

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

December 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes

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

Agenda: <https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/24222>

Video: https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/2024-12-17_WPCAG_Video.mp4

Members Present by video or phone:

Aaron Budris	Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Bonnie Burr	UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Alicea Charamut	Fisheries Advisory Council
Kathy Czepiel	Save the Sound
Virginia de Lima (alt.)	
Len Greene	First Light (Electric Power)
Carol Haskins	Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition
Sean Hayden	Lake Waramaug Task Force
Patrick Kearney	New Britain Water Dept.
Dan Lawrence	Aquarion
Alison McHorney	CT Office of Consumer Counsel
Darryl Newman	CT Nursery & Landscape Assoc.
Denise Savageau	CT Association of Conservation Districts
Tom Tyler	MDC

Other Participants:

Jonathan Avery	Hazardville and Jewett City Water Co.s
Lauren Bergman	CT Water Co.
Audrey Berry	CT Dept. of Public Health
Ryan Carboni	CT Council on Environmental Quality
Kim Czaplá	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection
Lily Engbith	CT Office of Policy & Management
Martin Heft	CT Office of Policy & Management
Ali Hibbard	CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection
Ray Jarema (alt.)	Berlin Water Dept.
Iris Kaminski	
Brooke Parker	CT Office of Consumer Counsel
Aimee Petras (alt.)	Farmington River Watershed Assoc.
Marcus Yancoskie	Rome, Smith, Kowalski

Members Absent:

Sonia Marino	CT Association of Directors of Health
Jeff Shaw	CT Outdoor Recreation Alliance
Martha Smith	New Haven West River Watershed Coalition
Steve Vitko	South Central CT Regional Water Authority
Steve Woltornist	Marmon Water Residential Filtration/Water Quality Assoc.

Staff:

Bruce Wittchen	CT Office of Policy & Management
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1. Call to Order

Co-chair Alicea Charamut called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of draft 9/17/2024 Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the [draft 11/19/2024 minutes](#) and the motion was approved unanimously, with Len Green and Alison McHorney abstaining because they had not attended the meeting.

3. 2025 meeting schedule (see attachment)

Alicea mentioned the proposed 2025 schedule and asked about any significant conflicts and none were mentioned. A motion was made and seconded to approve the schedule and the schedule was approved unanimously.

Tuesday, January 21
Tuesday, February 18
Tuesday, March 18
Tuesday, April 15
Tuesday, May 20
Tuesday, June 17
Tuesday, July 15
Tuesday, August 19
Tuesday, September 16
Tuesday, October 21
Tuesday, November 18
Tuesday, December 16

4. Old Business

a. WPC and work group updates

- WPC meeting
 - WPC membership change
 - 2025 WPC work plan
 - WPC staffing

Alicea Charamut said OPM's Martin Heft will be WPC chair beginning in January, which will be the last meeting chaired by Jack Betkoski of PURA. There was a discussion of Christopher Roy replacing Eric McPhee as DPH's representative on the WPC and David Arconti will replace Jack Betkoski as PURA's representative. Alicea noted that the WPC voted on the 2025 work plan and provided an overview.

- Annual WPC report and Fact Sheet

Alicea Charamut showed the draft annual report and there was a discussion of some members not receiving it when it was circulated immediately before this meeting. Alicea said it is a brief report, similar to last year's, and described its contents. There

was a discussion of changes to WPCAG membership, business representation on the group, and whether to also list alternate members. Alicea acknowledged the work of Kim Czapla, Virginia de Lima, Eric Lindquist, and Audrey Berry on the report. A motion was made and seconded to send the report to the WPC for its consideration and the motion was approved unanimously. Alicea showed the fact sheet and explained that it is a brief two-page summary of the report and there was a discussion of its value for explaining the work of the WPC to legislators, new WPCAG members, and others. Alicea said both documents will be sent to the WPC once revised.

- Nominating Committee

Carol Haskins described the call for volunteers, mentioned the Feb. 4 deadline for responses, and subsequent steps of the process.

- Watershed Lands Work Group

Kathy Czepiel said the group met last week and described Kim Czapla's presentation on the Aquifer Protection Act. The group also talked about potential collaboration with the Source Water group and Kathy mentioned that other group's white paper, which Denise Savageau said should be complete in Spring. Kathy said the groups can talk offline. She noted that there also was some discussion of topics expected to be addressed during the legislative session and also about the WPC work plan. Alicea Charamut said Kim's presentation can be seen on the meeting recording, which will be available at the [group's webpage](#).

- Outreach & Education Work Group

Denise Savageau said the group is looking at next year's work, which will focus on extreme weather and healthy watershed and said January, 2025's meeting date will be moved because of a conflict.

- Source Water Protection Work Group

Denise Savageau said the group did not meet in December but will meet 1/21/2025 and incorporate comments into the draft white paper. She invited people to join them, especially from the watershed lands group.

- Conservation Pricing and Rate Recovery Analysis Work Group

There was no update.

b. Expectations for 2025 legislative session

Alicea Charamut said DPH has drafted septic system regulations, noting DPH's increased jurisdiction for systems up to 10,000 gpd, and that those regulations will go through regulation review. She highlighted that the regulations' consideration of nitrogen.

c. Other old business

- Website changes

Ali Hibbard said the website is in a maintenance stage and said she, Kim Czapla, Becca Dahl, and Bruce Wittchen meet quarterly to look at that and mentioned that 2025 meeting schedules are being posted.

- WUCC update

Jonathan Avery and Dan Lawrence said it has been quiet at the local [Water Utility Coordinating Committee](#) level and Dan outlined expectations for WUCC plan updates in the coming years and said desired changes will require a change of regulations.

- Interagency Drought Work Group

Martin Heft said the [Interagency Drought Work Group](#) (IDW) met and that the state remains in [Stage 2 drought](#). He mentioned recent precipitation and that the group will meet again in January.

5. New Business

- Thoughts on 2025 outlook for the WPCAG

Alicea invited thoughts about what the WPCAG should do or not do in 2025. Denise Savageau mentioned her role on some statewide boards and highlighted the [Long Island Sound Study Citizens' Advisory Group](#), noting that the Study is being renamed the Partnership. They are preparing a [new comprehensive conservation and management plan](#) and she noted its relationship to the state water plan. She added that the Long Island Sound plan has a new section going beyond the plan's previous focus on nitrogen and other water contaminants to also include a comprehensive objective focused on watershed health.

Denise the new plan recognizes the impact of watershed health on Long Island Sound and she noted that all of CT is in the watershed. Denise said the plan is a final draft and still subject to change, but it is the measures of success, not the objectives, which are more likely to be tweaked. She highlighted that the draft recommends protecting 5,000 acres of land and that it might be increased to 10,000 because of the recognition 5,000 is not a lot of land considering the size of the watershed.

Denise said the plan's inclusion of land conservation and riparian buffers is consistent with the state water plan. She highlighted that public water supply watersheds are a subset of the Long Island Sound watershed and protecting Long Island Sound can also protect public water supply watersheds. This is important because the Long Island Sound Study is well funded, with an annual appropriation of \$40 million, and alternative funding is very limited for nonpoint source and watershed health work. She also noted that there has been an additional \$20 million of [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) (BIL) and [Inflation Reduction Act](#) (IRA) funding.

Denise recommended that water plan implementation be integrated with those and other efforts, including the [Governor's Council on Climate Change](#) (GC3) and the [Green Plan](#). WPCAG work groups should look at this. Alicea Charamut said this is exciting because the Long Island Sound Study's new focus on watershed health can provide additional resources and capacity for inland watershed work. Martin Heft recommended the WPCAG be

prepared for work on the priorities listed in the previously discussed WPC work plan. The WPC will ask the WPCAG to work on those but will also consider initiatives recommended by the WPCAG.

Iris Kaminski recommended CT adopt legislation regarding [1,4-dioxane](#), copying NY requirements, which include limits for drinking water and household products. Alicea said the WPCAG should consider the WPC's 2025 work plan at its next meeting.

5. Public Comment

Responding to Denise Savageau's earlier recommendation to coordinate with other state actions, Lily Engbith said that she and OPM's Joanna Wozniak-Brown are compiling a list of climate change related actions from executives orders and near-term actions recommended by the GC3. She expects to have an update on water-related recommendations in January and she would like to hear of any project updates. Alicea Charamut asked if they are looking at all the GC3-recommended actions and Lily said they are looking at all 61, plus sub-actions. There was a discussion of next steps and how that can contribute to the next state water plan update. Alicea also mentioned the 50th anniversary of the [Safe Drinking Water Act](#).

6. Upcoming Meetings

Alicea Charamut read the listed dates of upcoming meetings.

Dec. 17, 2024	Source Water Protection Work Group (9:00)
Jan. 7, 2025	Outreach & Education Work Group (9:00)
Jan. 7, 2025	WPC (1:30)
Jan. 9, 2025	Interagency Drought Work Group (1:00)
Jan. 21, 2025	Source Water Protection Work Group (9:00)
Jan. 21, 2025	WPCAG (1:30)
TBD	Conservation Pricing and Rate Recovery Analysis

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM