

**Lamoille Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC)**

**Thursday, July 24, 2025**

**9:00 to 11:00 AM**

**Hybrid meeting**

In-Person at Hyde Park Town Clerk's Office

344 VT-15

Hyde Park, VT 05655

Meeting video posted at <https://youtu.be/7cc852FCpFY>

**A VIDEO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE  
NRPC YOUTUBE CHANNEL (Link above).**

**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: Meghan Rodier (Q), Peter Danforth (Q), Christine Armstrong (Q), Ken Minck(Q), Richard Goff (Q), Brent Sheets (Q), Mel Auffredou (Q), Lucas Goldfluss (Q)

Q= towards quorum q= towards quorum when representative has recused

Staff: Dean Pierce, Cliff Jenkins, Nora Brown

Others present: David Upson (Hardwick Town Manager), Kristen Leahy (Town of Hardwick), Sarah Skelding (LCCD), Emily Lugthart (LCCD), Peter Danforth's AI Notetaker, JoAnn Hanowski's AI Notetaker

**1. Welcome and introductions**

Peter Danforth opened the meeting at 9:03am as Chair.

A round of introductions was made.

**2. Meeting protocols**

Peter Danforth reviewed norms for meeting on Zoom.

**3. Conflict of interest declarations, if any**

No conflict-of-interest declarations were made.

**4. Review/adjust and approve agenda**

No changes to the agenda were made.

Meghan Rodier motioned to approve the agenda. Mel Auffredou seconded. Motion carried.

#### **5. Approval of minutes**

Brent Sheets motioned to approve the minutes. Christine Armstrong seconded. Mel Auffredou abstained. Motion carried.

#### **6. Public comment not related to items on agenda**

David Upson shared that this is his first BWQC meeting, and he is excited to learn about the council's work.

Dean Pierce shared an overview of the council's structure, including how its members are chosen as representatives of certain organizations (RPCs, municipalities, land conservation organizations, and watershed organizations). He added that if David is interested in joining the council as a municipal alternate, that could happen at a later meeting.

#### **7. Seating of members (if any)**

Lucas Goldfluss was seated as a second alternate for Dan Koenemann.

#### **8. Budget adjustment requests (if any)**

Dean Pierce updated council members on a budget adjustment recently approved by the CWSP for Orleans County NRCD's Cemetery Brook project. The increase was improved administratively by CWSP staff, since it totaled less than 10% of the original award. He reminded members of the procedures for budget increases: under 10% increases can be approved by CWSP staff, between 10 and 20% can be approved by the chair and vice chair of the council, and anything above 20% must be voted on by the council.

Peter Danforth asked about the process for projects funded by the CWSP at the development/design phase that ultimately do not move forward. Dean answered that terminating the project in the WPD and the CWSP's lists is performed in coordination with DEC and included in annual reporting.

#### **9. Election of Officers**

With the group's permission Dean Pierce presided over the election of chair. He solicited nominations from the floor.

Meghan Rodier nominated Peter Danforth to be chair. Christine Armstrong seconded. Peter Danforth accepted the nomination. Mel Auffredou, Meghan Rodier, Ken Minck, Christine Armstrong, and Brent Sheets voted in favor. Peter Danforth was re-elected council chair.

Nominations for vice-chair were solicited from the floor.

Ken Minck nominated Meghan Rodier to be vice-chair. Brent Sheets seconded. Meghan Rodier accepted the nomination. Mel Auffredou, Peter Danforth, Ken Minck, Christine Armstrong, and Brent Sheets voted in favor. Meghan Rodier was elected vice-chair of the council.

## **10. Updates**

### **a. Expedited project development program**

Dean reviewed the expedited project development program, which was initially approved by the BWQC in July 2024. The program streamlines the funding process by simplifying the applications and pre-approving partners, allowing for rolling awards to expedite project development. So far, two organizations have used this process with specific WPD IDs.

When the program was initially approved, council members requested CWSP staff pursue the creation of a general WPD ID number to further streamline the process. This ID has now been received for the Lamoille Basin (12908) This functions similarly to a block grant, where individual PD sheets will be submitted by recipients and later aggregated by the CWSP for reporting to DEC.

In the Lamoille Basin, simplified PD funding is available for requests up to \$5,000, once per calendar year.

Richard Goff asked about who the prequalified partners are.

Dean responded that prequalified partners include those who went through the initial approval that took place as part of the CWSP creation process, including RPCs, NRCDs, some towns, and others. He will circulate the current list, noting that Vermont River Conservancy will be added soon. He added that CWSP bylaws require at least one prequalification round annually for both partners and contractors. For partners, applications are now accepted on a rolling basis.

Ken Minck requested a progress update from Cliff Jenkins, project manager for the Silver Lake Road project development in Georgia that was approved at the BWQC's last meeting. Cliff stated that he did not seek expedited PD funding because the budget exceeded \$5,000. He has instead solicited bids and expects to select a contractor next week.

