

Water Planning Council Advisory Group

November 17, 2015
Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG or group) was held at the [Public Utility Regulatory Authority](#) (PURA), in New Britain, Connecticut.

Members Present:

Virginia de Lima	USGS CT Water Science Center
Len DeJong	Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition
John Hudak	South Central CT Regional Water Authority
Margaret Miner	Rivers Alliance
Vin Ringrose	Fisheries Advisory Council
Maureen Westbrook	Connecticut Water Company

Members by Phone:

Karen Burnaska	Endangered Lands Coalition/CFE
Josh Cansler	Southeastern CT Water Authority
Robert Silvestri	PSEG

Other Attendees:

Steve Anderson	DoAg
Tom Callahan	UConn
Marc Cohen	ASRWVA
Betsy Gara	CWWA
Dave Kuzminski	Portland
Eric Lindquist	OPM
George S. Logan	Aquarion
Gail Lucchina	PURA
Charles Rothenberger	Rome Smith & Lutz/Save the Sound
Martha Smith	West River Watershed Coalition
Lori Vitagliano	South Central CT Regional Water Authority
Betsey Wingfield	DEEP
Bruce Wittchen	OPM

Members Absent:

Gil Bligh	City of New Britain
Eric Brown	CBIA
James Butler	SCCOG
David Knauf	Darien Health Department
Denise Savageau	Town of Greenwich
Richard Sobolewski	OCC
Kevin Sullivan	Green Industry
Henry Talmage	CT Farm Bureau
Robert W. Wesneski	Avon Water Company
Bob Young	Middletown Water & Sewer Department

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:36 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes – August 18, 2015

A quorum was not present, so the minutes were not approved.

3. Old Business

a. State Water Plan – Project Management Plan Update

Maureen Westbrook asked Tom Callahan if there has been any change in his status as potential project manager and he said there is no change. Maureen said the WPC Steering Committee has decided to work with the [New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission](#) (NEIWPCC) and will develop a scope of work.

There was a discussion of the expected arrangements and Virginia de Lima said the Science & Technology Committee has expressed an interest in contributing to any request for proposals (RFP) that is developed. Margaret Miner said that the WPC's Dave LeVasseur had said in an email that they would like to hear from different groups in developing RFPs, but Margaret noted that Dave did not specifically mention the WPCAG. There was a discussion of the WPCAG not being mentioned and Virginia de Lima, later in the meeting, said she had emailed Dave during the original discussion and he responded that he had forgotten to also mention the WPCAG in his email.

b. Steering Committee Activities

This topic was covered by the previous discussion.

c. Discussion and Recommendations from WPCAG

Eric Lindquist said coding of the new water website is nearly complete and the website should be launched after Thanksgiving. Website content will come from others. Eric said one goal is for the website to mesh water management information from various agencies and he added that the website will include a calendar for events like this meeting. He noted that he will work on establishing a social media presence for the water planning effort after that. He also offered to circulate examples of the website design.

There was a discussion of the monitoring and response demands that will arise with a move to social media. Martha Smith recommended that, if not already considered, the website should link to the water planning information that Other States' Plans work group co-chair Pat Bresnahan has posted at her streamingwater.org website.

Eric mentioned that the address of the new site will be <http://www.ct.gov/water/site/default.asp> and added that a separate email account will be associated with it. There was further discussion of this initiative.

Margaret Miner thanked George Logan for the recent panel hosted at Fairfield University. She said the WPC's Jack Betkoski said such meetings will be organized around the state and there was a discussion of the panel. Len DeJong said there appeared to be about 150 people in the room, with 120 of them appearing to be students. There was a discussion of a video of the panel being available online and further discussion of what was said. Len DeJong said that, at some point, such forums must make the transition from debate to planning.

Maureen Westbrook said PURA's Nick Neeley had contacted her and Margaret and described his request for the WPCAG to identify its concerns regarding PA 14-163. She asked the rest of the members if there are any other concerns to discuss prior to resuming last month's discussion the approval process. Len DeJong asked if we have any additional information about project management, a request for proposals (RFP) or the planning schedule. Gail Lucchina said those will be on the agenda for the WPC's 12/1 meeting.

Margaret Miner said changes to the plan approval process should be adopted in the 2016 session, or in 2017 at the latest. She acknowledged a preference to demonstrate some progress before seeking the needed extension. There was a discussion of how to best illustrate the need to change the plan approval process specified in Sec. 1(d)-(f) of [PA 14-163](#). Maureen said that, under the adoption

process specified in PA 14-163, inaction by the full legislature equals approval and she noted some of the resulting concerns. She also noted that the legislature can change the plan without returning it to those involved in developing it.

Maureen Westbrook explained that WPCAG member Robert Silvestri had compared the review periods and deadlines specified by PA 14-163 against legislative session schedules and determined that the plan cannot be approved in 2018 as expected. John Hudak said that, under the worst case scenario, his calculation shows that the WPCAG's proposed revised process could result in approval being delayed until 5/2021. Robert Silvestri explained the differences between the alternating short and long legislative sessions and there was further discussion.

Maureen Westbrook explained a handout, *Proposed Approval Process for State Water Plan* (see Attachment 1) and there was a discussion of different scenarios that might arise with the suggested changes to the legislative approval process and of the prospects for gaining legislative approval. Margaret Miner recommended the process be further revised so that the plan would go back to the WPC if the committees of cognizance would not recommend the general assembly approve the plan. There was further discussion.

There was a discussion of the processes by which the General Assembly adopts the state's POCD and energy plan. Virginia de Lima suggested this item be tabled to allow John Hudak to do further analysis of the time required to adopt the plan with the proposed process and there was a discussion of how to explain this concern to the WPC. Maureen Westbrook noted that the original plan proposed in the 1960s did not require legislative approval, only its submittal to the legislature once approved by the agencies.

There was a discussion of the requirement for potentially duplicative hearing and that, while planning funding is available now, it might not be in the future. Margaret Miner recommended that the WPCAG list the concerns for consideration by the WPC and mention that the original plan did not require legislative approval. There was a discussion of whether it would be better to seek changes to the plan approval process in the 2016 or 2017 legislative session.

Virginia de Lima said the suggested comments to the WPC only address the plan approval process, but funding is critical. She noted that the Other States' Plans report includes an appendix regarding funding for plan development and implementation. After further discussion, Margaret Miner asked if it would be possible to move forward with the discussed concerns and asked if anyone objects.

There was a lengthy discussion of the extent to which the water planning effort will be limited by the state's freedom of information (FOI) restricting the release of water system information and of how this might be dealt with in beginning the planning process. There was a discussion of organizing a meeting of security experts, people who seek water information and representatives of agencies who respond to such requests for water information.

Referring back to the discussion of agenda item 3a, Virginia de Lima said she had emailed the WPC's Dave LeVasseur in response to the concern raised by Margaret Miner and Dave has responded that he had forgotten to also mention the WPCAG in his original email and that the WPC also wants to hear from this group. There was further discussion of how to present concerns regarding the impacts of water system security needs.

d. Policy Committee

Margaret Miner said the group met and has circulated a draft meeting summary.

e. Technical & Science Committee

Virginia de Lima said the group continues to meet every other week and explained that the data needs spreadsheet has been streamlined.

f. **Other States' Plans work group**

Virginia de Lima noted that some concerns have been expressed regarding whether Steering Committee members will commit the time necessary to review the work group's report rather than just relying on a brief overview of it. Betsey read an overview of the most recent meeting.

Bruce Wittchen referred back to an earlier comment by someone concerned that too much of the time spent in meetings is devoted to hearing what other groups are doing. He suggested that all group updates be compiled for people's review prior to meetings. There was a discussion of doing so and Virginia said there should be a change in expectations regarding what the various meetings are for.

4. New Business

a. **Other**

There was no new business

5. WPCAG Work Group Updates

b. **Drought Plan Work Group**

Virginia said she and OPM's Eric Lindquist are refining the drought response action spreadsheet and explained that the current approach is to consider the individual actions to be options, not requirements, at each drought stage. This will provide greater flexibility.

d. **Watershed Lands Work Group**

Margaret Miner said the group the group is reviewing the state's Green Plan, which ties into the state's POCD and the ongoing water planning. The group has also been discussing Class 1 and 2 land protections and decided to discuss the proposed natural gas pipeline expansion through MDC lands.

There was a discussion of DPH requirements for land protection, including the standards for previously-disturbed land and DPH's requirements concerning commercial and noncommercial alternative energy installations. Margaret said she has requested DPH's criteria in writing and noted that DPH submitted comments reflecting concerns regarding the proposed pipeline work on MDC lands.

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7. Future Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for 1:30 on Tuesday, December 15th, 2015, at PURA in New Britain.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM

Attachment 1: Proposed Approval Process for State Water Plan

