

**Water Planning Council Meeting**  
**PURA**  
**December 1, 2015**  
**MINUTES**

**WPC Members present:** John Betkoski, [PURA](#); W. David LeVasseur, [OPM](#); Mike Sullivan, [DEEP](#).

Council member Blaschinski was absent.

**Attendees:** Tom Callahan, UConn; Margaret Miner, Co-Chair WPCAG; Maureen Westbrook, Co-Chair, WPCAG; David Radka, CWC; Robert Wesneski, Avon Water Co.; Lori Vitagliano, SCCRWA; Gail Lucchina, PURA; Bruce Wittchen, OPM, Corinne Fitting, DEEP, Betsey Wingfield, DEEP, Denise Ruzicka, DEEP; Cheryl Chase, DEEP; Dave Kuzminski, Town of Portland; Len De Jong, PRWC; Nick Salemi, MDC; Nick Neeley, PURA; Alicea Charamut, CRWC; Lori Mathieu, DPH; Chris Clark, Mohegan Tribe; David Knauf, Town of Darien; George Logan, Aquarion Water Co.

**Call to Order**

Council Chairperson Betkoski called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

**Approval of the October 13, 2015 Minutes**

Vice Chairperson LeVasseur made a motion to approve the October minutes and WPC member Sullivan seconded. There were no errors or corrections.

**Business**

- a. Update Regarding the NEIWPC MOU: Vice Chairperson LeVasseur advised that the draft MOU had been submitted to OPM's legal and administrative units. They made some minor tweaks. The Vice Chairperson stated that he had given the draft MOU to the WPC members and their comments are due in one week. He advised that after review and comment by the WPC, he would send the MOU to NEIWPC.
- b. Project Management: Tom Callahan advised that he is retiring in the reasonably near future and he informed the group that he is willing to continue on a volunteer basis. He would not be performing any project management duties in connection with the University of Connecticut. He advised that he awaits the Council's ideas about this proposal and he stated that if there is a kerfuffle about his participation, he would advise against his continuing. Council member Sullivan asked Tom if he could be more specific about his retirement date and Tom replied that it would be at the start of the new year. Chairperson Betkoski stated that Tom's announcement would be taken under advisement but he added that it would be difficult to pass up Tom's offer to continue on a volunteer basis. Council member Sullivan concurred and added that he has been an advocate of Tom continuing in this role. He has been very vocal about his support. Vice Chairperson LeVasseur concurred and expressed that Tom provides a level of understanding and continuity that would be very helpful. Chairperson Betkoski added that the timing is good since NEIWPC is about to come on board.

- c. Overview of Fairfield University Panel Discussion: Council Chairperson Betkoski informed the group that on November 16, 2015, a panel discussion was held at the University on the topic of How the State Water Plan Will Change Connecticut's Future. George Logan moderated and Denise, Maureen, Lori and Margaret were fellow panelists along with Representative Hampton. The Chairperson also explained that the event was videotaped and it will be used as a model event throughout the state. There were over 100 students present and an overflow room was needed. Maureen added that it was an interesting forum and there were interesting discussions. Margaret commented that it was unusually well moderated and it was a well-organized discussion. The Chairperson stated that the discussion that took place between Margaret and Lori was quite interesting and he gave kudos to George. The Chairperson also advised that he would soon be going to Yale to speak to Julie Zimmerman's class with Margaret and Larry Bingaman. Denise added that the event was very well done and Lori expressed thanks to John Herlihy for organizing the event.
- d. Legislative Proposals: Maureen stated that there was discussion at the WPCAG meeting regarding the current approval process. There is concern about what could happen if the Legislature fails to act. In that event, the plan is deemed approved. Maureen also stated that it could be by virtue of the calendar if they are not in session. Maureen added that right now the plan goes to the Joint Standing Committees and allows them to modify it without going back to the WPC. Maureen cautioned that there could be someone with a political agenda that could make major changes without WPC approval. The WPCAG would like the plan to come back to the WPC at least once if changes are recommended. Betsey Garra was going to look into other approval processes in other legislation. The WPCAG looked at the prior statute and it did not have an approval mechanism. Chairperson Betkoski recommended working with Nick Neeley to prepare something for the next meeting. Vice Chairperson LeVasseur suggested that they look at the Planning and Development approval process. It is a continuing committee. He stated that we can think about which committee would be the main committee. Mike said he is familiar with the legislative process and recommenced a chart to see what works well. Mike cautioned about changing something because it carries risks and we are only just developing the plan. Council Member Sullivan stated that it might make more sense to wait until we are about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through the plan. Maureen stated that she considered that option but believes it is cleaner to do something now since it is a blank slate. Chairperson Betkoski asked if Representatives Mushinsky and Hampton had been apprised. Maureen stated that they were both comfortable with WPCAG's ideas.

Maureen also raised the issue regarding Margaret's FOIA question. Maureen stated that it might be beneficial to have a one-day off-site session to go through it and try to resolve the issues. Margaret disagreed and stated that she thinks that there are a lot of people that do not understand the law. She contends that the Attorney General's office should have someone present as well as an agency with material that might be protected and also people involved in security matters. Margaret stated that it should be a two-day conference similar to what was done at Yale regarding stream flow. The first day dealt with science and the second day concerned the law. Margaret added that Virginia proposed a security conference and the WPCAG was enthusiastic about this idea. Lori stated that the WUCC process was starting next year and what is public information and what should be protected should be made

very clear. Lori said that the FOI subcommittee could not agree five years ago and they issued two reports that had very differing conclusions. Lori stated that we need to figure out what the major concern is about. If it is safe yield then that is the question and we can have an honest conversation. She stated that we should talk to the AWWA and find out what the threats are and if water systems are soft targets. Chairperson Betkoski asked who would hold this security conference. Margaret stated that Virginia proposed this and it would be difficult to arrange. Margaret stated that Virginia was thinking of high level security and cyber is one area where there is agreement. Council member Sullivan stated that we need to resolve issues like this issue more than any other and it needs to be dealt with now. He also stated that regardless of whether a conference is held, there is no reason not to delve into this matter. He stated that if it is a legislative proposal it can come from the WPCAG and conferences need not get in the way of examining the law. He also offered that you can hold a legislative public hearing. Council member Sullivan stressed that we need to engage on this now and go forward in agreement so that we have the public trust and have buy-in on what the plan actually is. Council member Sullivan sees this as a much more important issue than the approval process. Margaret concurred and said it is a critical issue even outside of the water plan. Maureen disagreed and said the approval is the first step first. She also feels that with regard to FOIA we need experts involved in security. Margaret said that people used to be able to get water supply plans for 20 years. She stated that they are concerned about water resources and they need access to information.

### **Other Business**

PURA has established a joint docket with DPH to look at acquisitions. We are looking to streamline the process and it may result in legislation. Chairperson Betkoski stated that we are just beginning this process.

Council Chairperson Betkoski informed people that if a scheduled meeting has an end time it's just blocking of the schedule and does not mean that the meeting will last that long.

Council Vice Chairperson LeVasseur advised that a reminder would be sent out to the Steering Committee to read the Other States Report and be prepared to discuss it at the next Steering Committee meeting.

Chairperson Betkoski asked if there was any report about the conference that was held recently in Denver. Corinne advised that 14 states were represented and many of them were western states. Corinne also remarked that many of the states were on their third, fourth or fifth iterations of their state water plans. The plans were all long term of about 20 years with periodic, usually five year, updates. She said that Connecticut was advised that it should know why it needs a plan and to stay focused. They heard many tag lines such as Arizona's "Keeping Arizona's Glass Half Full." Time and money have been set aside for graphics and different people are profiled to bring the plan into focus for everyone. She said that other states get the word out by issuing one or two page bulletins periodically to keep people interested. Corinne offered that California stated that they could advise us on how they handled the security issue and Oregon stated that will share their webinar which was very good and other states made similar offers. Denise stated that other states found that if there was stakeholder input early on then it was easier to accept the plan later on. She stated that if there is no early buy in then you are defending

a plan that people may feel is being forced on them. She stated that the conference was sponsored by the American Water resources Association. Denise also advised that another conference would be held next year.

Betsey stated that MDC and CPTV are working on a project. One episode aired a little over a week ago. The topic was combined sewer overflow and surrounding areas. Denise was featured in this as well as Commissioner Klee. It is now on the CPTV website for viewing and it is very well done.

Len advised that Colorado recently approved a state water plan in November and they have a very exciting website. Len encouraged everyone to review this plan. Len also reported in Virginia's absence that their Science and Technology Group has a robust database and tomorrow they are going to test it and use the Pomperaug watershed as a test to see how it works.

Maureen advised that CWC has launched a conservation incentive program. It is the Water Drop Challenge and if a customer's usage is reduced 10% over a one year period they will get a \$30 credit. Maureen said they are doing a lot of consumer education and customers must sign up by the end of the year.

### **WPCAG Update**

**Drought Work Group:** Margaret stated that the Drought Group is continuing to meet and is trying to figure out if there are other ways to look at declaring a drought.

**The Watershed Lands Group:** Margaret reports that they are feeling a sense of urgency due to the Kinder Morgan gas pipeline project that will cross MDC's West Hartford watershed lands.

### **Executive Session**

No executive session was needed.

### **Future Meeting Dates:**

It was announced that the next WPC meeting would be held at PURA on January 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by Gail Lucchina, PURA*

