

## Water Planning Council Advisory Group

### April 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes

A telemeeting of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG) was held by Zoom

An audio recording (19 MB) is available at:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG\\_2021/2021-04-20\\_WPCAG\\_Audio.mp3](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG_2021/2021-04-20_WPCAG_Audio.mp3)

A video recording (310 MB) is available at:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG\\_2021/2021-04-20\\_WPCAG\\_Video.mp4](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Water/WPCAG_2021/2021-04-20_WPCAG_Video.mp4)

#### Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	<a href="#">Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments</a>
Karen Burnaska	<a href="#">Save the Sound</a>
Josh Cansler	<a href="#">Southeastern CT Water Authority</a>
Alicea Charamut	<a href="#">Fisheries Advisory Council</a>
Virginia de Lima	<a href="#">USGS CT Water Science Center</a>
Carol Haskins	<a href="#">Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition</a>
Sean Hayden	<a href="#">Lake Waramaug Task Force</a>
Ingrid Jacobs (alt.)	<a href="#">Aquarion</a>
Patrick Kearney	<a href="#">Manchester Water &amp; Sewer</a>
Margaret Miner	<a href="#">Rivers Alliance</a>
Jeff Pugliese	<a href="#">Middlesex Chamber of Commerce</a>
Denise Savageau	<a href="#">CT Association of Conservation Districts</a>
Tom Tyler	<a href="#">MDC</a>
Lori Vitagliano (alt.)	<a href="#">South Central CT Regional Water Authority</a>
Brenda Watson	<a href="#">Operation Fuel</a>

#### Other Participants:

Judy Allen	Save Our Water CT
Jonathan Avery	Hazardville and Jewett City Water Cos.
Ally Ayotte	<a href="#">PURA</a>
Corinne Fitting	<a href="#">DEEP</a>
Alexandria Hibbard	<a href="#">DEEP</a>
Iris Kaminski	
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Bruce Wittchen	<a href="#">OPM</a>

#### Members Absent:

Eric Hammerling	<a href="#">CT Forest and Park Association</a>
Fred Klein	<a href="#">CT Power and Energy Society</a>
David Knauft	<a href="#">Darien Health Department</a>
Joan Nichols	<a href="#">CT Farm Bureau Assoc.</a>
Vacancy	<a href="#">CT Nursery &amp; Landscape Assoc.</a>

#### 1. Call to Order

Alicea Charamut asked everyone to introduce themselves and called the meeting to order at 1:36.

#### 2. Approval of draft 2/16/2021 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the [draft 3/16/2021 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Lori Vitagliano and Brenda Watson abstaining.

### **3. Water Planning Council Update**

#### **a. Implementation Work Group (IWG)**

Virginia de Lima said the private well water quality group reported that DPH environmental health program staff recommended that radon testing not be required because a health standard has not been established and sampling requirements are more demanding. She noted, however, that WPC member Lori Mathieu of DPH said radon should be included. The work group has two recommendations: that arsenic and uranium be added to the list of required analyses and that there be further study of the possible inclusion of radon. Virginia also mentioned that the topical group reviewing the 2017 drought response intends to complete its report by May 7.

Virginia reported attendance at last month's [workshop](#) presented by the [Alliance for Water Efficiency](#) (AWE) and described the WPC's discussion of the water efficiency flyer and suggestion for legislation in 2022. The previously discussed implementation tracking work group is on hold and she explained that DPH staff with expertise are not currently available. She also mentioned further discussions of the application of the [Freedom of Information Act](#) (FOIA) to meetings of water subgroups and the possibility of giving groups more tightly-focused assignments.

Alicea Charamut asked if there was any feedback about the workshop and Virginia said there was not any at the IWG meeting. Alicea asked if anyone at this meeting had any feedback. Iris Kaminski said she was curious about the situation for renters who do not have individual water meters and little was said about that at the workshop. She noted that the monthly connection charge is more significant for people with low water use. Alicea said the workshop touched on that the second day and asked if Brenda Watson can do a presentation on this at a future meeting.

