



Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

## CVRPC Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) Meeting Minutes – 9 January 2025

**CWAC Members:** ✓

Commissioner Representatives	
	John Brabant
✓	Mitch Osieki
✓	Ron Krauth
✓	Rich Turner
✓	Alice Peal

Municipal Representatives	
✓	Clark Amadon
✓	Joyce Manchester
	Emily Ruff
	Jeff Schulz
✓	Joseph Whelan

**CVRPC Staff:** Brian Voigt, Lincoln Frasca

**Other Attendees:** Ashely Hellman (Department of Environmental Conservation), Lynnette Claudon (Department of Environmental Conservation), Cristin Ashmankas (Department of Environmental Conservation), Dan Koenemann (Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District), Kari Bradley (Calais Town Administrator), Johnathan Sprung (Waitsfield Planning Commission Chair), Rebecca Campbell (Warren Town Administrator).

**Call to Order & Introductions**

A. Peal called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM.

**Updates to agenda:** N/A

**Public Comment:** N/A

**Approval of November minutes**

*R. Turner moved to approve the minutes of the 14 November 2024 meeting. M. Osieki seconded the motion. All in favor and the motion passed.*

## **Community Wastewater Management Assistance (see slides)**

**Ashely Hellman:** Environmental Analyst and ARPA Pretreatment Initiative Lead ARPA projects with the Department of Environmental Conservation.

A. Hellman presented on municipal and business wastewater initiatives that have utilized the American Rescue Protection Act (ARPA). She highlighted several projects, including a landfill leaching project in Montpelier, a brewery wastewater treatment projects in Morrisville and Williston, and a whiskey production project in Middlebury, all aimed at reducing pollutants and improving wastewater treatment. A. Hellman discussed the importance of updating sewer use ordinances, setting local limits, and conducting industrial user surveys to better understand wastewater discharge from various industries. The goal is to have cleaner Vermont lakes and rivers, with the ARPA funds contributing significantly to pretreatment solutions by addressing wastewater at its source. A. Hellman also mentioned a new model sewer use ordinance that the Department of Environmental Conservation is developing that will be freely available to all Vermont municipalities. She recommended sending questions about Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) or other emerging contaminants in wastewater to [ANR.WSMDWastewater@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WSMDWastewater@vermont.gov).

**Lynnette Claudon:** PE, Chief Pollution Control Design Engineer & Planning Advance Program Lead and **Cristin Ashmankas:** Compliance, Outreach, Operations, and Logistics Program Manager with the Department of Environmental Conservation.

L. Claudon and C. Ashmankas discussed the challenges and solutions related to wastewater management in Vermont's unsewered villages. Half of Vermont's municipalities lack municipally owned wastewater systems They highlighted the limitations faced by these villages due to the lack of municipal wastewater systems, which hinders redevelopment and business growth. They introduced the state's Wastewater program, which issues water and wastewater permits for properties with a flow of 6,499 gallons per day or less. The program also offers tools like pretreatment and groundwater recharge to reduce the burden on the soil for wastewater treatment. They also mentioned the direct discharge program, which regulates discharges directly to lakes and streams in Vermont and reports annually to the Environmental Protection Agency. They discussed the future of wastewater in Vermont, focusing on decentralized wastewater management.

L. Claudon and C. Ashmankas discussed the impact of beer and dairy production on water usage, changes in water usage due to different types of buildings or businesses, and various funding opportunities for wastewater projects in Vermont. C. Ashmankas explained that changing the use of a building, even if the total water usage remains the same, may require upgrading the wastewater system due to changes in the composition of the wastewater. L. Claudon provided an overview of funding sources including ARPA grants, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, United States

Department of Agricultural Rural Development programs, the Northern Borders Regional Commission and more. She emphasized that funding opportunities are constantly evolving and noted that no new ARPA grants are available. C. Ashmankas mentioned the Environmental Protection Agency's growing interest in funding wastewater projects for underserved communities. L. Claudon advised interested communities to first establish a committee, assess local goals and vision, and potentially seek funding for engineering and planning efforts. C. Ashmankas advised communities to focus on solving their wastewater needs prior to addressing community drinking water projects.

### **Presenter Q & A (discussion)**

C. Amadon encouraged municipalities to pursue funding and to assemble a wastewater committee. Moretown has been in the process of investigating wastewater solutions for two and a half years. The Department of Environmental Conservation has been very supportive throughout the process. The town has hosted several public forums to engage the community in the planning process. Currently, an indirect discharge system is being pursued. Moretown's biggest challenge is soil type, topography, and lack of commitment amongst property owners. Department of Environmental Conservation and related funding sources are essential for small towns seeking a solution. Construction costs are high for community wastewater projects. The Northern Borders Regional Commission has been an excellent resource for Moretown. C. Amadon suggested the state rules dictating where indirect discharge systems can be established should be discussed by the Department of Environmental Conservation to enable more communities to find a solution.

C. Ashmankas noted that indirect discharge rules are guided by the Environmental Protection Agency. However, the state's wastewater rules allow for smaller systems that can use innovative technologies to put in systems that serve multiple users but not the entire village. She suggested considering smaller systems and alternative technologies.

