

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

October 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes

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

Agenda: <https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/18565>

Video: https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2023-10-17_WPCAG_Video.mp4

Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Association
Sean Hayden	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Patrick Kearney	Manchester Water & Sewer
Fred Klein	CT Power and Energy Society
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Darryl Newman	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Steve Vitko	South Central CT Regional Water Authority

Other Participants:

Paul Aresta	CT Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
Ally Ayotte	CT Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA)
Jonathan Avery	Hazardville & Jewett City Water Cos.
Lauren Bergman	CT Water Co.
Jack Betkoski	CT Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA)
Kim Czapla	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Kathy Czepiel	Save the Sound
Becca Dahl	CT Office of Policy & Management (OPM)
Virginia de Lima	
Betsy Gara	CT Water Works Assoc.
Rich Hanratty	CT Water Co.
Ali Hibbard	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Iris Kaminski	
Justine Phillips-Gallucci	CT Office of Policy & Management (OPM)
Aimee Petras (alt.)	Farmington River Watershed Assoc.
Martha Smith (alt.)	West River Watershed Coalition
Kelsey Sudol (alt.)	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Mike Turaj	Operation Fuel
Nick Velseboer	CT Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
Brad Weeks	Rome, Lutz, Smith, and Kowalski
Karen Weeks	Rome, Lutz, Smith, and Kowalski

Members Absent:

Bonnie Burr	UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources
David Knauf	CT Association of Directors of Health
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Jon Morrison	USGS CT Water Science Center
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts

Tom Tyler
Brenda Watson

[MDC](#)
[Operation Fuel](#)

Vacancies:

Business Association (Non-Water Intensive)
Land Protection
Recreation

Staff:

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

1. Call to Order

Co-chair Alicea Charamut called the meeting to order without a quorum present and everyone introduced themselves.

2. Approval of draft 8/15/2023 and 9/19/2023 Minutes

A quorum was not present at first and returned to this item later and a motion was made and seconded to approve the draft [8/15/2023](#) and [9/19/2023](#) minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Upcoming Webinar

Protecting Drinking Water Sources: A GIS Tool to Rank Priority Areas in CT: 11/2 at 1:00
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEuf-mggjgqHtEghNT3REtktaHSu5E5CYN7#/registration>

Alicea Charamut described the upcoming webinar and there was a discussion of an error on the webinar's flyer.

4. Discussion: Future of WPCAG & IWG

- Recap of WPC and IWG meetings and further discussion & recommendations

There was a discussion of options for the IWG and WPCAG and Jack Betkoski said WPC members favor combining the groups, but with each WPC agency assigning a liaison to the group rather than being represented by a voting member as they are on the IWG. There was a discussion of various aspects of WPCAG membership, including the staggering of members' 4-yr terms, some members' attendance issues, and the WPCAG's statutory framework and the possibility of changing that.

There also was a discussion of the assignment and oversight of subgroups currently divided between the IWG and WPCAG and whether consolidation would increase the burden on administration of the WPCAG. It was also suggested that there be greater business & industry involvement in the WPCAG, beyond the water industry and intensive water use sectors already represented, and an associated discussion of the division of WPCAG membership and leadership between in-stream, out-of-stream, and neutral interests.

Virginia de Lima recommended a work group develop plan implementation metrics, both quantitative and qualitative, and Jack Betkoski said such metrics would help in obtaining funding. Virginia also suggested that a group consider what an updated plan should look like. Alicea Charamut recommended it be a small group focusing on desired

changes to the plan and she asked Jack Betkoski if the recommendation can be included on the next WPC agenda.

Iris Kaminski asked if a WPCAG position can be created for a representative of the public. Jack Betkoski said the Office of Consumer Counsel fills that role and Alicea Charamut added that public participation increases when a controversial issue is being considered. She also suggested that a group work on operational procedures.

5. Updates

a. Other Water Planning Council Updates

Alicea Charamut reported that Martin Heft had said there is a possibility that a staff member budgeted to be hired at OPM in FY 2024-25 might be able to assist the WPC. Jack Betkoski said the WPC might be supported by half of a person's time and added that some funding might be available for the water plan.

b. Implementation Work Group Update

- Topical Sub-Work Groups

- [Outreach & Education](#)

Ali Hibbard mentioned a recent presentation to the group by DPH's Eric Lindquist regarding flash drought.

- USGS data needs

Ali Hibbard said the work group's draft report is being revised.

- WPC Annual Report

Virginia de Lima suggested the WPC consider having the group prepare two annual reports: a concise report to the legislature and a more detailed report to the WPC that compiles the information produced by the subgroups. Jack Betkoski agreed with that approach.

6. WPCAG Work Group Updates

a. Watershed Lands Work Group

Margaret Miner said Rich Hanratty is the new co-chair and that there are a couple policy issues to consider. Rich recommended looking at the relationship between the Aquifer Protection Area [statutes](#) & [regulations](#) and suggested reaching out to representative municipalities regarding how the regulations work for them.

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

Alicea Charamut said the group continues to look at the white paper.

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 said the group is developing a survey to send water utilities and explained the intent of the survey.

7. Old Business

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

There was no update.

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

Becca Dahl said the group did not meet this month and plans to meet in November and has submitted the [2022 drought after action report](#). Virginia de Lima said the group's current approach of having monthly standing meetings that can be canceled if unnecessary is better than the alternative.

c. Nominating Committee

Carol Haskins provided an overview of current vacancies and identified candidates for the recreation and business & industry association positions. The consumer representative position must be refilled and she mentioned that Kathy Czepiel is expected to fill the vacancy left by Karen Burnaska's retirement. There was a motion to approve the presented slate of members for 2024 and the motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Jack Betkoski thanked Carol Haskins for her work on that and Carol Haskins asked members to confirm their alternates.

d. Hydrilla update

Alicea Charamut said hydrilla has been found in East Twin and Bolton Lakes and 2-3 others. Sean Hayden noted the concern about hydrilla being found in lakes without public access. Alicea provided an update on the Army Corps of Engineers work on CT River hydrilla, which will continue with pilot projects next summer, and there was further discussion.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

10. Next Meeting Date

Upcoming meetings include:

November 7, 2023: WPC (1:30)

November 14, 2023: IWG (1:00)

November 21, 2023: WPCAG (1:30)

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:45.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM