



South Lake Champlain Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC) Minutes

March 15, 2023, at 12:00 noon

Online and in-person at the Rutland Regional Planning Commission offices.

Council Members present: Erin Rodgers, chair (TU); Adam Piper (alternate, VLT); Katy Crumley (PMNRCD); Mike Winslow (ACRPC); Paul Donaldson (Town of Poultney); Shayne Jaquith, vice-chair (TNC); and non-voting alternate, Phil McGovern (TU)

Partners present: Angie Allen, DEC Basin Planner and Shannon Pytlik, DEC River Scientist.

Staff present: Barbara Noyes-Pulling, RRPC/CWSP; Devon Neary, RRPC/CWSP, and Hilary Solomon, PMNRCD/CWSP

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by BWQC Chair Erin Rodgers at 12:07 PM

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mike Winslow made a motion to approve the 3/15/23 South Lake BWQC meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Erin Rodgers. The motion passed unanimously.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 9, 2023

Mike Winslow made a motion to approve the 2/9/23 South Lake BWQC meeting minutes. Shayne Jaquith seconded the motion. The motion passed. Adam Piper was not present at the February 9 meeting and abstained.

4. VICE CHAIR VACANCY

Shayne Jaquith reported that he was able to serve as the vice chair. Mike Winslow made a motion to nominate Shayne to serve as the vice chair for the South Lake BWQC. Erin Rodgers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. REVIEW PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

Barbara reviewed the public participation policy with the meeting attendees. She pointed out that the policy calls for a continuous improvement committee to help the BWQC maintain the highest levels of transparency. The group noted a discrepancy in the language related to the committee being formed versus the committee having the ability to amend the policy. The attendees proposed changing the language to match, so that the subgroup may be formed, and the policy may be amended. The members

agreed to review the public participation policy at least every time the BWQC membership changed significantly and otherwise as needed.

Mike Winslow made a motion to change the language of Article III Amendment and Enhancement to read: This policy may be amended as deemed appropriate by the CWSP and BWQC. Additionally, a committee (working group) of the BWQC *maybe* created to focus on updating and improving this public participation policy. Erin Rodgers suggested that a BWQC meeting schedule be added to the section which Mike Winslow added to the motion. The motion was seconded by Shayne Jaquith. The motion passed unanimously.

The group discussed potential meeting schedules and decided to try meeting in January, February, April, May, July, August, October, and November. We agree that we may need to shift the dates forward one month, depending on the success of the current dates chosen over time. The next meeting will be scheduled for late April. We will try to set dates ahead of time for the year.

6. RFQ UPDATE

Hilary and Barbara related that the Lake St Catherine and Lake Bomoseen Associations are considering submitting their qualifications. Both associations had been in touch with questions about the RFQs. TU, TNC, and potentially VLT are also considering submitting their qualifications. Barbara fielded several questions from consultants who will also submit their qualifications as subcontractors. We look forward to reviewing them once they arrive.

7. REVIEW CO-BENEFITS (INCLUDING SVI)

The meeting participants reviewed the Co-benefits SOP. They asked that references to other documents or websites be hyperlinked where possible for ease of access to the information. Several members commented that they liked the simplicity of the scoring without weighting categories. There was mention that there are quite a few categories, and we may look to simplify the scoring over time. Erin Rodgers made a motion to approve the co-benefits scoring method and SOP document with addition of hyperlinks where possible. Mike Winslow seconded. The Co-benefit scoring method was approved unanimously.

8. REVIEW DRAFT RFP AND SCHEDULE

This was the first opportunity for the BWQC members to discuss the grant application format and contents. Similar to the scoring of SOPs, members asked for live links to related tools and documents. They asked that we add details about who/how to submit the applications. They prefer a single PDF document to make it easier for them to keep the main application and the supporting documents together. Mike Winslow suggested that one option was to ask for the narrative document and a separate single PDF with the attachments bundled. Barbara noted that CWSP staff can help bundle the documents into one document for review if that makes it easier for applicants who do not have access to adobe writer.

CWSP staff mentioned that the Vermont Department of Historic Preservation (part of the State Historic Preservation Office) will be reviewing most of the projects. Angie noted that some project types are exempt from review, though any that disturb the ground will likely need review.

Additional changes that need to be incorporated into the application guidance document include adding the project types and associated milestones, and making sure our language matches the CWIP funding policy for project stages, sectors, etc.

Shannon Pytlik mentioned that there will be two upcoming trainings to learn to use the Functioning Floodplain Initiative tools to quantify phosphorus reduction from certain stream restoration projects. One of the trainings will be April 19 in Middlebury at the ARPC offices. Shayne Jaquith wondered who would be checking the outputs from the FFI program, since the data entry will determine the phosphorus reduction numbers and assumptions and bias might change the scores. Shannon mentioned that there is an export feature so that DEC staff can review the inputs for each project if needed.

9. PROJECT ID/PROJECT DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

CWSP staff reviewed the 7% of funds that are available for project ID and development and encouraged the BWQC members to consider applying for those funds as well as project funds. All interested parties are encouraged to reach out to Hilary or Barbara if they have early-stage project ID or development ideas for the watershed. Angie Allen mentioned that we should consider developing the older Stream Geomorphic Assessments and referred to a project development grant currently held by PMNRCD to do that work; the consultant RFP was released last week for the project through LCBP. Katy Crumley and Shannon Pytlik discussed the need for more information and a process to identify forest sector projects including legacy roads, ditches, stream crossings, skid trails, and landings. Shannon referred to the paper by David Brynn and Kristen Underwood that evaluated several state forests for erosion and high impact road locations. The group agreed to focus on forestry topics at the next meeting. The focus will include project types (that can be funded through formula grants), public and private lands project ID, and trying to evaluate the quantity and feasibility of projects available in the watershed.

10. PROJECT SCORING UPDATE

Hilary Solomon very quickly ran through the Fair Haven project (mentioned at past meetings) score using the scoring and co-benefits metrics so BWQC members could see how the scores might be applied to a project. The BWQC members agreed that it was helpful to see the scoring applied to a project, that the scoring held some amount of subjectivity, and that they would feel more comfortable once they had seen the scoring rationale for a number of different projects.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public present.

12. NEXT MEETING

Staff will send out a doodle poll, but we hope to pick a specific day/time soon. Topics will include RFQ update, review of RFP projects, and forestry sector speakers.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:52 PM