Winooski River Basin Water Quality Commission Meeting Minutes – May 19, 2022

BWQC Members:

NRCDs		**RPCs**	
	Peter Danforth, Lamoille NRCD	✓	Darlene Palola, CCRPC
✓	Emily Porter-Goff, Alternate		Garret Mott, CCRPC, Alternate
✓	Remy Crettol, Winooski NRCD	✓	Alan Quackenbush, CVRPC
	Russ Barret, Alternate		Robert Wernecke, CVRPC, Alternate
Land Conservation Organizations		**Municipalities**	
✓	Steve Libby, VT River Conservancy	✓	Annie Costandi, Essex
	Vacant, Alternate		Sarah McShane, Stowe
Watershed Protection Organizations		✓	Nigel Hicks-Tibbles, Northfield
	Michele Braun, Friends of the Winooski River	✓	Alice Peal, Waitsfield, Alternate
✓	Shawn White, Alternate		
✓	Corrie Miller, Friends of the Mad River		
	Brian Shupe, Alternate		

CVRPC Staff: Brian Voigt, Bonnie Waninger

Guests: None

Call to Order & Roll Call
B. Voigt called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm and conducted Roll Call.

Public Comment
None.

(Re)Introductions
B. Voigt noted that Emily Porter-Goff has been appointed as the alternate seat for the Lamoille NRCD. Participants introduced themselves and provided context for their participation.

Review & approve minutes from April 21, 2022 meeting
A. Quackenbush moved to approve the April 21, 2022 meeting minutes; N. Hicks-Tibbles seconded. Motion carried.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair
B. Voigt noted that no one had contacted him regarding serving as an officer. C. Miller expressed that she would appreciate the opportunity to get to know BWQC members

prior to electing officers. B. Voigt noted that this could be a recurring agenda item until members know one another. N. Hicks-Tibbles asked about setting a timeline for electing officers. B. Voigt noted that he would be happy to continue to run the BWQC meetings during the start-up period – while the BWQC is developing and adopting policies – but that the BWQC should have a Chair and Vice Chair by the time the BWQC begins to evaluate projects.

In response to a question from R. Crettol, B. Voigt explained the role of officers and the role of CWSP staff as it relates to meetings. S. White suggested BWQC members develop a brief bio. Members discussed the bio content. N. Hicks-Tibbles suggested using the information from the BWQC application form. C. Miller noted it would be helpful to know about members' previous experience serving as a chair for other committees. B. Voigt will distribute basic topics the bio might answer. He will distribute returned bios with the next meeting packet.

P. Danforth recommended that a meeting invitation be sent to all participants in addition to the agenda to facilitate meeting link access. In response to a question, B. Voigt confirmed that meeting information is posted to the CVRPC website (https://centralvtplanning.org/about/minutes-agendas-staff-reports/winooski-basin-water-quality-council/).

Introduce & Discuss draft Bylaws
Voigt introduced the draft bylaw. He requested feedback on member terms and officers.

- Terms:
    - Darlene recommended 3-year terms.
    - C. Miller thought terms for watershed organizations should be different from others and wondered if successive terms could be held. B. Voigt clarified that terms were not being suggested to limit participation, rather that staggered terms are being proposed to ensure there is not complete turnover of the BWQC in a single year.
    - N. Hicks-Tibbles supported staggered terms and supports 3-year terms with initial terms staggered. He suggested members representing the same interest group should be on different term cycles. Would make sense for different member types to have different requirements if there are differences.
    - B. Waninger discussed terms versus term limits. Seats could have terms to create openings for new appointees, and serving successive terms could be enabled so that an organization could serve an unending number of terms if there are a limited number of candidates for the position.
    - A. Peal noted the importance of using staggered terms to ensure

