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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

STATE WATER PLANNING COUNCIL

Regular Meeting held via Teleconference on
December 5, 2023, beginning at 1:30 p.m.

**HELD BEFORE: JOHN W. BETKOSKI, III, WPC CHAIRMAN and
PURA VICE-CHAIRMAN**

A P P E A R A N C E S:

WATER PLANNING COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

JOHN W. BETKOSKI, III, CHAIRMAN (PURA)

MARTIN HEFT (OPM)

LORI MATHIEU (DPH)

CHRISTOPHER BELLUCCI (DEEP)

Also Present: (on record)

Staff Present:

Virginia de Lima

Alyson Ayotte

Pat Kearney

Laura Lupoli

Kathy Czepiel

Lisette Stone

Justine Phillips-Gallucci

Eric Lindquist

Dave Kuzminski

Rich Hanratty

Kim Czapala

Lauren Bergmann

Ali Hibbard

Fred Klein

Theresa Govert

Becca Dahl

Margaret Miner

Aaron Budris

Alicea Charamut

Transcript Legend

- 1
- 2
- 3 [sic] - Exactly as said.
- 4 [phonetic] - Exact spelling not provided.
- 5 [--] - Break in speech continuity
and/or interrupted sentence.
- 6
- 7 [...] - Indicates omission of word[s]
when reading OR trailing off
and not finishing a sentence.
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1 [On the record 1:30 p.m.]

2
3 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Let's call this
4 meeting for December 5 to order. The first
5 order of business will be the approval of the
6 November 7, 2023 transcript.

7 Do I hear a motion?

8 MR. HEFT: So moved.

9 MS. MATHIEU: Second.

10 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Motion made and
11 seconded for the transcript for the previous
12 meeting.

13 Any questions or comments? If not all, in
14 favor, say Aye.

15 [All in favor; none opposed.]

16 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Motion carries.

17 Before we begin, I would like Theresa
18 Govert, who is the chief of staff or chair and
19 she's taking time out of her busy schedule this
20 afternoon and I thank her. Would you like to
21 say hello and tell us where you came from and
22 all that good stuff.

23 MS. GOVERT: Thank you so much for the
24 introduction, Chairman. I am Theresa Govert.
25 I have previously worked for the Senate Dems in

1 their policy department. I'm specifically
2 focused on energy, the budget and planning and
3 development and I know I have interacted with a
4 handful of you in my previous capacities. So
5 I'm excited to be here and kind of learn more
6 about what the Water Planning Council is doing
7 and excited to be part of the meeting. Thank
8 you for including me.

9 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Thank you for being
10 with us. We're thrilled to have you.

11 Item agenda number three: Public Comment.

12 Any public comment on any agenda items?
13 Any public comment? We have before you that's
14 been sent out the 2024 meeting schedule for the
15 Water Planning Council. We have it for review.
16 I would entertain a motion to approve.

17 MR. HEFT: I will make a motion that we
18 accept the 2024 meeting dates as presented.

19 MS. MATHIEU: I'll second that.

20 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Thank you. Questions
21 on the motion?

22 MR. HEFT: I will just note that, and it
23 is in the calendar, if anyone is looking for
24 the standard of the first Tuesday, that in May
25 it is not the first Tuesday because of

1 legislative session, we moved it. So if you're
2 putting it in your calendar, note that there's
3 a change in May from the first Tuesday.

4 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Thank you, Martin. If
5 there's no further questions, all in favor, say
6 Aye.

7 [All in favor; none opposed.]

8 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Meeting schedule for
9 2024 is approved.

10 Next, moving on to the Water Planning
11 Council Annual Report. I'm going to turn it
12 over to Virginia.

13 MS. de LIMA: Did you say you were going
14 to turn it over to me?

15 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Yes.

16 MS. de LIMA: I'm asking if any of the
17 four of you have any feedback to the draft that
18 we did send to you? We are more than willing
19 to make edits to it and so please let me know,
20 either right now or in follow-up emails.

