

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

May 17, 2022 Meeting Minutes

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

A video recording is available at:

https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2022-05-17-WPCAG_Video.mp4

Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Karen Burnaska	Save the Sound
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Virginia de Lima	USGS CT Water Science Center
Sean Hayden	Lake Waramaug Task Force
John Hudak	South Central CT Regional Water Authority
Fred Klein	CT Power and Energy Society
David Knauf	CT Association of Directors of Health
Patrick Kearney	Manchester Water & Sewer
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Darryl Newman	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts
Tom Tyler	MDC

Other Participants:

Dan Aubin	DPH
Ally Ayotte	PURA
Jonathan Avery	Hazardville and Jewett City Water Cos.
Chris Bellucci	DEEP
Lauren Bergman	CT Water Co.
Rich Hanratty	CT Water Co.
Iris Kaminsky	
Dave Kuzminski	Portland
Gannon Long	Operation Fuel
Eric McPhee	DPH
Christine O'Neill (alt.)	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Mary Pelletier	Park Watershed
Martha Smith (alt.)	Rivers Alliance
Lisette Stone	DPH
Kelsey Sudol	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Bruce Wittchen	OPM

Members Absent:

Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition
Eric Hammerling	CT Forest and Park Association
Brenda Watson	Operation Fuel

Vacancies

Agriculture

Business & Industry – Association

1. Call to Order

Alicea Charamut called the meeting to order at 1:35 and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of draft 4/19/2022 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [4/19/2022 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Josh Cansler, John Hudak, and Virginia de Lima abstaining because they had not attended the meeting.

3. Presentation: Discussion of New Developments and Public Water Systems

Dan Lawrence introduced Eric McPhee and Lisette Stone of the Dept. of Public Health (DPH) and mentioned their assistance to the [water utility coordinating committees](#) (WUCCs) regarding DPH's [Certificate of Public Convenience & Necessity](#) (CPCN) process. Eric provided some background regarding the coordinated water system planning process and highlighted relevant issues regarding new systems and regionalization, using the Central WUCC plan as an example.

Eric showed the story map Lisette Stone is developing to explain requirements and invited input. He said they want to avoid the clustering of small systems. He demonstrated the story map and noted the significance of wastewater considerations in decision-making. He also highlighted the timing of decisions in the CPCN process. He said DPH's process change is the equivalent of the change to its process DEEP described last month. Emergency interconnections should be easier with these changes.

Fred Klein asked what happens when a local water company cannot supply a new development in its exclusive serve area (ESA). Eric said the company would have to own and operate the new system if it cannot otherwise supply the development. He said it is not so clear when the development is a noncommunity system and recommended all such development proposals be reviewed by the WUCC. Eric outlined the review process and noted that WUCCs do not meet as often in the past, which can slow the process. He added that DPH's process has three steps and the 2nd step requires that the well be in place. Eric said DPH would like feedback and will make that available.

Jonathan Avery asked who is expected to pay for the new system or extended water line to serve a new development located at a place without water service; where does the ESA holder get the funding? Eric McPhee responded that the developer is expected to fund it, but noted that questions can arise regarding expectations for the system to be installed. Dan Lawrence said the WUCCs will be discussing this and Eric McPhee said rate structures must be looked at.

Pat Kearney said developers often go to local planning & zoning (P&Z) agencies first and can get project approvals without consideration of water service. Eric McPhee and Lisette Stone said input should be sought from public health directors and Dan Lawrence mentioned involvement of [councils of governments](#) (COGs). Alicea Charamut referenced issues raised by Fred Klein and Pat Kearney and asked who says “no” to a development if there is no

water? She mentioned DPH's Lori Mathieu saying that water and wastewater service are always the last consideration.

Eric McPhee said the local plan of conservation & development (POCD) and zoning are important and one of the recommendations is for water service and zoning to be aligned. Fred Klein pointed out the cost differential experienced by a developer if a well can serve the development without adverse effect. Alicea Charamut said her question focused on instances when water is not available but said the potential for adverse effects from a new well might unknown.

Pat Kearney said people looked to his municipal water system to serve an area of the adjacent town where private wells are affected by natural contamination. His system requires people to be served by an extension must pay the cost of the extension, but the cost is so high that people choose to treat the water from their wells. The \$200 per foot cost to extend a water main makes sense for a big development.

Jonathan Avery pointed out that DPH's requirements for large water systems apply when a large system takes over a small system. He listed requirements, including emergency power generation, an extra well, and water treatment, and said an extension would be reasonable for a water company if those costs were imposed on the developer. Darryl Newman commented on the multiple-stage review process being discussed and said the process should be one-stop shopping at the local level.

5. Water Plan Updates

b. Implementation Work Group Update

The group proceeded to agenda item 5b and Dan Aubin showed the implementation tracking and reporting subcommittee's report, which had been emailed to the broad WPC distribution list. He described the group's mission, pointing out that it is not intended to do the tracking and reporting; it is making recommendations for how those tasks should be done. He described the history of the group and scrolled through the recommendations listed in the table in Sec. III, beginning at the bottom of pg 2.

