

Connecticut Water Planning Council

May 6, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Video:

https://ctvideo.ct.gov/opm/250506_Water_Planning_Council_Meeting_Recording.mp4

Members Present:

Martin Heft (chair)
Christopher Roy
Christopher Bellucci

[CT Office of Policy & Management](#)
[CT Dept. of Public Health](#)
[CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection](#)

Other Participants:

Paul Aresta
Lauren Bergman*
Josh Cansler*
Ryan Carboni
Alicea Charamut*
Kim Czapla
Kathy Czepiel*
Virginia de Lima*
Betsy Gara
Ali Hibbard
Ray Jarema*
Pat Kearney*
Peter Kelly
Dan Lawrence*
Eric Lindquist
Sonia Marino*
Ron McDaniel
Remy Mellinghoff
David Murphy
Maddie Myers
Aimee Petras*
Francis Pickering
Kaleigh Pitcher
Justine Phillips-Gallucci
Hannah Reichle
Denise Savageau*
Greg Sweeney*
Liz Tavelli
Jeff Ulrich
Steve Vitko*

[Council on Environmental Quality](#)
[CT Water Company](#)
[SE CT Water Authority](#)
[Council on Environmental Quality](#)
[Fisheries Advisory Council](#)
[CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection](#)
[Save the Sound](#)
[USGS \(retired\)](#)
[CWWA](#)
[CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection](#)
[Town of Berlin Water Control](#)
[New Britain Water Department](#)

[Aquarion](#)
[CT Dept. of Public Health](#)
[Town of Guilford Health Department](#)

[Farmington River Watershed Association](#)
[WestCOG](#)
[PURA](#)
[CT Office of Policy & Management](#)
[MetroCOG](#)
[CT Association of Conservation Districts](#)
[CT Association of Irrigation Professionals](#)

[Aquarion](#)
[Regional Water Association](#)

**Denotes representative or alternate of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group*

Staff:

Becca Dahl
Bruce Wittchen

[CT Office of Policy & Management](#)
[CT Office of Policy & Management](#)

Call to order and Seating of Council Members

Council Chair Heft called the virtual meeting to order at 1:32 pm, outlined meeting procedures, and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

Approval of draft 4/1/2025 Minutes

The motion was made by Chris Bellucci and seconded by Chris Roy. The motion passed unanimously.

Public comment on agenda items

There were no public comments.

Business

1. Legislative watch list

Council Chair Heft noted that there are only 40 days left in session, and there have been some updates on the Legislative watch list:

[SB 9](#) has been calendared for the Senate and should include some amendments from [SB 1245](#).

Many other bills are waiting for a spot on the calendar.

2. WPCAG Co-Chair Appointment

Council Chair Heft thanked Alicea Charmut and Dan Lawrence for their continued leadership of the WPCAG, especially the continuity they provided in transition to merging the Implementation Workgroup and the WPCAG.

A motion was made to re-appoint Alicea Charamut as co-chair and to newly appoint Steve Vitko as co-chair of the WPCAG. The motion was made by Chris Bellucci and seconded by Chris Roy. Motion passed unanimously.

3. 2025 Work Plan Task Assignment

Council Chair Heft noted that the WPC and the WPCAG are currently in the process of reviewing the State Water Plan recommendations and have the survey from the Outreach and Education Workgroup out to aid with this. He also noted that the WPC would like the WPCAG to delve into Section 5.3 of the State Water Plan, specifically possible partnerships.

A motion was made to charge the WPCAG with the task of exploring possible partnerships and contacting external agencies and educational institutions. Christopher Roy made the motion and it was seconded by Chris Bellucci. Motion passed unanimously.

Chris Bellucci commented that he believes this is a great idea to involve universities and include students.

Alicea Charamut asked to clarify if the WPC plans to provide documentation for this assignment. Council Chair Heft responded that he will provide clear tasks and documentation for this assignment.

4. Watershed Lands Workgroup and Source Water Protection Workgroup Merger

Council Chair Heft noted that there was a brief write-up of this proposed merger in the Agenda Packet provided before the meeting. The merged group would be named the “Watershed Protection Workgroup” with DPH as primary staff for this group.