21 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: I want to say thank
22 you very much to you and the group for putting
23 this together. We're on schedule, which is
24 great. I don't have any recommendations at
25 this point. Lori, I don't know if we're in a

1 position if you need to have a few more people
2 take a look at it at your place.

3 MS. MATHIEU: Thank you, Jack. I'm having
4 a little trouble hearing your audio.

5 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Can you hear me now?

6 MS. MATHIEU: Much better. Thank you.
7 Jack, what you said, the report looks really
8 great. Virginia, thank you and the team. A
9 lot of hard work putting that together and
10 reforming it in the way that it is. The draft
11 internally here on the 16th of November has
12 been shared internally for our internal review.
13 I know it's due at the beginning of the year
14 and we have some weeks here so that's where it
15 stands at this point.

16 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: I think we can
17 probably -- and I'll turn to our expert on
18 these types of things, Mr. Heft. Can't we do
19 an electronic vote on this by the end of the
20 year?

21 MR. HEFT: We could on that, we would have
22 to call it for that as a special meeting just
23 to vote on that or we could have a motion
24 written in the effect that we approve the water
25 plan pending the approval of, you know, our

1 leadership or whichever way we want to term it.
2 Do that, and once we have that, then we are
3 done and obviously if we don't have that
4 approval from leadership, then we would have to
5 come back.

6 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Lori, you okay with
7 that?

8 MS. MATHIEU: That's good. I want to
9 respect the fact that leadership has it and
10 they might have comments and they might want to
11 have edits, whatever, so I'm fine with that.

12 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Would you like to make
13 that a motion, Martin?

14 MR. HEFT: Sure. And before I do that,
15 I'll say I want to echo everyone else, a great
16 job putting together, Virginia, your group,
17 Lori, your group at DPH that went through and
18 did that. I know some changes were recommended
19 at the last meeting that got put into this and
20 that with the additional pictures and
21 everything else, I think it's a great draft
22 report. I did present it to OPM's secretary
23 and deputy. They didn't have any concerns on
24 it. Obviously highlighted it for them and so
25 they're aware of it on that end.

1 With that, I will make a motion that
2 pending agency legislative leadership approval
3 that the Water Planning Council Annual Report
4 for 2023 be adopted and submitted.

5 MS. MATHIEU: I'll second that.

6 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Motion made and
7 seconded that the Water Planning Council report
8 for 2023 be submitted to the legislature. We
9 want to put --

10 MR. HEFT: Pending the legislative
11 leadership -- excuse me, the agency legislative
12 leadership approval.

13 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Virginia, you have a
14 question?

15 MS. de LIMA: Yes, I do. I want to make a
16 request specifically of you, Lori --

17 MS. MATHIEU: Could I call for -- we're in
18 the middle of a motion.

19 MS. de LIMA: Right. And this is relative
20 to that motion.

21 MS. MATHIEU: We're in a council so point
22 of order here, I'm starting to lose track if
23 there's a question in the middle of a motion.

24 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Okay. So, I guess,
25 Virginia, can you clarify this after the

1 motion?

2 MS. de LIMA: Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Any further questions
4 or clarification? If not, all in favor, signal
5 by saying Aye.

6 [All in favor; none opposed.

7 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Motion carries. Now,
8 Virginia.

9 MS. de LIMA: I would like it acknowledged
10 if not in the motion at least from you folks
11 that if edits are requested that they be passed
12 along to us in enough time for you to meet your
13 deadline to the legislature.

14 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Understood.

15 MR. HEFT: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Thank you very much.

17 MR. HEFT: I was going to say in followup
18 with that is as I took the lead last year to
19 get the report filed legislatively and
20 everything else, if each of the agencies get
21 back to me, I can do the transmittal letter and
22 get the final report submitted. I will need a
23 clean copy of the final report that doesn't say
24 draft on it, with today's date on it and
25 everything. Virginia, I think you have the

1 final draft of it, or if Lori or whoever does,
2 and once that gets to me, I will be happy to do
3 the transmittal of it once we have all the
4 approvals in which case if there is any changes
5 need to be made, I'll be happy to make those
6 connections back to Virginia and the group.

7 MS. MATHIEU: I know that Eric Lindquist
8 is on and we have the final draft so maybe we
9 could flow it through our team if that's okay.

10 MR. HEFT: Definitely. Thank you.

11 MS. MATHIEU: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Sounds good. Any
13 questions?

14 Next, WPCA team nominees, Carol? Is Carol
15 on the call today?

16 MS. CHARAMUT: I don't think -- I think we
17 took care of everything we needed to take care
18 of last WPC meeting. I don't think there's
19 anything new from the nominating committee.

20 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Thank you.

21 Let's move. Let's move down to the
22 Workgroup Reports. Alicea, you're on the
23 screen.

24 MS. CHARAMUT: So, two of -- the source
25 water protection white paper, the group that's

1 working on that, we are making progress on
2 making edits to the draft so that's moving
3 forward. And the Conservation Pricing and Rate
4 Recovery Analysis Workgroup, I may be canceling
5 Thursday's meeting. I was supposed to get
6 together with the Connecticut Waterworks
7 Association to talk with their folks about some
8 of the concerns they have because their input
9 is really important going forward. We have not
10 been able to schedule a meeting with enough
11 lead time to the next meeting so hopefully
12 we'll get together before the holidays hit,
13 which I guess you could say now it's already
14 hit so that we can circle back in the January
15 meeting with their feedback and input.

16 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Yes.

17 MS. CHARAMUT: Other than the Watershed
18 Lands meeting, which I think is also on the
19 agenda.

20 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Yes. Right. Is that
21 it for the Workgroup?

22 MS. de LIMA: Okay. The Annual Report
23 obviously was a big focus over the last several
24 weeks and the USGS data collection topical
25 workgroup has completed their report. The

1 Implementation Workgroup has submitted comments
2 back to them and we're waiting on any comments
3 from the advisory group. And so if the
4 advisory group doesn't have any comments, we
5 would appreciate that said explicitly so we
6 don't wait for them if they're not coming.

7 MS. CHARAMUT: Ginny, I gave them a
8 deadline of this Friday so if nothing that
9 comes to you, we don't have anything.

10 MS. de LIMA: Chris and Ali, Ali Hibbard,
11 will incorporate those comments and hopefully
12 the Implementation Workgroup will give their
13 final approval to the report at our meeting
14 next week if possible and forward it along to
15 you folks. That's going along nicely.

16 The other major thing that we've been
17 talking about is the integration of the
18 Implementation Workgroup and the Advisory
19 Group. Dan and Alicea and Carol Haskins and I
20 have been working on that. We're pretty close
21 to having a final draft. Some of the
22 outstanding issues are relatively minor, but
23 one thing we would want to pass by you is that
24 we have agreed to -- well, in the annual
25 report, you'll see that we had some of our

1 workgroups listed as standing committees. The
2 Education and Outreach being a prime example of
3 that, groups that don't have an anticipated
4 ending, they're ongoing. Distinct from that,
5 we have the topical workgroups which are
6 focused on a topic and have an end date and
7 have a report at the end of that. One of the
8 questions that has come up is whether the
9 standing groups should actually be reporting,
10 if you will, directly to you folks, the Water
11 Planning Council, rather than to the Advisory
12 Group. The pattern that we've gotten into
13 recently is using Education and Outreach as an
14 example, Denise has been reporting to you folks
15 at your Water Council meetings. And it might
16 make sense to have the standing committees
17 report directly to you rather than having that
18 other layer in between and then the Advisory
19 Group would be focused more on topical issues
20 that would be addressed as specific units. So,
21 that's something to throw out there. We would
22 appreciate your thoughts on that. Part of that
23 was prompted because of the reporting that's
24 been happening over the past year or so has
25 worked in that direction anyway.

1 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: To me, it makes sense.
2 Look at our agenda today. Watershed, Outreach,
3 Drought. I mean I can understand the
4 committees should probably report directly to
5 us. I don't know how my colleagues feel.

