

Winooski River Basin Water Quality Commission Meeting Minutes – June 16, 2022

BWQC Members:

NRCDS		RPCs	
✓	Peter Danforth, Lamoille NRCDC	✓	Darlene Palola, CCRPC
✓	Emily Porter-Goff, Alternate	✓	Garret Mott, CCRPC, Alternate
✓	Remy Crettol, Winooski NRCDC	✓	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: Dan Albrecht (CCRPC), Karen Bates (VT DEC)

Call to Order & Roll Call

B. Voigt called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm and conducted a Roll Call. Quorum was present to conduct business.

Updates to agenda

None.

Public Comment

None.

Review & approve minutes from May 19, 2022 meeting

A. Quackenbush moved to approve the May 19, 2022 meeting minutes; P. Danforth seconded. Motion carried with G. Mott abstaining.

Discussion / Election of Chair & Vice-Chair

B. Voigt noted he had received biographies from most members. In response to questions from N. Hicks-Tibbles and D. Palola, he reviewed the role of and expectations for the Chair and Vice Chair – the Chair would help set the meeting

agenda and would be responsible for running the meetings. The CWSP would still be tasked with recording meeting minutes, performing tasks between meetings to support BWQC activities and work collaboratively to develop the agenda. He also noted that future meetings should include time to offer suggestions for future meeting agenda items and that if he were to receive new information that is pertinent to BWQC activities that he would communicate that to the Chair as they work to set meeting agendas.

D. Palola asked a question regarding project prioritization. B. Voigt discussed approaches for the project prioritization process including identifying shovel-ready projects or examining the full list of projects included in the Watershed Projects Database. Regardless of the approach, the project prioritization process will be ongoing for the duration of the BWQC.

N. Hicks-Tibbles asked the BWQC what other information they need to proceed with Chair and Vice-Chair elections. D. Palola asked if the BWQC could have a rotating Chair / Vice-Chair. B. Voigt suggested the BWQC consider one-year terms for officers instead.

B. Voigt asked P. Danforth to reflect on his experience as the Chair of another BWQC. P. Danforth responded that his other BWQC was progressing in a similar fashion to what has been discussed by the Winooski BWQC.

A. Quackenbush recommended B. Voigt reach out to members with Chair/Vice Chair experience and to members who might have interest in the positions so that there are candidates to consider at the July 2022 meeting.

G. Mott noted he had been the Chair of the CCRPC Board. He did not think it was an overwhelming workload, but did note that it does take some extra commitment. He agreed with the suggestion that Voigt reach out to perspective candidates prior to the next meeting and to communicate his findings to the BWQC.

N. Hicks-Tibble proposed interested members email B. Voigt and requested B. Voigt reach out to members individually so a vote can be held in July.

R. Crettol suggested members also submit member names for nomination as Chair to B. Voigt so that he can reach out to those members directly.

N. Hicks-Tibble is interested in the Vice Chair position, but also noted that if no one else was interested, he would be amenable to being Chair.

P. Danforth suggested R. Crettol as Chair. R. Crettol said he has considered it, but does not have experience in the role and would consider the role of Vice Chair if N. Hicks-Tibble was interested in serving as the Chair. G. Mott noted the Chair does not have to be knowledgeable, they need to "herd cats"; they listen, keep the discussion focused on the topic at hand and keep the meeting moving. M. Braun noted the Chair

also works with staff between meetings to ensure things stay on track, which can be time consuming. B. Voigt added that the Chair also needs to be able lead a conversation in an unbiased way. N. Hicks-Tibble said he currently is Chair of the Northfield Conservation Commission and was involved in the Student Bar Association during law school.

R. Crettol asked if M. Braun would be interested in either position. M. Braun declined.

P. Danforth moved to elect N. Hicks-Tibble as Chair and R. Crettol as Vice Chair; M. Braun seconded. B. Waninger noted the item had not been warned as an action item.

B. Voigt will check in with other members before the next meeting. G. Mott supported waiting until next month for elections.

The BWQC agreed to hold the vote for the next meeting.

Draft ANR Formula Grant Methodology – Information

B. Voigt requested feedback for ANR on the document. The document link is https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/erp/docs/2022-03-28_FINALDRAFT_FormulaGrantFundAllocations_PublicComment.pdf. He suggested the document helps the BWQC understand project benefits and establish priorities.

B. Voigt reviewed the document contents and described how water quality restoration formula grant funding was determined. He also demonstrated the use of the data dashboard and how it can be used to evaluate sector-level Phosphorous reduction requirements.

Review & Discuss Draft Winooski BWQC Bylaws

B. Voigt requested general comments on the draft bylaws. P. Danforth relayed that the Lamoille BWQC has three-year term limits for Chair and Vice Chair, with annual votes for each of these positions.

D. Palola recommended term limits of three years to provide for continuity (institutional knowledge).

R. Crettol highlighted a typo in Section 404: “to” should be “two”.

N. Hicks-Tibble suggested an addition to Section 904 discussing removal of BWQC members. The addition might say something to the effect that violation of Code of Conduct, significant violation of Code of Conduct or violation of bylaws may be referred to BWQC and the member’s appointing entity for removal of the member. N. Hicks-Tibbles will share suggested language with B. Voigt.

M. Braun asked for clarification of Section 404 language regarding who the “appropriate” entity might be. B. Waninger suggested “appointing” entity instead of “appropriate” entity. She also questions who has the authority to remove a member from the BWQC.

G. Mott asked if Section 404 applies to alternate members as well. Language clarifying the attendance requirements for alternates may be necessary. B. Voigt discussed the role of the alternate, noting they will be called on to participate under two scenarios – the member is unable to attend a meeting or the member has a conflict of interest and needs to recuse themselves from a decision. Following the clarification of roles, G. Mott does not think additional language regarding meeting attendance needs to be included.

D. Palola asked if Section 904 should cross-reference Article X – Conflict of Interest. G. Mott questioned the need for formalized language given the small group size and the ability for members to police themselves. N. Hicks-Tibbles indicated that the text he provides will state that anything that is a violation of a requirement of the bylaws shall be considered a violation of the Code of Conduct. He suggested the BWQC be enabled to report inappropriate behavior to a member’s appointing body and that the appointing body be enabled to remove a member mid-term due to inappropriate behavior.

D. Palola recommended language be added to Conflict of Interest (or Code of Conduct) related to soliciting and/or accepting gifts or gratuities from contractors or other parties that are or may be recipients of CWSP funds. This would be in addition to recusing oneself from decision-making. B. Voigt asked if the language “...financial or otherwise...” covered this? D. Palola will consider this.

The BWQC revisited the idea of creating a sub-committee to complete the bylaws. Members do not think this is necessary. In response to a question from B. Voigt, BWQC members expressed that they believe the bylaws are nearly ready for adoption. B. Voigt will send a final email requesting comments and set a deadline for submission. The intent will be to have a final discussion in July, and a vote to adopt.

B. Voigt discussed BWQC membership and proportionality of representation established in the law. He shared that the State is reconsidering this language in relation to the inclusion of indigenous perspective. The State may pursue changes to the law to say inclusion of this group would not trigger weighting of votes. Instead an indigenous member would have equal voting rights – increasing the size of the BWQC from nine members to ten.

Review & Discuss Public Participation Policy Ideas

B. Voigt briefly reviewed the draft Public Participation Policy. He noted that if the BWQC wanted to wait to adopt a full policy, it could adopt an interim policy. He shared a list of questions and requested feedback.

D. Palola suggested the document was fairly complete. She supported a policy similar to Northern Lake Champlain's document.

R. Crettol asked what a "community connector" is, and what the sources of the compensation would be. B. Voigt described the various sources for compensating members, depending on the seat. B. Voigt will seek a definition of "community connector" from the Northern Lake Champlain CWSP. The BWQC agreed this should be defined in the policy.

M. Braun said the public participation policy should include some outline of procedures for public engagement. This would assist the Chair and set expectations for the public for what their participation means. She provided scenarios of public participation in future meetings.

B. Voigt requested members provide recommended language for changes to the document and any final comments before the next meeting.

Upcoming Training Opportunities & Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- *Abenaki Perspectives on Water* to be held June 17, 2022 at 9:00 AM in person or virtually. Registration is requested.
- The next meeting is July 21, 2022. Agenda items include: Chair and Vice Chair election, bylaw final review and vote, communication and outreach policy, and sub-grant policy.
- D. Palola suggested an update regarding the CWSP.
- R. Crettol noted the Lamoille BWQC offered organizations the opportunity to discuss potential projects. He requested that K. Bates also discuss what she knows about potential projects.

Adjourn

G. Mott moved to adjourn at 3:04 pm; A. Quackenbush seconded. Motion carried.