

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

Jan. 24, 2022 Zoom meeting

Final Minutes

Attendance

Member		Seat	Member		Seat
Annie Bastoni	P	At-Large	Frank Proto	E	At-Large
Fay Benson	P	Agriculture	Brian Rahm	P	Environment
Cynthia Brock	P	Municipal	Stephanie Redmond	P	At-Large
Liz Cameron	P	Co. Environmental Health	Steve Riddle	A	Water Purveyor
Amanda Champion	P	County Government	Elizabeth Thomas	E	Recreation
Michelle Henry	P	EMC Representative	Linda Wagenet	P	At-Large
Kristen Hychka	P	Municipal Government	Chris Bordlemay Padilla	P	Associate
Emelia "Mia" Jumbo	P	At-Large	Roxy Johnston	P	Associate
Darby Kiley	P	County Planning & Sustain.	Cedric Mason	A	Associate
Patrick King	P	Business & Industry	Steve Penningroth	P	Associate
Lynn Leopold	P	Municipal Government	Elaine Quaroni	P	Associate
Jon Negley	E	Soil & Water Cons. District	Tom Vawter	P	Associate
Holly Payne	P	At-Large			

Guests: Anne Koreman, Liz Kreitinger

Call to Order/Agenda Review or Changes – Chair Cynthia Brock called the meeting to order at 4:17pm.

Privilege of the Floor – Liz Kreitinger, who is scheduled to become the new Watershed Organization representative in February, introduced herself. She is finishing up her doctorate at Cornell in the Department of Natural Resources and starts as the new director of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network in March. Brian Rahm shared that the NYS Water Resources Institute recently hired a DEC Regional Office 7 Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator. Brian added that he would be happy to help facilitate a future presentation by this person to the WRC. The position will be based out of Syracuse.

Action: Election of 2022 Officers and Recommendation for Voting Membership – *Linda Wagenet, Membership/Nominating Committee*

Linda presented the slate of officers for 2022, 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: Darby Kiley made a motion, which was seconded by Linda Wagenet, to elect Cynthia Brock as chair, Frank Proto as first vice chair, and Liz Cameron as second vice chair, of the Water Resources Council. Motion was carried by the members present.

Linda Wagenet presented an application from Jenna DeRario for the Cornell Cooperative Extension seat to the WRC members present for their consideration. Holly Payne, who also works at Cooperative Extension, spoke briefly about Jenna’s role as Payment for Ecosystem Services Educator.

Action: A motion by Lynn Leopold, which was seconded by Linda Wagenet, was made to recommend Jenna DeRario for the Cornell Cooperative Extension seat on the Water Resources Council. Motion carried.

Legislator Anne Koreman shared that the newly formed Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee might schedule an early special meeting to help expedite committee business such as advisory board liaison appointments. She will work with staff to keep everyone informed.

Presentation: Draft 2020-2022 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters – *Roxy Johnston, MP*
Roxy reported to the group on NYSDEC's proposed changes to the 303(d) List of Impaired Waters. She started with background information on the 303(d) list, which requires states to monitor their waters on a regular basis and actual data to determine if they are meeting the criteria set for their best uses. States are required to submit their findings to the Environmental Protection Agency every two years. She highlighted that a shortcoming of the 303(d) list, which is part of the Clean Water Act, is that it is a child of the 1970s and as such is geared toward addressing point source pollutants and does not adequately consider many of the climate change–driven impacts affecting waterbodies today. As part of the proposed changes, the southern end of Cayuga Lake was removed from the list for silt/sediment, and the NYSDEC has proposed delisting silt/sediment statewide due to “flaws in original analysis.” NYSDEC released this notification on during the last week of December and gave the public only 30 days to submit comments, prompting the WRC executive committee to write the state to request data and an extension of the comment period. The Q&A discussion covered various topics, including implications for funding, water quality monitoring obligations for municipalities, data collection and reporting requirements, sampling for pH levels, contributions of citizen scientists, upcoming 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, possible impact of staffing changes at NYSDEC, and more.

Action: Approve Executive Committee Comment Letter Sent to NYSDEC on Draft 303(d) List

Action: A motion by Linda Wagenet, which was seconded by Michelle Henry, was made to approve the January 11 Executive Committee letter to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Bureau of Water Assessment and Management requesting an extension of the public comment period for proposed changes to the Draft 2020-2022 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters as well as the data used for the new listings in Tompkins County. Motion carried by the members present.

Members informally voted in support of the Executive Committee penning and submitting draft comments on behalf of the full Water Resources Council in regards to the Draft 2020-2022 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters in time for the new comment period deadline of February 11, 2022.

Organizing for 2022

Led by Darby, the group discussed workplan organization for 2022. This included reviewing and assessing selected action items from the Water Quality Strategy and determining which committees to continue or create in service of these goals. Darby shared background context on WRC committees vis-à-vis the bylaws and welcomed new members to reach out to her directly for clarification or assistance. In addition, Kristen Hychka and Stephanie Redmond gave updates on the needs of the Municipal Training and Water Withdrawal Committee, respectively, and Kristen passed along a message from Fay Benson that he would not be able to chair the Soil Health Committee moving forward.

Due to time constraints, member introductions were moved to the February meeting agenda.

Action: Approval of Draft Minutes – The draft Dec. 20, 2021, meeting minutes were approved as submitted by the members present (moved by Amanda Champion and seconded by A. Fay Benson).

Committee Reports as needed

None

Chair and Staff Reports – No chair’s report was given. Darby reported that FEMA has finalized the draft Flood Insurance Rate Map database for Tompkins County and shared it with local officials and stakeholders. Next steps include outreach to municipalities, FEMA-led public meetings in February, and a public comment period. On a related note, Liz Kreitinger shared that Cayuga Lake Watershed Network hosted a presentation on the impact of climate change on lake levels.

Member Announcements – None

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned 5:54pm.