

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

July 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes

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

A video recording is available at: <http://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=21978>

Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Bonnie Burr	Agriculture
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Association
Patrick Kearney	Manchester Water & Sewer
David Knauft	CT Association of Directors of Health
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Kelsey Sudol (alt.)	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Tom Tyler	MDC
Steve Vitko	South Central CT Regional Water Authority
Brenda Watson	Operation Fuel

Other Participants:

Ally Ayotte	CT Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA)
Paul Aresta	CT Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
Lauren Bergman	CT Water Co.
Kim Czaplá	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Renee Driscoll	Veolia
Ali Hibbard	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Mary Pelletier	Park Watershed
Aimee Petras (Alt.)	Farmington River Watershed Assoc.
Justine Phillips-Gallucci	CT Office of Policy & Management (OPM)
Mike Turaj	Operation Fuel

Members Absent:

Fred Klein	CT Power and Energy Society
Jon Morrison	USGS CT Water Science Center
Darryl Newman	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts

Vacancies:

Business Association (Non-Water Intensive)
Land Protection
Recreation

Staff:

Bruce Wittchen [CT Office of Policy & Management](#) (OPM)

1. Call to Order

Alicea Charamut called the meeting to order at 1:32 and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of draft 6/20/2023 Minutes

Steve Vitko said the draft incorrectly says he attended the meeting and Bruce Wittchen said he will correct that. A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [6/20/2023 minutes](#) as corrected and the motion was approved unanimously, with Steve Vitko abstaining because he had not attended the meeting.

3. Recap: Water Planning Council 7/12 Retreat

Alicea Charamut described the retreat and said it was helpful in rejuvenating the process. She noted that one topic addressed was the pros and cons of the WPCAG and IWG being combined or remaining separate. She noted that the scheduled prioritization exercise did not happen, explaining that retreat organizer Virginia de Lima decided an open discussion was needed before that.

Alicea said there was a discussion of the WPC needing to show why resources are needed, that the legislature needs to see what the WPC is doing. A lot has been accomplished but without explaining what will be done moving forward. Dan Lawrence highlighted the need for legislative and community outreach and also mentioned a discussion of the burdens of multiple groups meeting.

Kelsey Sudol mentioned state agency staff being burdened to participate in the multiple groups but added that she also learned of the degree to which the WPC agencies interact. Alicea asked if agency staff who attended have anything to add. Ally Ayotte said she agreed with the points that were made and noted the importance of marketing and social media. Kim Czaplá agreed and suggested streamlining the various efforts so this process is more efficient moving forward. Alicea Charamut added that the WPC wants to have more in-person/hybrid meetings in the future.

4. Other Updates

a. Water Planning Council Update

There were no further WPC updates, but Mary Pelletier pointed out a challenge her organization, [Park Watershed](#), is encountering that could benefit from WPC involvement. She described the [regular flooding in Hartford's North End](#) and impacts on the Park River. This is a problem in other cities too. Alicea Charamut said there needs to be better coordination among all the agency plans and Mary provided further background about the obstacles. Alicea said wastewater is not a major part of the [current state water plan](#) due to the level interest in water *quantity*, but there is more of a [One Water](#) perspective now.

b. Implementation Work Group (IWG) Update

Kelsey Sudol said last week's meeting focused on preparations for the WPC retreat. She said the group is experiencing turnover and will need additional members and she also mentioned that there had been a discussion of state agency staff's work on the [water website](#).

c. State Water Plan and staffing update

Dan Lawrence described the WPCAG's work regarding priorities for a water plan update and added that some aspects are being considered in different ways than expected. There was a discussion of the [WPCAG comments](#) provided for consideration at the WPC retreat. Alicea said the WPC intends to do a survey and Dan asked if the WPCAG's plan priorities subcommittee should meet again. Steve Vitko said it should meet occasionally and Dan agreed, saying it can meet quarterly or biannually.

5. WPCAG Work Groups

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Alicea Charamut asked Aimee Petras about the just-announced easement protecting MDC land in the Colebrook reservoir watershed and Aimee provided some background and described the recent press conference. There was a discussion of the situation, which was a topic at last month's meeting, and of the impending DPH decision regarding the MDC's request to abandon that as an emergency water supply.

Margaret Miner said the work group will meet again in the fall but without former co-chair Karen Burnaska, who has retired. It will be time for a reset. Margaret mentioned concerns regarding the proposed state land conveyance in North Canaan that was discussed in previous meetings (3rd item at <https://portal.ct.gov/CEQ/Environmental-Monitor/Environmental-Monitor-Archives/2022/November-8-2022#state>) and also mentioned a quarry in Monroe that is in litigation.

Margaret said it would be more relevant elsewhere on the agenda, but someone in her town is interested in establishing a testing program for private wells. She complimented DPH's Ryan Tetreault, noting that his private well program at DPH is short-handed, described deficiencies in the information she was able to find online and said there should be a single list of what to test for and who people should contact.

David Knauf described his experience as a health director and explained that this is a long-time concern but there is no easy answer. He said all questions on this topic go to Ryan but explained that there is no overarching standard that can be referenced. David said the current private well water testing requirement is archaic, focusing on aesthetic concerns, and described some issues that would arise with additional mandatory testing. David also mentioned that a contractor had sent a letter about PFAS to hundreds of people in his town and no one followed up by contacting the health department. There was further discussion of this topic and Carol Haskins said the state of Maine has [helpful guidance](#).

b. Source Water Protection Work Group: [Source Water Protection Outline](#)

Alicea Charamut said the group's meeting originally scheduled for this week was postponed to [7/25/2023](#).

c. Solar Siting Work Group: [Draft Solar Siting Recommendations & Work Plan](#)

There was no update.

d. Conservation Pricing and Rate Recovery Analysis Work Group

Alicea Charamut mentioned a survey that she and Mary Ann Dickinson, formerly of the Alliance for Water Efficiency, are working on.

6. Old Business

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

Dan Lawrence said the planned 7/19/2023 meeting of the [WUCC implementation work group](#) was canceled. The WUCCs continue to meet quarterly or biannually. Dan Also mentioned that Russ Posthauer has stepped down as co-chair of the western WUCC and must be replaced...

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

Bruce Wittchen provided the update and said the group considered but did not decide to elevate any part of the state to Stage 1 drought and noted the large amount of rain that much of the state has received since then. Dan Lawrence described the predictive modeling Aquarion uses for its SW CT sources and said the model triggered Aquarion's first stage.

c. Nominating Committee

Steve Vitko recommended that Regional Water's Nicoletta Blevins, who was hired to replace Lori Vitagliano, also replace Lori as his alternate on the WPCAG. There was a discussion of the process for designating alternates, which does not require appointment by the WPC.

d. Hydrilla update

Alicea provided an overview of [US Army Corps of Engineers \(USACE\) work regarding CT River hydrilla](#) and said a recent meeting was informative. She said they are researching the specific strain of Hydrilla present in the CT River, one that has no tubers and has not been seen before. Alicea also described the planned approach, in which pesticide treatments will be tested at seven pilot project sites followed by the preparation of guidance material for future state use. She added that she will find out if this month's flooding affects the USACE timeline.

7. New Business

There was no new business.

8. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

9. Next Meeting Date

Upcoming meetings include:

August 1, 2023: Education & Outreach Work Group (9:00)
August 1, 2023: WPC (1:30)
August 3, 2023: Conservation Pricing Work Group (11:00)
August 8, 2023: IWG (1:00)
August 15, 2023: WPCAG (1:30)

Kim Czaplá added that the next meeting of the Source Water group will be at 9:00 on 7/25.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:37.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM