

**Missisquoi Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC) Special Meeting
DRAFT MINUTES**

Wednesday, July 12th, 2023, 11-1 PM

Virtual Meeting/Held Via Zoom* (computer/smartphone/tablet etc.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RY6VSpjjWU>

**A VIDEO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE NRPC
YOUTUBE CHANNEL.**

**THE WRITTEN MINUTES ARE A SYNOPSIS OF THE DISCUSSION AT THE
MEETING. MOTIONS ARE AS STATED. MINUTES WILL BE SUBJECT TO
CORRECTION BY THE COUNCIL. CHANGES, IF ANY, WILL BE RECORDED IN
THE MINUTES OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Council Members: Kent Henderson (Q), Dan Seeley (Q), Allaire Diamond (Q joined at 11:23am), David Allerton (Q), Beth Torpey (Q), Sarah Damsell (Q), Jacques Couture (Entered at 11:30am), Tom Briseldon, Lindsey Wight (Q), Ellen Fox., Dave Allerton (Q), Lauren Weston (Q), (Q=toward quorum).

Staff: Dean Pierce, Dea Devlin, Maddie Yandow

Voting Members not present: Barry Lampke. Sarah Downes (Q), Ted Sedell (Q),

1. Welcome and Introduction

Lauren Weston opened the meeting as BWQC Chair at 11:03am. Everyone on the call and in the room introduced themselves.

2. Hybrid Meeting protocols

Lauren Weston reviewed some considerations for hybrid meetings.

3. Review/adjust and approve agenda

Dean Pierce suggested including "Disclosures" as a future standing agenda item.

No additional adjustments were offered to the agenda. Lindsey Wight moved to approve the agenda as presented, Kent Henderson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Dan Seeley moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Lindsey Wight seconded the motion. Motion carried.

5. Public comment not related to items on agenda

No public comment was offered.

6. Seating of any new reps or alternate(s) (f required)

Dean Pierce shared that replacing the current alternate for the NRCD with Mel Affredou has been proposed, and Lauren Weston indicated this has been approved by the NRCD. Kent Henderson moved to seat Mel Affredou as alternate, Lindsey Wight seconded. Lauren Weston recused herself.

7. Election of Officers

Dean Pierce shared that there is a need at the start of the fiscal year to elect a Chair and Vice Chair. Dean Pierce shared information about how this process unfolds.

Lindsey Wight shared an update on the work that the nominating committee conducted in preparation for this meeting and offered as a slate to nominate Lindsey Wight as the next Chair, and Kent as the Vice Chair.

Lauren Weston moved to elect Lindsey Wight as Chair of the Basin 6 BWQC. Dan Seeley seconded the motion. Lindsey Wight abstained.

Lauren Weston nominated Kent Henderson as Vice Chair of the Basin 6 BWQC. Dan Seeley seconded the motion. Kent Henderson abstained. Motion adopted.

8. Project prioritization

Dean Pierce shared information about the second call for applications which was issued on May 15th and closed on June 26th. Dean Pierce reported that one application was received, and that approval is recommended.

Lauren Weston shared details about the funding sought in the application submitted by the NRCD during the funding round. Kent Henderson asked if they anticipated subcontractors being utilized for projects outside of tree planting projects. Lauren Weston responded that their intention when identifying projects that fall outside of tree plantings is to pursue these separately, and will not likely anticipate subcontractors being utilized.

Sarah Damsell asked about how the current events and flooding in Vermont might change or influence the scope of work that conservation organizations are conducting. Lauren Weston responded that this should be a topic of future discussion at a CWSP meeting and that efforts to mitigate the impacts of the flood should be organized.

Kent Henderson moved to accept the proposed project seeking funding. Dan Seeley seconded the motion. Lauren Weston abstained. Motion adopted.

Lauren Weston indicated interest in receiving notification when projects are approved.

9. Future Solicitation Schedule and Process

Dean Pierce indicated it would be helpful to rearrange the solicitation schedule to three times annually versus the current four times annual schedule in place. Dean Pierce also shared information about the preapplication process that the Basin 5 CWSP currently conducts with its BWQC and shared this could be a process that the Basin 6 BWQC takes on also.

Dean Pierce followed up with a few questions for the BWQC regarding how they might want to roll out this change. Lauren Weston expressed that a three-time annual application process would be preferable but wants to clarify the schedule. Kent Henderson said the Basin 5 CWSP preapplication process was unhelpful.

Lauren Weston shared that November is not ideal for meetings and identified tweaks in the schedule that would be preferable for her organization. Allaire Diamond shared she has no preference about the quantity of application reviews per year.

Lauren Weston asked if anyone was interested in the preapplication process, and there was no response. In response to the question posed about thematic rounds of applications, the consensus from the members present was that this was not desirable for the Basin 6 BWQC.

10. Conflict of Interest Guidance

Dean Pierce shared the updated language in the guidance as distributed by the DEC. Dean Pierce shared this new guidance is broader and encompasses more. Dean Pierce went through the bullet points of what is new in this guidance.

Dean Pierce clarified the process of voting on slates and who should recuse themselves during these votes.

Dean Pierce shared a new portion of the guidance, which encompasses confidentiality in the materials involved in project solicitations before and through the voting process. Dean Pierce highlighted that this may conflict with other laws and policies in place.

Dean Pierce shared the updated guidance on how CWSP staff may be involved in the project application process.

Dean Pierce shared an update in the guidance about disclosures and conflict of interest.

Dean Pierce shared a final notable update about conflicts with prior employers and the 'statute of limitations.'

11. Pub Part Policy, Updates, and Conclusion

Dean Pierce shared the Northwest Regional Planning Commission completed an internal review of the draft policy and that as a result, the NPRC thinks the materials created are more appropriate for a Public Participation Plan. Dean Pierce shared that the CWSP is encouraging the BWQC to keep its current Interim Public Participation Policy in place while the work created by the Public Participation Committee is folded into the Public Participation Plan.

Lauren Weston expressed that she wants a policy to be concrete and not interim for another year, so depending on when a Public Participation Plan could be produced, she would be in favor of continuing forward with a BWQC plan or policy. Lauren Weston also expressed concern that the NRPC Public Participation Plan would not be in line with the policy drafted by the Public Participation Plan. Dean Pierce shared a little more about the process that occurred within Catherine Dimutrik's internal review.

Lauren Weston articulated frustration with the confusion she holds surrounding the role of the BWQC. Dave Allerton expressed that better advertising of CWSP funding will lead to more funding. Lindsey identified a need for a clear path in terms of next steps regarding this policy.

Lauren Weston moved to agree with the CWSP request to delay acceptance of the draft Public Participation Policy until December or when the NRPC releases its Public Participation Plan with informal conversations about the role of public participation before then. Dave Allerton seconded the motion. Motion carried. Allaire Diamond had stepped away and did not participate in the vote.

Dean Pierce shared a few updates concerning master agreements, subgrant awards and Operations & Maintenance.

12. Conclusion

Lauren Weston moved to adjourn the meeting. Kent Henderson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 12:40pm.