Christopher Roy added that he currently has internal request in place to get staff support for this group from DPH.

A motion was made to merge these workgroups, contingent upon the completion of the Source Water Protection White Paper. Chris Bellucci made the motion and it was seconded by Christopher Roy. Motion passes unanimously

5. Next Meeting June 10

Council Chair Heft noted that the next meeting is a week later than typical because of the Legislative Session ending at the beginning of June

- a. Agenda topics: There are no topics to note currently. Council Chair Heft reminded the group that information for the meeting needs to be submitted one week in advance.

Workgroup Reports

1. Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG)

Alicea Charamut reported for the WPCAG. At the previous meeting, they discussed legislative updates and how to move forward on how to work through water plan priorities. She plans to provide a presentation on Section 5 of the State Water Plan to provide background and refresh the WPCAG over the next few months. She also noted that the WPCAG would like to get together in-person to discuss the priorities of the State Water Plan as a whole group and are currently targeting September / October.

a. Standing Work Groups

i. Nominating Committee

Council Chair Heft made note of the current WPCAG vacancies as listed in the Agenda Packet. There was no further report.

ii. Outreach & Education (O&E)

Denise Savageau reported for the O&E Workgroup that met earlier in the day.

1. May 29th Webinar – She shared details about the upcoming webinar happening on May 29th, titled, Forests, Droughts, and Wildfires. An email was sent out to the WPC email list on this.
2. Upcoming Workshops – Denise Savageau shared that the O&E Workgroup is anticipating holding two more webinars in the fall. They will also be part of the Extreme Weather and Our Watersheds Webinar Series, on the following topics
 - a. Floods and Impacts on Water Quality
 - b. Drought and Impacts on Water Quality
3. Outreach Survey: Denise Savageau asked for WPCAG members and others to distribute the survey to listservs and contact lists.

Ali Hibbard shared that the survey has collected 16 responses, and the survey platform is Microsoft Forms, which compiles data well. This survey is open until May 31st

4. Press Release – Denise Savageau discussed that the O&E Workgroup would like to get a press release out on the Extreme Weather Webinar Series. The press release would ideally go out before May 29th and would highlight the past webinar recordings as well.

Council Chair Heft shared that he is happy to work with Denise and the Workgroup to get this out.

5. Draft Workplan – Denise Savageau wanted to clarify if the workplan has been fully approved by the WPC, and how to proceed. Council Chair Heft responded, sharing that each event should be approved by the WPC through the new form created for O&E.

iii. Watershed Lands

Kathy Czepiel reported and noted that Friday June 6th is the next meeting for the Watershed Lands Workgroup. An agenda will be going out soon. She asked for clarification on the scheduling for the newly merged group.

Council Chair Heft responded for the Watershed Lands Workgroup to continue as normal until the merger takes place.

b. Topical

i. Conservation Pricing Rate Recovery Analysis

Alicea Charamut reported that she and Dan Lawrence will further discuss the

hand-off of this assignment to the WUCCs. She will have more information compiled soon.

ii. Source Water Protection

Denise Savageau reported that there is not much to update at the moment. She has met with Chris Roy about Source Water Protection in DPH. There has been some rearrangement within DPH and restructuring which has added some confusion.

2. Interagency Drought Workgroup (IDW)

Becca Dahl reported out sharing that the IDW last met on April 3rd and reduced the drought stage from a Stage 2 Drought to a Stage 1 Drought. She also mentioned that the IDW will meet on May 8th and evaluate current conditions.

Public Comment

Alicea Charamut shared that this is an important ‘water week’ as it is currently Watershed Awareness Month, American Wetlands Month, and Drinking Water Week. She wanted to make sure the group was informed and shared that Rivers Alliance has a lot of press and social media out on these topics

Virginia de Lima shared news of staffing changes at the USGS, resulting in six retirements from the Connecticut office.

Denise Savageau shared about the Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC) – CREST tool which is used to aid in solar siting. The tool has recently been improved to include Aquifer Protection Areas, and continued improvements from DEEP are anticipated.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:18 pm. The motion was made by Chris Roy and seconded by Chris Bellucci. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes prepared by Becca Dahl, OPM