Mel Auffredou asked about the deliverables for expedited PD projects. Dean clarified that the deliverables remain the same as in the standard PD process—the only change is the funding pathway.

Dean noted that the current deadline for all deliverables under this generic WPD ID is July 1, 2027.

### **b. O&M program**

Dean Pierce provided an update on Operations & Maintenance (O&M) work under the CWSP funding program. He reviewed the purpose of O&M, including verification requirements, and explained that NRPC had recently surveyed partners and contractors to assess interest in performing O&M tasks. Going forward, the CWSP application will include a question asking whether applicants are interested in performing O&M on their own projects. This would allow CWSP to award O&M work directly to the applicant without soliciting multiple bids. However, for projects that have already received funding, a competitive procurement process will still be required. Dean noted that many partners are eager to take on O&M for their own projects.

Dean also emphasized that DEC is trying to better understand O&M costs, which are proving to be relatively high and may become a substantial portion of CWSP funding. He clarified that applicants do not need to return to the council to request O&M funding for projects funded through CWSP—approval of the project is considered to include approval for future O&M funding as well. Because of the potential high costs, Dean shared that the CWSP does not wish to enter into long-term O&M agreements at this time.

Dean also clarified the difference between partners and contractors. Partners are typically municipalities or mission-driven organizations such as RPCs, conservation organizations, and NRCDs. These groups perform public benefit work with a degree of independence and are funded through sub-grants, which offer greater flexibility than contracts, as long as there is a master agreement in place. Contractors, on the other hand, are usually private, for-profit entities that are issued formal contracts. While there is a preference for funding to flow through partner organizations, it is not a strict requirement of the program.

Meghan expressed appreciation that O&M funding is being considered, but noted that it would reduce the amount of funding available for other project phases. She asked what timeframe was being considered when Dean said the CWSP was not willing to enter into long-term O&M agreements at this time but agreed that the first few years of maintenance are critical.

Dean continued that for a few projects in Basin 6, they had initially discussed 1- to 3-year agreements, but given the high cost estimates that were returned, it now seems unlikely that a 3-year contract will be pursued. While nothing is finalized, CWSP is currently leaning toward a 1-year agreement, or possibly a 3-year agreement with an exit clause. He acknowledged the importance of long-term maintenance, which is why partners have been given the opportunity to take on the work.

Peter asked if O&M agreements are still being developed. Dean responded that two agreements are in progress in Basin 6. He clarified that some projects, such as the Ten Bends riparian buffer planting, were not originally subject to maintenance agreements. One possible approach being considered is to solicit quotes for hypothetical projects and keep selected contractors on retainer.

Ken asked if this would be a two-part process, in which inspections are performed first and maintenance only follows if an issue is found. Dean confirmed that verification and inspection are not costly; the primary expenses come from the maintenance work itself.

Dean added that part of the delay in advancing O&M agreements stemmed from a DEC rule prohibiting herbicide use, even though contractors recommended herbicides to improve plant survival rates. That policy is expected to change. In the meantime, DEC is tolerating mentions of herbicides in O&M agreements, as long as they are contingent on this change in DEC policy being formalized. To manage uncertainty, the agreements will include contingency language so that future policy changes won't require amending the agreements. Dean noted that using herbicides can reduce O&M costs by about half.

### **c. Announcements**

Dean Pierce updated council members on an application by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife service that was previously submitted and then tabled. The project was a small component of a larger series of FEMA-funded buyouts in Wolcott, Morrisville, and Hardwick. FEMA timelines remain uncertain, but VFWS still intends to submit the project for CWSP funding in the future. It would offer 4.4kg of phosphorus reduction for roughly \$20,000, representing good cost effectiveness.

Dean also noted that the council still needs another representative of a watershed organization.

Peter Danforth suggested Pollinator Pathways or the Lake Elmore Association. Dean expressed support for the idea, but recommended Peter reach out to Watersheds United Vermont for ultimately approval as a watershed organization.

Ken Minck asked for an update on the financial status of the CWSP. Dean noted that an update was provided during the last meeting, but provided a brief refresher. He noted that the CWSP has spent roughly \$137,000 of the \$380,000 in year-one funds it was awarded, and has achieved 141.25kg in P reduction, leaving the CWSP in good standing. But he also noted that only 1 project has been fully implemented, so much of these P credits cannot be fully counted on, and O&M costs must also be taken into account.

The next meeting of the Lamoille BWQC will take place on September 26. Funding round 9 will open on October 9 and close on November 13, 2025. Funding round 10 will open on February 5 and close on March 12, 2026.

**11. Recess (if quorum maintained) or Adjourn (if quorum lost) to visit project sites in Elmore**

Brent Sheets motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mel Auffredou seconded. Meeting adjourned at 10:06am.