Lake Champlain Executive Committee

Meeting Minutes

October 29, 2024 9:30AM – 12:30PM
(Virtual via Microsoft Teams)

ATTENDANCE:

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Pete Laflamme (Meeting Chair, for Julie Moore, VTANR), Nathalie Provost (Chair, Quebec MELCCFP), Yuan Zeng for Joe Zalewski (Chair, NYS DEC), Walt Lender (Chair, NY CAC), Pierre Leduc (Chair, Quebec CAC), Buzz Hoerr (Chair, E&O Committee), John Krueger (Chair, HAPAC), Neil Kamman (Chair, TAC), Jennifer Curran (USACE), Laura DiPietro (VT AAFM for Alyson Eastman), MaryJo Feuerbach (EPA R1), Antony Tseng (EPA R2), Susan Sullivan (NEIWPCC),

STAFF: LCBP: Eric Howe, Mae Kate Campbell, Kerry Crowningshield, Emma Dannenberg, Lauren Jenness, Elizabeth Lee, Corrie Miller, Ryan Mitchell, Grace Palmer, Meg Modley Gilbertson, Matthew Vaughan, Sonya Vogel, Jim Brangan, Erin Vennie-Vollrath (LCBP NY Coordinator NYS DEC), Sarah Coleman (LCBP VT Coordinator, VT ANR), Beth Whitmore-Stolar (NYS DEC/NEIWPCC/LCBP), Daniel Tremblay (Quebec MELCC), Bryan Dore (EPA R1), Theresa Vander Woude (EPA R1), Karyn Hanson (NYSDEC), Karen Stainbrook (NYS DEC)

GUESTS: Tom Berry (GLFC)

Teleconference and webinar open, networking **9:30AM**

MEETING BEGINS **9:45AM**

INTRODUCTIONS: Pete Laflamme (Vermont ANR) chaired this meeting. Eric welcomed everyone. Pete opened the meeting with a round of introductions.

Approval of Summary of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

ACTION ITEM: Approve Meeting Minutes from **September 10, 2024,** Executive Committee Meeting (tabled from previous meeting)

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: John Krueger
- Discussion on the motion: none
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: none

ACTION ITEM: Approve Meeting Minutes from **October 8, 2024,** Executive Committee Meeting

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: John Krueger
- Discussion on the motion: none
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: none

PUBLIC COMMENT **9:55 AM**

- None

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES **10:00 AM**

- None

Lake Champlain Steering Committee: Ad hoc working committee and 3rd party consultant update **10:15 AM**

The committee is actively working to review and address current operational issues. There is a shared consensus on avoiding any disruptive changes until the ongoing third-party review and internal evaluations are completed. Further meetings are planned, and the group is committed to maintaining smooth operations during this transitional period.

Grant Awards **10:30 AM**

Enter into Executive Session to consider grant awards. Pierre Leduc left the meeting due to a conflict of interest with several of the grant programs to be considered for award.

ACTION ITEM: Motion to enter into Executive Session to review draft Records of Decision for the Artist in Residence, Clean Water planning, large and small implementation, Healthy Ecosystems - Aquatic Organism Passage (BIL funding), and one outstanding award for the Land Acquisition and Conservation grant program (BIL funding).

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: John Krueger
- Discussion on the motion:
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: none

EXECUTIVE SESSION: The group moved into Executive Session.

Exit Executive Session.

OPEN SESSION: GRANT AWARD DECISIONS:

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE Artist-in-Residence (New York and Vermont) ROD as presented and discussed in Executive Session (2 awards, one NY and one VT)

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: John Krueger

- Discussion on the motion: none
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions:

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE Clean Water - Large Implementation ROD as presented and discussed in Executive Session

- Motion By: John Krueger
- Second by: Buzz Hoerr
- Discussion on the motion: Neil wanted to confirm that that there is one project that is not recommended for funding. Pete confirmed that the motion is for the ROD as discussed during Executive Session.
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions:

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE Clean Water - Small Implementation ROD as presented and discussed in Executive Session

- Motion By: John Krueger
- Second by: Buzz Hoerr
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions:

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE Clean Water - Planning ROD as presented and discussed in Executive Session and holding off on lower-ranked projects pending the availability of additional funds

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: John Krueger
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions:

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE Healthy Ecosystems - Aquatic Organism Passage (BIL-Funded) ROD as presented and discussed in Executive Session

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: John Krueger
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions:

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE award of the Land Acquisition project as presented and discussed in Executive Session.

- Motion By: Buzz Hoerr
- Second by: John Krueger
- Discussion on the motion: Buzz expressed his appreciation for Matt's efforts to answer the Committee's questions so we can confidently support this proposal.

- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions:

Additional Discussion

US Federal De minimis rate changes: There were some questions about the recently adjusted federal de minimis indirect rate for organizations that do not have a Federally Negotiated Indirect Rate Adjustment (NICRA). These changes went into effect for agreements and subawards executed after October 1, 2024. Eric noted that the LCBP Grand Isle team will be working with NEIWPCC Lowell staff to develop language to share with applicable grant recipients to inform them of this change, and allow them to adjust their budgets if they would like. That could potentially be an extra 5% of their budgets that could be applied to indirect. Staff will work with those contractors to incorporate changes as needed.

John praised a recent presentation, highlighting it as one of the best he had heard in years, demonstrating the program's effectiveness, especially the contributions of the staff. He mentioned that during the ad hoc committee discussions, the majority agreed to retain all current staff until the review processes were completed. John proposed a motion for the Executive Committee (EC) to support the same stance.

Buzz echoed John's sentiments, emphasizing the value of the current staff based on decades of experience. He supported the motion to avoid disruptions to staff stability, allowing the program to meet its commitments effectively.

Pete noted that this topic was discussed previously in Lake George and that the three Steering Committee chairs are leading the initiative for the Basin Program. He suggested that this matter should be primarily discussed by the Steering Committee, as several chairs were absent from the current meeting. Pete offered to relay the request to Julie and mentioned that the SC chairs could convene a separate EC meeting if needed.

John pointed out that the Steering Committee's next scheduled meeting would occur after a critical date, suggesting urgency for the Executive Committee's involvement.

Pete reiterated his willingness to bring the discussion to the Steering Committee chairs.

Neil acknowledged the concerns surrounding the topic, indicating that clarity from involved present parties would be helpful to address any uncertainties.

Susan expressed discomfort with the discussion in the presence of many team members, clarifying that NEIWPCC had no intention of altering staff positions. She emphasized NEIWPCC's commitment to the team's current processes and their ongoing work. Susan informed the Committee that she does not intend to make any staffing changes to the LCBP team until the 3rd Party consultant and ad hoc committee have completed their work at the end of December.

Neil highlighted the approval of 27 new awards, increasing the workload across all teams. He expressed appreciation for the efforts of the programmatic and financial staff involved.

Susan shared NEIWPCC's analysis, which showed that staff in the Grand Isle office were experiencing excessive workloads. She noted a possible recommendation of adding a minimum of five new staff members to address these pressures. Susan also mentioned asking Eric to analyze non-contractual work requirements. She stressed that the program's expansion necessitated a reevaluation of processes, recognizing that the processes might no longer be effective in their current form.

Eric briefly reviewed upcoming agendas for this Committee over the next few months:

ADJOURN **12:30 PM**

Meeting Outcomes:

Approval of Meeting summaries for: September 10, October 8

Grant Award Decisions for:

- Artist-in-Residence (New York and Vermont)
- Clean Water – Large Implementation
- Clean Water – Small Implementation
- Clean Water – Planning
- Healthy Ecosystems – Aquatic Organism Passage (BIL funding)