Brenda Watson said the sooner she can do the presentation the better. It would be 30-45 minutes and she asked if it can be before the next meeting. Alicea noted the FOIA requirements of an additional meeting. Iris Kaminski pointed out the lack of individual metering for many renters. There was further discussion about the proposed presentation and Ally Ayotte said she will be discussing the agenda of the next WPC meeting with WPC chair Jack Betkoski tomorrow and will ask about including the presentation.

Judy Allen asked what the outcome had been of the conversation between the MDC and AWE following the workshop. Virginia summarized the issue, which was discussed at last week's IWG meeting, and said the MDC apparently accepted AWE's explanation. Alicea mentioned Dr Beecher's workshop presentation and said rate adjustment mechanisms require strong regulation. She noted issues regarding rates and said this needs to be fleshed out and discussed. The tools need to be fixed to use them. Denise Savageau said this effort is necessary to encourage conversation.

Martha Smith asked if the Regional Water Authority found the AWE's analysis of its rates to be helpful. Lori Vitagliano said she is only filling in for John Hudak today,

but he was closely involved in that work and will have to answer that later. Alicea asked if anyone else representing a water utility at this meeting had anything to add and none did. She recommended a survey of workshop attendees and Virginia de Lima agreed it would be helpful to get feedback.

Denise Savageau noted that the Governor's Climate Change Council (GC3) plan for the coming year includes a list of other state plans in CT and the goal is for all to include climate change components. She noted the interest in vulnerability assessment, infrastructure, and land use but added that that the role of forests for source water protection should be considered too. There was a discussion of the GC3 approach.

Margaret Miner pointed out that the Rivers Alliance had cosponsored a [water conference](#) with CCSU two years ago and do we just hold conferences and that's the end of it? Virginia de Lima said it is important to provide the tools for making things happen. Jonathan Avery said regulated private water companies are using the tools already but the politics are tricky for municipal and regional utilities. There was a discussion of rate-setting issues faced by municipal and regional utilities and Alicea Charamut said she had hoped the conference would address those. She described some of the concerns and said utilities have charged too little for too many years.

Jonathan Avery said a lot of those utilities hire consultants and recommended educating the consultants. Lori Vitagliano reminded everyone that she was just sitting in for John Hudak, but said it will be important to get input from utilities' rate-setting people. There was further discussion of the workshop's rate study and Virginia de Lima said she will follow up on the question about a post-workshop survey.

#### 4. Old Business

##### a. Water-related legislation update

Alicea Charamut said everything is out of committee. She mentioned [HB 6666](#), *An Act Concerning The Department Of Public Health's Recommendations Regarding Various Revisions To The Public Health Statutes*, which includes changes in watershed lands project review. Lori Vitagliano added that it also adds a provision about submitting information electronically. Alicea said she had no glaring concerns about [HB 6615](#), *An Act Concerning Safe Drinking Water*, and also mentioned [SB 834](#), *An Act Concerning Water Quality Notification*.

Alicea said she also is pleased with [HB 6540](#), *An Act Requiring A Study Of Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Stormwater Sampling Requirements*, and [HB 6441](#), *An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation*. She noted that storm water language in HB 6441 has been revised to match HB 6540. Alicea also mentioned that [SB 1031](#), *An Act Concerning The Use Of Sodium Chloride To Mitigate Ice And Snow Accumulations*, made it out of committee, but noted resource constraints at DEEP.

There are two PFAS bills, [SB 837](#), *An Act Concerning The Use Of Perfluoroalkyl Or Polyfluoroalkyl Substances In Class B Firefighting Foam*, and [SB 926](#), *An Act Concerning The Presence Of PFAS In Certain Consumer Packaging*. Alicea noted her concern regarding [SB 701](#), *An Act Concerning The Bolton Lakes Regional Water*

*Pollution Control Authority*, because of its language regarding the Bolton Lakes sewer system “notwithstanding” the provisions of various statutes and regulations.