continuity of BWQC operations.
    - N. Hicks-Tibbles asked how new members would be appointed and how vacancies would be filled. B. Voigt discussed the language of the statute. N. Hicks-Tibbles proposed that if there were a vacancy, the alternate would be voted as the interim member at next meeting. B. Voigt discussed the various mechanisms through which members are appointed.
    - A. Quackenbush wondered whether terms should be set by the appointing entity rather than the BWQC.
- Officers:
    - Terms of office: C. Miller asked if all BWQCs are using the same approach. B. Voigt said they are not because individual BWQCs are at different points of formation. He discussed how bylaw amendments are accomplished per the language proposed in the draft bylaws. N. Hicks-Tibbles recommended update to current language to clarify that members may serve in a single officer position for a maximum of three consecutive terms. He also recommended checking Vermont statutes for guidance on electing new members, quorum and other bylaw topics.
- Meetings: B. Voigt discussed calling of Special Meetings. N. Hicks-Tibbles recommended reducing it to 3-4 people for calling a Special Meeting. B. Waninger noted that 5 was a quorum of members and helps ensure a quorum would be present at the Special Meeting. D. Palola asked if the Chair was able to call a Special Meeting. B. Voigt clarified the language proposed in the draft. By consensus, the BWQC requested that three be inserted into the bylaws.
- Conflict of Interest: B. Voigt noted he would strike the language about signing a conflict of interest policy as it pertains to CVRPC committees not the BWQC. It is up to the BWQC to decide if something more stringent than what is in the draft language is necessary. C. Miller asked about differences between Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest. B. Waninger provided highlights using CVRPC policy as an example. C. Miller noted that some words used in the Code of Conduct, such as respectfully, might be interpreted differently by different people. She recommended equity and inclusion be considered. N. Hicks-Tibbles suggested that if an external document is desired, the BWQC should look to Code of Conduct language adopted by the CVRPC and the Vermont State Legislature. He expressed concern about how soon the BWQC could complete this and what it means to violate the code. He proposed keeping the four bullet points in the draft document and considering the need for an external document at a later date. S. White agreed and suggested adding a bullet about members representing their respective constituency (e.g. watershed organizations, municipalities) rather than their own organizations (e.g. Friends of the Winooski River, Waitsfield). C. Miller recommended "Code of Ethics" rather than "Code of Conduct".

- Amendments: Discussed previously.

Introduce & Discuss draft Public Participation Policy

Voigt used questions to prompt BWQC member thinking regarding the role of public participation in the BWQC. He briefly reviewed the level of public engagement: inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower from the EPA public engagement resource. He noted various resources and provided URLs for them.

Peter discussed the LNRCD's recent efforts: build listserv, build collaborative efforts with other organizations and advertise meetings. He hopes to keep the NRCD's efforts parallel with the BWQC's efforts.

S. Libby suggested public participation needs to consider confidentiality and landowner. For example, no public discussion of projects until signed Purchase and Sales Agreement or at least agreement regarding landowner participation. B. Voigt noted that when the BWQC prioritizes projects, the applications are public information. The BWQC may need to consider landowner commitment and how it relates to prioritization of projects. N. Hicks-Tibbles suggested that application review is related to contracts and could qualify for executive session. He suggested the public should be asked to contribute their thoughts on locations that need to be addressed. In the chat, B. Waninger let BWQC members know CVRPC would open a discussion about grant applications and confidentiality with DEC.

A. Peal suggested starting small – website posts to discuss/advertise the BWQC and what it does.

C. Miller asked what the goal of public participation for this effort? B. Voigt noted that this is for the BWQC to decide and asked the members to consider what they think will translate to long-term success of the BWQC and what public participation means to the organizations they represent. B. Waninger asked: 1) Where can engagement with the public be value-added to BWQC process(es)? 2) Is the BWQC satisfied with meeting only the minimum requirements of Vermont's Open Meeting Law or do they want to exceed them? 3) Where do you need public engagement to do your job?

C. Miller suggested each entity discuss the types of engagement they perform to better identify the niche the BWQC might fill.

Upcoming training opportunities

B. Voigt mentioned upcoming training opportunities:

- Abenaki Perspective on Water (June 17th, 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM, tentative)
- TMDL & Target Setting Primer (video, slides)
- Finding Clean Water Projects in Your Town (video)
- Vermont Secretary of State – Vermont Government Transparency 101
- VASARA Records Training (TBD)

Agenda items for next meeting

- N. Hicks-Tibbles suggested a bylaws and rules subcommittee to further the draft document. B. Voigt suggested he add input from today's meeting and comments received then provide a draft to BWQC members for review before the next meeting. BWQC members agreed to this approach.
- B. Voigt suggested public participation as a topic to continue.
- A. Quackenbush suggested bios be provided with the meeting packet and elections be held.
- S. White suggested additional bylaw discussion on quorum related to amending the bylaw. For instance, in addition to % members present, does the BWQC wish to include additional requirements, such as sectors represented.
- C. Miller recommended additional details about alternates. For example, if the alternate is present is the organization represented?
- The next meeting is scheduled for June 16

Adjourn

N. Hicks-Tibbles moved to adjourn at 3:12 pm; A. Quackenbush seconded. Motion carried.