6 MR. HEFT: I will mention I would like to
7 reserve comment. I would like to look at the
8 whole thing as a whole on it and obviously make
9 a recommendation to us for what way you think
10 is best to do and then we could definitely look
11 at that and I want to look at the whole
12 consolidation, you know, or partnership as a
13 whole and look at it that way rather than
14 trying to pull each piece apart at this point.
15 I'd rather look at it that way, but I don't
16 have any concerns because we do have that
17 already being reported that way currently. So
18 the recommendation from the two groups could be
19 to keep it in that format. We may look at it
20 differently once we look at the overall picture
21 of it on that. That would be my only thoughts.

22 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: You're suggesting we
23 wait until we get the final report. I have no
24 problem with that. Lori?

25 MS. MATHIEU: I agree with Martin. I

1 think stepping back and getting a lot of
2 people's input as to the structure would be
3 really important to have a time on the agenda
4 to have this discussion between many of the
5 people that have been participating so that we
6 could understand how our structure should be
7 moving forward because there's a variety of
8 ways we could do this. And I would, similar to
9 Martin, want to think about it more within our
10 own team as well. So thank you.

11 MS. de LIMA: Alicea and Dan and Carol and
12 I will continue working on it and hopefully
13 have a draft to the Implementation Workgroup
14 next week and the Advisory Group the week
15 thereafter so we can all be onboard with that
16 and forward it to you folks to perhaps be on
17 your agenda. I know in the motion that you
18 folks passed last month, you were saying by
19 spring that we would integrate the two groups.
20 My personal goal is to do it by the beginning
21 of the year, so obviously your January meeting
22 is the beginning of the year exactly, but once
23 we get the founding document, if you will,
24 finalized, we would still be working on
25 integrating the proposal format. The proposal

1 format that the IWT uses is slightly different
2 than the proposal format from the Advisory
3 Group. We would like to make those consistent
4 as well. Those are not things that have to go
5 through you, but it's a task that we've set
6 ourselves in this integration process to
7 streamline the proposal and the formatting to
8 be consistent. That's something we'll be doing
9 as a committee. We acknowledge that's an
10 outstanding task that we will have to do even
11 after approval of the founding document.

12 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Any questions for
13 Virginia? Sounds like we have a path moving
14 forward here.

15 Martin, Interagency Drought Workgroup. Do
16 we have enough water?

17 MR. HEFT: We've been doing well that way,
18 in which case we have canceled our meeting for
19 this week for the drought meeting for the month
20 of December, but I do want to note that on
21 December 15 agency staff representing the
22 Interagency Drought Workgroup, specifically
23 staffed from DEEP, Homeland Security, DPH, OPM
24 are going to do a road trip, if you will, to
25 Massachusetts to meet with staff from the

1 Massachusetts Drought Task Force to exchange
2 information on drought preparedness and
3 response and about their understanding of
4 drought from a regional perspective. Topics
5 are going to include to be discussed are flash
6 drought, declining or moving out of drought
7 stages, public awareness, interpretation of
8 drought declarations and then reviewing each of
9 the states' drought management plans to learn
10 more about each other and get some exchange.
11 It's an all-day meeting that's going to be held
12 at Mass. Wildlife facility in Westborough and
13 kind of a good little meet and learn session
14 between the two groups which is just part of
15 our process as well. Education and learning
16 and working to better implement our own
17 interagency drought workgroup and the drought
18 plan. I wanted to make that announcement and
19 we'll have further reports next month after
20 they have this meet and learn session.

21 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Thank you, Martin.
22 Thank you and the group for the great work. We
23 have a good precipitation right now, but it
24 gets bad really quickly.

25 MR. HEFT: People forget there could still

1 be a winter drought. Knock wood that we won't
2 be in that.

3 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Thank you and thank
4 Workgroup. Denise cannot be with us this
5 afternoon, but she did send us a work plan for
6 2024 for the Outreach and Education sub group
7 and we're going to have Ali give us a report.
8 Ali, thank you for filling in.

9 MS. HIBBARD: Hi there. The Outreach and
10 Education Workgroup met this morning and
11 finalized our 2024 plan of work. That was sent
12 to the Water Planning Council this morning.
13 Right now we are working with Mike Dietz to
14 create guidance for private well owners during
15 drought. The guidance document is still being
16 edited and we would like to complete it by
17 March. We are also in the process of planning
18 a lunch and learn for the first week of March
19 to tie together the National Groundwater
20 Awareness week and the 20th anniversary of the
21 Aquifer Protection Program.

22 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: I hope everybody, my
23 fellow committee members, council members, have
24 a copy of the work draft for 2024, which is
25 very well thought out. Lots of great things

1 happening between the workshops, website logo.

2 Martin, do we have to formally accept this?

3 MR. HEFT: No.

4 MS. MATHIEU: Can I ask Ali a question on
5 private wells and private well guidance and the
6 people involved from our department. I believe
7 our private well staff are involved in that
8 group. I think one of the things that we would
9 like to emphasize is when private wells are
10 tested or any public water, public, private,
11 semi-public water is tested that utilization of
12 a certified laboratory is important and that
13 labs are certified by the Department of Public
14 Health. There's a program within our team here
15 that does that work, and I think that should
16 definitely be recognized. We have a list of
17 certified laboratories. I guess there has been
18 a notion out there that you don't have to use a
19 certified lab in order to have results. I want
20 to just note that and make sure that that's a
21 point of emphasis for all of us.

22 MS. HIBBARD: I can pass that on to the
23 workgroup.

24 MS. MATHIEU: Thank you, Ali, I appreciate
25 that.

1 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Any other questions?
2 With that, thank you very much. We will move
3 on to I think we covered the pricing, did we
4 not, Alicea?

5 MS. CHARAMUT: Covered what? I'm sorry, I
6 got lost.

7 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: The conservation
8 pricing.

9 MS. CHARAMUT: Yes.

10 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: You have a meeting
11 coming up on that?

12 MS. CHARAMUT: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Let's move on to
14 Watershed Lands Workgroup. Margaret?

15 MR. HANRATTY: Hi, this is Rich Hanratty.
16 Margaret asked me to give the report. For the
17 Watershed Lands Workgroup, our next meeting is
18 this Friday 12/8 at 9 a.m. Don't miss it. We
19 plan to discuss existing Aquifer Protection
20 regulations, Class II lands that are not in
21 drinking water watersheds and groundwater and
22 regards status of mapping and changes affecting
23 groundwater, so we're really looking for
24 feedback from as many people as possible and
25 constructive discussion. Thanks.

1 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Thank you. Any
2 questions for Rich?

3 We can move on to any Public Comment. Any
4 Public Comment?

5 Okay. There's no public comment. Our
6 next meeting will be January 2, 2024 and
7 there's no further business. I'll wish
8 everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and
9 look forward to working with you all in 2024.
10 With that, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

11 MR. HEFT: I'll make a motion to adjourn
12 at 2:00.

13 MS. MATHIEU: Second.

14 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: Meeting adjourned.
15 All in favor, signify by saying Aye.

16 [All in favor; none opposed.]

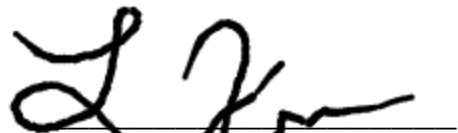
17 CHAIRMAN BETKOSKI: We are adjourned, in
18 record time.

19 [Meeting ended at 2:00 p.m.]
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1 STATE OF CONNECTICUT :
2 : CHESHIRE
3 COUNTY OF NEW HAVEN :
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5

6 I, Lucas Ferraro, Notary Public for the State of
7 Connecticut, do hereby certify that the preceding pages
8 are representative of the Water Planning Council meeting,
9 was taken before me, held via Zoom videoconferencing,
10 commencing at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 5, 2023.

11 Dated at New Haven, Connecticut, this 8th day of
12 December 2023.

13 
14 Notary Public

15
16 My Commission Expires: October 31, 2028.
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