Alicea said [HB 6496](#), *An Act Concerning Certain Soil-Related Initiatives*, is out of committee. Denise Savageau noted that the version approved by the committee has additional language, but there should be more attention to source water protection. She said DEEP’s emphasis in the original bill had been on protecting wetlands and aquifer protection areas, which are subject to its regulations, not on public drinking water watersheds, which are subject to DPH’s. Denise also mentioned [HB 6441](#), *An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation*.

Margaret Miner mentioned [HB 6577](#), *An Act Concerning The State Properties Review Board*, which she said would move the [State Properties Review Board](#) (SPRB) to the legislative branch. She explained the significance and noted the relevance to the Cheshire land conveyance discussed last year. She said DOT said the conveyance is in properties review now and then goes to the [Office of the Treasurer](#). Treasurer Shawn Wooden described his office’s role as being limited. She is trying to reach the SPRB’s Dimple Desai but has not yet received a response. She asked when is it in the public interest to give away a resource like the Cheshire property.

Alicea Charamut asked if the proposed changes in HB 6577 are beneficial and Karen Burnaska said the Watershed Lands Work Group discussion is ongoing. In response a question about the bill, Karen said she would forward information to WPCAG members. Alicea noted the potential impacts of conveyances on water resources and described a situation in Tolland.

b. [Water Utility Coordinating Committee](#) (WUCC) update

Jonathan Avery said the eastern and central WUCCs have not met since last month and mentioned that the WUCCs are experiencing changes in leadership, including the retirement of Mark Decker. Ingrid Jacobs said the statewide WUCC group will meet May 19.

c. [Interagency Drought Work Group](#) update

Bruce Wittchen said the group did not meet this month. He said the group will consider improvements to the drought plan based on last years’ experience with it and invited people to provide suggestions. He noted the state has been somewhat dry and that things can change rapidly this time of year because of leaf-out.

**5. WPCAG Work Groups**

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Alicea asked if there is anything to report beyond the earlier discussion of the Cheshire conveyance. Karen Burnaska noted that there was no further action on the report submitted to the WPC. She also reminded everyone of the recommendation that WPCAG co-chairs Josh Cansler and Alicea Charamut be on the task force for DEEP’s [Integrated Resource Planning](#).

b. Source Water Protection Workgroup – [Discussion of Source Water Protection Outline](#)

Alicea said feedback has been received from one person and invited more. Karen asked about the process and timeline. Alicea said they are receiving reactions to the outline and then people will volunteer to draft sections. That could take a few months. Following that, it will go to the WPCAG for further work, with agency input before it goes to the WPC. The goal is to provide a white paper to be used in future decision-making and planning processes. Denise Savageau said the outline can steer the process and provided background regarding expectations. She noted DPH's authority regarding source water, but other agencies also have responsibilities in protecting source water. The white paper will tie everything together and support those efforts. Alicea Charamut asked people to review the outline and provide feedback.

Alicea noted that she is compiling an outline regarding solar project siting, but it was not ready prior to this meeting. She will circulate it later and her expectation is for a small group to prepare recommendations for the WPC. She pointed out that the Watershed Lands Work Group has already done much work on this topic.

**6. New Business**

There was no new business.

**7. Public Comment**

Alicea pointed out that her comments about legislation express her opinions on the River Alliance's, not the WPCAG's

Jonathan Avery said he is surprised that there was not a survey following the rates workshop and there was a discussion of whether the funding provided to the AWE is all spent. It was also noted that the work of the American Water Works Association source water protection group overlaps with the new WPCAG group. There was further discussion of the workshop and its materials and Virginia de Lima recommended that the info be distributed.

**8. Next Meeting Date**

Alicea read the dates of upcoming meetings:

WPCAG:	May 25, 2021, 1:30 (4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday)
WPC:	May 4, 2021, 1:30
IWG:	May 11, 2021, 1:30

**9. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM*