

# Water Planning Council Advisory Group

October 26, 2015  
Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG or group) was held at the [Department of Energy & Environmental Protection](#), in Hartford, Connecticut.

## Members Present:

Gil Bligh	<a href="#">City of New Britain</a>
Josh Cansler	<a href="#">Southeastern CT Water Authority</a>
Virginia de Lima	<a href="#">USGS CT Water Science Center</a>
Len DeJong	<a href="#">Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition</a>
John Hudak	<a href="#">South Central CT Regional Water Authority</a>
Margaret Miner	<a href="#">Rivers Alliance</a>
Robert W. Wesneski	Avon Water Company
Maureen Westbrook	<a href="#">Connecticut Water Company</a>
Bob Young	<a href="#">Middletown Water &amp; Sewer Department</a>

## Members by Phone:

Bruce Rich	<a href="#">Fisheries Advisory Council</a>
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## Other Attendees:

Steve Anderson	<a href="#">DoAg</a>
Marc Cohen	ASRWWA
Henry Link	EEC
George S. Logan	Aquarion
Gail Lucchina	<a href="#">PURA</a>
Virginia Mason	PRWC volunteer
Charles Rothenberger	Rome Smith & Lutz/Save the Sound
Nick Salemi	MDC
Martha M Smith	West River Watershed Coalition
Lori Vitagliano	South Central CT Regional Water Authority
Bruce Wittchen	<a href="#">OPM</a>

## Members Absent:

Eric Brown	<a href="#">CBIA</a>
Karen Burnaska	<a href="#">Endangered Lands Coalition/CFE</a>
James Butler	<a href="#">SCCOG</a>
David Knauf	<a href="#">Farmington Valley Health District</a>
Denise Savageau	<a href="#">Town of Greenwich</a>
Robert Silvestri	<a href="#">PSEG</a>
Richard Sobolewski	<a href="#">OCC</a>
Kevin Sullivan	Green Industry
Henry Talmage	<a href="#">CT Farm Bureau</a>

## 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:39 p.m.

## 2. Approval of Minutes – August 18, 2015

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2015 meeting. The motion was approved unanimously with Gil Bligh and Josh Cansler abstaining because they had not attended the meeting.

## 3. Old Business

a. State Water Plan – Project Management Plan Update

Maureen Westbrook said \$500,000 of bond funding has been authorized for this year and the state is looking at procurement requirements. The WPCAG and the CT Water Works Association (CWWA) both submitted comments to the WPC on considerations is selecting service providers for the process. This was included on the agenda for the WPC's October meeting and is expected to wait until the December meeting. Maureen said she hopes the issues that have been considered by WPC members before decisions on procurement are made even if they have not yet been discussed at a meeting.

Margaret Miner noted that the WPC wants the Steering Committee to have input on this, but what information will be provided to Steering Committee members and will they receive it in time to thoroughly review it? Gail Lucchina said this topic is the 1<sup>st</sup> item on the draft agenda for next week's Steering Committee meeting, but she doesn't know the details Margaret is seeking.

There was further discussion of the questions that have been raised. Virginia de Lima asked if all the agencies have designated a representative for this process, as discussed at a recent WPC meeting. There was further discussion of options being considered and of potential alternatives.

Maureen Westbrook noted that the WPC had asked the WPCAG to be prepared to discuss communications and outreach options at this month's WPC meeting, but the WPC had to postpone that discussion. At this point, should the WPCAG try to get more involved or wait for the expected consultant and/or project manager to get involved? She suggested it would be good to have OPM's Eric Lindquist attend a WPCAG meeting to further discuss online options and the website work he is doing. Bruce Wittchen said Eric had a conflict today but that he will ask Eric to attend the next meeting if he can.

Maureen asked if people felt the WPC would budget for communication and outreach services or look to the WPCAG handle communications. Len DeJong said the appropriate role for the WPCAG would be to help develop the scope of services for such activities. There was general agreement that it would be best for such activities to be part of someone's paid job and to not rely on volunteers.

Margaret Miner suggested that the communications and outreach process go through the state's Councils of Governments (COGs). There was further discussion of that possibility and of when the process should be underway and how it would be organized, such as the possibility of producing webinars to explain specific aspects of water planning.

There was a discussion of the reliability of the funding provided for water planning and whether it will be adequate. Members noted the amounts dedicated to developing water plans in other states and that the amounts made available in CT appear inadequate in comparison.

b. State Water Plan – Discussion of Approval Process

Maureen Westbrook distributed a document highlighting provisions specified in PA 14-163 regarding the plan approval process and there was a discussion of that process. Maureen mentioned WPCAG member Robert Silvestri's previous analysis of the time required to complete the process, relative to legislative session calendars. She also noted concerns that have been raised about the potential modifications to the plan once submitted to the legislature without further review by the WPC or others who participated in developing the plan.

There was a discussion of the process and Margaret Miner noted her concern that Sec 1(e) of PA 14-163 will lead to the plan being considered approved if the General Assembly fails to act on it. There was further discussion and it was noted that a year has already been lost in the plan development process, so the deadline may need to be extended. If the legislative review process requires

additional time, as suggested by Robert Silvestri's analysis, they can extend the deadline further themselves. There was further discussion of the legislative calendar and of the impacts of session length.

Maureen Westbrook distributed two handouts developed with Margaret Miner last session outlining a possible alternative approval process and explained that it may alleviate many of the concerns that have been raised. There was a discussion of the alternative process and how it compares to other processes, such as the regulation approval process. After further discussion, Maureen suggested that the WPCAG make recommendations to improve the process and noted that the WPC itself might want to extend the deadline.

There was further discussion of the alternative process and Maureen noted that the education and outreach efforts should not end with submission of the plan. There was further discussion of the timing of the legislative review process and whether the suggested alternative process can work. Margaret Miner and Maureen Westbrook discussed whether the WPCAG can provide such feedback at the upcoming WPC Steering Committee meeting and asked members to provide any feedback before then.

Bob Young asked if there is a consensus that the approval process should be changed, even if the specific changes to be made are not yet known. The group agreed there is a consensus. There was further discussion and the group decided to approach the WPC to find out how the WPCAG should proceed.

c. Steering Committee Activities

The group decided this topic was covered by the previous discussion.

d. Policy Committee

Margaret Miner said a number of questions have been raised to date and noted that Policy Committee Chair Bob Moore has asked if we can have a meaningful plan based on the existing data. Maureen Westbrook mentioned that the group has discussed diversion registrations.

There was a discussion of Steering Committee organization and processes. Virginia de Lima suggested that there be no more than one presentation per Steering Committee meeting and Margaret Miner added that Gene Likens requested a more predictable meeting schedule and also requested that information to be discussed be distributed further in advance of meetings. There was a discussion of how Steering Committee members are updated regarding various groups' efforts. Virginia said there should be a better understanding of the various groups' roles.

Margaret Miner asked if the WPCAG might develop tutorials for Steering Committee members who would like to be brought up to speed on topics outside their area of expertise. There was further discussion of the roles of the various groups and communications between them. Gail Lucchina recommended WPCAG members raise any concerns now, not later. Virginia Mason noted that, from the standpoint of the WPCAG developing education materials for Steering Committee members, it will be important to find out what would be helpful without asking members what they do not know. There was further discussion of how to approach that and of the clarification of group roles and of consultant selection. It was agreed that this would be suggested to the WPC and that WPCAG members could be resources for such tutorials.

e. Technical & Science Committee

Virginia de Lima said the group continues to brainstorm regarding data needs. She said the group has provided two lists of questions to the Policy Committee and noted the group has discussed flood management issues and people's desire for the plan to address water quality as well as water

quantity. Margaret Miner said addressing water quality raises additional issues. There was a discussion of whether such questions should be posed to the Policy Committee, the WPC or the Steering Committee. Len DeJong suggested the group share a draft of its data matrix as soon as possible.

**4. New Business**

**a. 2016 Legislative Initiatives for Consideration**

There was no discussion of legislative initiatives.

**5. WPCAG Work Group Updates**

**b. Drought Plan Work Group**

Virginia said the group has been discussing the drought plan triggers.

**d. Watershed Lands Work Group**

Margaret Miner said the group received an update on the state's Green Plan from DEEP. She mentioned that many people and organizations are concerned about the proposed pipeline expansion through MDC land. She added that DPH submitted comments and said a coalition is forming. She noted that there are many pipelines.

**6. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**7. Future Meeting Date**

The next meeting is scheduled for 1:30 on Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, at PURA in New Britain.

**8. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM*