payne	P	At-Large	Tom Vawter	E	Associate
Frank Proto	P	At-Large	Linda Wagenet	E	Associate

Guests: Matt Genchur

Call to Order/Agenda Review –Chair Cynthia Brock called the meeting to order at 4:17pm. There were no changes to the agenda.

Privilege of the Floor – Guest Matt Genchur from Resource Environmental Solutions introduced himself.

Action: Election of 2025 Officers – Membership & Nominating Committee

Jon Negley presented the slate of officers for 2025, with Cynthia Brock, Frank Proto, and Liz Cameron agreeing to serve again as chair, first vice chair, and second vice chair, respectively. Additional nominations were solicited from the floor, but none were forthcoming.

Action: Jon Negley made a motion, seconded by Shawn Bossard, to elect Cynthia Brock as chair, Frank Proto as first vice chair, and Liz Cameron as second vice chair of the Tompkins County Water Resources Council for 2025. Motion carried.

Action: Approval of draft minutes

The December 2024 draft minutes were approved as submitted.

Discussion: Organizing for 2025

Darby led a comprehensive overview of the Water Quality Strategy Actions and their relation to the proposed 2025 work plan. The presentation included proposed committee structures and assignments and solicited member feedback on preferences. Darby clarified the roles of standing committees and reminded members of upcoming bylaw revisions. The group discussed various topics, including the 303d list, water withdrawal permits, and legislative actions. They also discussed the potential renaming of the Watershed Rules and Regulations Committee to the Drinking Water Protection Committee. Additionally, they explored ideas for inter-watershed coordination, such as inviting guest speakers and hosting a local symposium. The Monitoring Partnership's

future related to TMDL implementation was also discussed, along with potential collaboration with the Education Committee on outreach. Legislative training timelines, ongoing municipal training, and the new Septic System Committee's charge to address research, policy, and permitting were also covered. Darby raised the issue of consistent terminology, prompting discussion on whether to use "septic system" or "on-site wastewater treatment system." Q&A discussion covered septic system education, the Board of Health's role in private well oversight, as well as emerging contaminants like PFAS and microplastics. Additionally, the discussion touched on the lack of local, state, or federal regulation of water quality in private wells. In closing, members were instructed to sign up for committees by reaching out to Cynthia or staff.

Federal & State Public Notices/Actions Subject to Public Comment

The group reviewed two federal and state public notices open for comment. The first notice covered DEC's proposal to revise guidance documents regarding phosphorus guidance values for waterbodies. The second notice addressed EPA's response to New York State's impaired water bodies list, which included proposed changes to listings for various impairments including silt, sediment, harmful algal blooms, and algal/weed growth across multiple water bodies. During Q&A, members discussed sampling protocols for chlorophyll-a measurements at different water depths, averaging methods for data collection, and timeline concerns for comment submission. The Monitoring Partnership will meet on February 11 to potentially develop comment letters, with submission deadlines of February 18 for EPA comments and February 24 for phosphorus guidance comments.

Action: A motion was made by Cynthia Brock, with a second by Frank Proto, to authorize the executive committee to sign off on comments developed by the Monitoring Partnership regarding the NYS DEC Proposed Phosphorous Guidance Value and the EPA Addition of 96 water body/pollutant combinations to the NY 2020-2022 303(d) list. The motion carried.

Action: A motion was made by Frank Proto, with a second by Jon Negley, to request a 30-day extension for the deadlines related to the NYS DEC Proposed Phosphorous Guidance Value and the EPA Addition of 96 water body/pollutant combinations to the NY 2020-2022 303(d) list. The motion carried.

Before turning to the next agenda items, Chair and Staff Reports, Cynthia asked Jon to elaborate on a note he'd made in the meeting chat regarding an 800-acre solar development project in the towns of Lansing and Groton. Jon explained that the project is under review by the New York State Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Electric Transmission. Concerns were raised regarding agricultural protection, wetlands impact, and stormwater management. It was noted that the DEC does not consider solar panels as impervious surfaces for runoff calculations. The state's authority to override local regulations was discussed, including a potential override of certain Groton regulations regarding prime farmland. Public comments on the project are due February 21, with a public hearing scheduled at Groton High School on February 20.

Chair and Staff Reports

Chair's Report – Cynthia reminded committee chairs to submit their annual reports to Kristin by February 10.

Staff Report – Darby reminded new and renewing voting members to look for their yellow oath cards in the mail from the County Legislature. These cards need to be notarized and filed with the County Clerk's Office. Additionally, Darby provided a brief update on the ad hoc bylaws committee, which now includes Elaine and Frank as members. Additional volunteers are welcome.

Member Announcements

Roxy provided the Cayuga Watershed Intermunicipal Organization watershed manager report, highlighting the Town of Covert's awarded salt barn funding application. Roxy also reported on a meeting with representatives from the Commonland condominiums to address localized erosion along Six Mile Creek. Additionally, she shared

that the Seneca County road ditch assessment is nearing completion, with assessed ditches eligible for implementation funds; a stormwater BMP project is being developed, seeking municipally owned properties for small projects; and there is a Nature Conservancy grant offering up to \$50,000 for climate-resilient projects, with lower grant tracking hurdles than DEC funding. Jon reported that the Governor's budget allocates \$400 million to the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) for FY 2026. Frank inquired about potential hydrilla funding through the EPF, but no specific line item was identified.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 5:44pm.