R. Krauth expressed concern about the shrinking geology departments at Middlebury and UVM. This has negative impacts on the understanding of the relationship between groundwater and pollution. Groundwater quality is closely tied to local geology and should be considered when seeking new solutions.

C. Amadon noted the importance of finding experts that are interested in working with towns on wastewater issues.

C. Ashmankas offered to put towns in touch with a state hydrogeologist.

M. Osiecki mentioned how Middlesex's small village with no municipal wastewater has prevented growth. About twenty years ago the town considered developing a water and wastewater system. More recently a private landowner reached out to the town offering water from their land to be used for a municipal system. Currently, the town is not interested in a village wastewater system. However, they are engaging the community to gauge interest in a community drinking water system.

C. Ashmankas recommended looking at wastewater first. She discussed the operational and capacity requirements of a municipal water supply, emphasizing the

constant oversight needed. She suggested that wastewater systems are more passive and less expensive in the long run compared to water supplies. C. Ashmankas also highlighted the importance of wastewater systems in solving growth problems by moving wastewater off to the side. New wells can be installed after wastewater is established.

B. Voigt asked about what enforcement mechanisms exist for sewer use ordinances.

A. Hellman noted municipalities can charge penalty fees to users who violate the sewer use ordinance, but the state cannot charge fees. This is why ordinances need to be updated regularly to ensure that the set penalties make sense for holding industries accountable for what they are putting down the drain. The Environmental Protection Agency requires municipalities to conduct industrial user surveys and the Department of Environmental Conservation can enforce that standard with pretreatment permit language. The Environmental Protection Agency also has a model sewer use ordinance.

L. Claudon emphasized that every town should have an ordinance regardless of industrial user status. Middlebury has an ordinance worth reviewing that addresses industrial users and Combined Sewer Overflows.

C. Amadon discussed the possibility of congressional earmarks for funding systems and the ongoing conversations with Waterbury about extending their system into North Moretown.

L. Claudon mentioned that funding for a study on the extension could be available through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. The Department of Environmental Conservation recently published a press release on "[What Not to Flush: Prevent Pollution and Save Time and Money with These Tips](#)"

J. Whelan raised concerns about toxic chemicals in drinking water, specifically PFAS, and asked about testing and regulation in Vermont.

C. Ashmankas noted all new wells need to be tested before being put into operation or before they are shared to a new user. A study by the Department of Environmental Conservation was conducted to randomly select wells and test for PFAS. Areas of known concern are also included in the list of required testing sites. She mentioned while PFAS are detectable everywhere, Vermont is actively working to address the issue and is part of a legal case against the production of PFAS.

A. Peal brought up the topic of source protection areas and Waitsfield's water protection overlay district that restricts certain activities in these areas.

C. Ashmankas mentioned that source protection areas are required by the Agency of Natural Resources and can have multiple zones depending on their distance from the source. She also noted certain legacy uses from before the 1970s have been grandfathered into source protection areas.

### **Upcoming Meetings (see slides)**

L. Frasca introduced upcoming meeting topics and presenters, including the March 2025 meeting with Shannon Morrison, the district Wetlands ecologist. Shannon has offered to cover wetland topics including the state's re-mapping effort, how maps

pertain to the regulatory world with jurisdiction and classification, as well as the screening tool for wetlands and/or Class I petitions. She welcomes suggestions from committee members on other topics of interest.

A. Peal mentioned her interest in descriptions of the many wetlands natural communities and Class 1 wetlands candidates.

The May 2025 meeting will be focused on Forest Road Inventories and Town Forest Management. *Send any topic or speaker recommendations for Spring meetings to [frasca@cvregion.com](mailto:frasca@cvregion.com) by Thursday January 23, 2025.*

### **Announcements (see slides)**

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, Department of Environmental Conservation, and Friends of the Mad River are facilitating a Mad River Valley Wastewater Workshop this Spring, date and location to follow.

CVRPC is currently leading three clean water projects in the towns of Berlin, Calais, and Waitsfield. In Berlin, Fitzgerald Environmental Associates has been hired to complete Project Development of Riparian Buffer and Culvert Replacement in partnership with the Waitsfield Conservation Commission. The Calais Gully project is awaiting a Department of Environmental Conservation eligibility determination for a culvert replacement. Lastly, a Request for Proposals is active for engineering services to complete the Waitsfield Floodplain Restoration Project Development in partnership with the Waitsfield Conservation Commission.

A [Sabin Pond Lake Watershed Action Plan](#) Request for Proposals has been issued by the Department of Environmental Conservation and is due 24 January 2025.

D. Koenemann, Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District Manager, introduced a locally led survey to collect information on the environmental concerns & solutions that matter to the residents of the Winooski Basin. The Natural Resources Conservation District works with United States Department of Agriculture to address community needs and the results from this survey will help shape their work action plan. The survey will be closing in the beginning of March with a community forum to follow. [Locally Led Survey Website](#), [Link to the survey](#).

**Adjourn:** *M. Osieki moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:40 PM. R. Turner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

The next meeting is scheduled for 13 March 2025.

*Minutes submitted by CVRPC staff member Lincoln Frasca*