Dan Lawrence asked if the recommendations apply to the associated groups and Dan Aubin said it does, describing how that is handled in the Long Island Sound plan. Gannon Long thanked Dan Aubin for his work on this and Dan highlighted the role of DEEP's Corinne Fitting and Ali Hibbard. Alicea Charamut asked people to look at the report and there was a discussion of the next step of the process, which is for it to go back to the Implementation Work Group and then to the WPC. Comments should be sent to Dan Aubin by Friday. Dan Lawrence asked about the agency lead and Dan Aubin said options are discussed in the report. There was further discussion of funding and administration.

a. Water Planning Council Update

Virginia de Lima mentioned last week's wetlands webinar associated with the 50th anniversary of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act and said another is scheduled in June. Denise Savageau said the next webinar will be June 8 and focus on riparian corridors. She will moderate and participants will include [WestCOG's](#) Charles Vidich and the WPCAG's Alicea Charamut and Sean Hayden.

Alicea mentioned that the WPC is considering options for funding water planning and the water chief position. Denise Savageau described the [congressionally directed spending](#) process, noting it works through existing funding programs. We will not know the outcome for a while but the potential for this has accelerated the funding discussion.

6. WPCAG Work Groups

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Margaret Miner said the group's 6/10 meeting will discuss correspondence to the Government Administration & Elections (GAE) Committee about the legislative land conveyance process, which did not operate as desired following the committee's addition of the work group's addendum to the committee's conveyance request questionnaire. Bills did not include the expected information. Margaret said the group will also continue its work regarding the protection of Class 1 and 2 lake lands. She also mentioned related work in solar siting and Alicea Charamut said there is no update on that today; there has been no update regarding DEEP's [Sustainable, Transparent and Efficient Practices for Solar Development](#) (STEPS).

7. Old Business

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

This was covered previously.

b. Interagency Drought Work Group update

Bruce Wittchen provided an update regarding the [Interagency Drought Work Group](#), noting the agencies continue to consider possible changes proposed in response to the recommendations in the [report submitted by the Drought Topical group](#). He said OPM has proposed separating potential changes into three groups: easy changes that can be made without controversy this year; changes that will need more time and could be ready next year; and those that will take even more time.

Bruce mentioned that conditions are drying in the eastern part of the state and he wouldn't be surprised if the US Drought Monitor classifies some of that area as being abnormally dry when updated later this week. The work group is monitoring conditions.

c. Nominating Committee

Alicea Charamut said Jeff Pugliese has a new job in a different sector and had to leave this group. The committee will have to find someone new to represent a business & industry association.

d. Hydrilla update

There was no update.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

4. [State Water Plan Update & Prioritization Discussion](#)

The group returned to Item 4 and noted the WPC's recent discussion of updating the water plan every five years. There was a discussion of priorities for the next plan and Alicea Charamut recommended there be two tracks: one for current priorities and the other for future priorities. There was further discussion of options and Denise Savageau said the implementation team needs to know what to work on the next 1-2 years.

Denise Savageau mentioned climate change, which is topic #41 in the [water plan's task list](#), and said there are a lot of funding opportunities now. She mentioned the land use – water connection and mentioned guidance manuals being developed. She also asked if there should be discussions with the CT Green Bank and referred to Eric McPhee's mention of water rates earlier in this meeting. That issue is important for conservation. Alicea Charamut mentioned the importance of environmental justice and health equity issues.

Virginia de Lima pointed out the slow pace of progress if only 3 or 4 of the plans 40+ recommendations are addressed each year. That is not reasonable. She said it's possible that some issues that previously lacked a consensus now have a consensus in support. We should not limit ourselves to what is in the current plan and what are the highest priorities now?

Alicea Charamut asked if subcommittees should identify priorities. Virginia outlined the previous prioritization process and suggested that the next prioritization process not be limited to the list of tasks considered previously. Denise Savageau said some recommendations can be lumped together in a broad land use & water category. She recommended looking for gaps: what can be done, who is doing that, and what funding is needed. She mentioned a variety of federal funding sources but highlighted the need for matching funds.

Alicea said she is concerned that some small things low on the list might be the best ones to do now. A lot can be missed if there are only five priorities. Virginia de Lima added that lumping different tasks together can be problematic, mentioning conservation, and Denise Savageau said we should look at all items but consider what funding is available now. Alicea recommended dedicating most of a meeting to this but pointed out a potential conflict with the CT Green Bank, which might come to the June meeting. She also mentioned her desire for [Governor's Council on Climate Change](#) (GC3) references to be incorporated into the water plan.

Iris Kaminski said she like the 3-bucket approach Bruce Wittchen had described in his report on the Interagency Drought Work Group. There was further discussion of options and Alicea Charamut invited suggestions. Martha Smith recommended stepping back and not limiting ourselves to the original priorities. She agrees with including climate change issues and agreed that priorities should be fundable. There was a discussion of who looks at overlap with the GC3 plan and whether all agencies review it.

Virginia de Lima said this process is skirting tough issues and a decision must be made about how to tackle them. She mentioned diversion registrations as being one example. Dan Lawrence said big issues must be broken down to work on them and he agrees with looking at conservation. Alicea said we have to be realistic about what cannot be done

without a mediator and there was further discussion of the approach and of conflict resolution.

9. Public Comment

There were no additional comments.

10. Next Meeting Date

11. Alicea Charamut read the list dates of upcoming meetings.

June 7, 2022:	WPC
June 14, 2022:	IWG
June 21, 2022:	WPCAG

12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM