



Lake Champlain Executive Committee

FINAL Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2025 9:30AM – 12:30PM
(Via Microsoft Teams)

ATTENDANCE:

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

STAFF: LCBP: Eric Howe, Mae Kate Campbell, Kerry Crowningshield, Katie Darr, Colleen Hickey, Lauren Jenness, Elizabeth Lee, Corrie Miller, Ryan Mitchell, Grace Palmer, Meg Modley Gilbertson, Matthew Vaughan, Sonya Vogel, Anna Vold, Erin Vennie-Vollrath (LCBP NY Coordinator NYS DEC), Emily Bird (VT ANR) on behalf of Sarah Coleman (LCBP VT Coordinator, VT ANR), Sarita Croce (NEIWPC), Jim Brangan, Beth Whitmore-Stolar (NEIWPC/LCBP), Bryan Dore (EPA R1), Michele Fafette (EPA R2), Theresa Vander Woude (EPA R1)

GUESTS: Tom Berry (GLFC), Rebecca Ellis (Sen. Welch's Office), Ethan Hinch (Sen. Sanders' office), Karin Stainbrook (NYS DEC), Sylvain Dion (DGAAD, QC), Michael Laitta (IJC)

MEETING BEGINS

9:45AM

INTRODUCTIONS: Pete LaFlamme, VT ANR, Chaired this meeting. Pete opened the meeting with a round of introductions.

Approval of Summary of previous meeting

ACTION ITEM: Approve Meeting Minutes from December 10, 2024, Executive Committee Meeting

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

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES

10:00 AM

- Rebecca Ellis (Sen. Welch's office): Rebecca shared links in the meeting chat and brought to the committee's attention to the Presidential declaration of a national energy emergency which has many implications, including reducing permitting, and was accompanied by an Executive Order Releasing American Energy, Section 7. This may pause funding appropriated through IIJA (BIL), but it seems focused on electric vehicles. The language is broad.
- Ethan Hinch (Sen. Sanders' office): Ethan noted the meaning of the word disbursement is yet to be defined, as is the interpretation of that term by the president. It could mean that new grants will not be awarded or grants could be withheld. It will take some time for the new Executive Orders to be interpreted and guidance to be shared.
- Yuan noted that there was also an Executive Order issued to end the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion program. She asked how that may affect funding and programs. Rebecca shared that generally the new Executive Orders indicate that there would be no further spending on any programs noted in the orders.
- Ethan: The Continuing resolution for FY25 funding expires on March 14. Unclear what will happen between now and then. Senators Sanders and Welch continue to push for maximum funding to LCBP in the appropriations bills.

PUBLIC COMMENT

9:55 AM

- None.

FY24 LCBP Budget Review

10:15 AM

LCBP Key Functions DRAFT Budget - Eric Howe

- Eric provided an overview of the draft LCBP budget cycle, focusing on the key functions budget, which includes staffing and office support. While funding levels remain uncertain, planning is based on level funding from the EPA 120 appropriation. He walked through the draft budget, noting it may change due to Executive Orders.
- Michele suggested adding columns to better display FTEs and net changes for clarity, which Eric agreed to implement. Neil inquired about how FTE values are determined, and Eric confirmed they are based on actual employee values rather than a fixed amount. Neil also proposed front-loading funds for the BIL AOP restoration position to secure investment amid governance changes, a suggestion Eric agreed to consider.

PROPOSAL REVIEWS

11:00 AM

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

ACTION ITEM: Motion to enter into Executive Session:

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: Antony Tseng
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: Pierre Leduc recused himself

FY24 Education & Outreach Small Grants (funded by FY24 EPA, GLFC)

Exit Executive Session.

GRANT AWARD DECISIONS:

ACTION ITEM: Conditionally **APPROVE** Education and Outreach Small ROD as presented and discussed in Executive Session

- Motion By: Buzz Hoerr
- Second by: MaryJo Feuerbach
- Discussion on the motion: none
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: Pierre Leduc

There was a request by Executive Committee members to have an opportunity to review proposals that were not recommended for funding. The team will be sure to provide space for all proposals in future reviews.

FY 2025 BIL Priorities review

- Eric provided an update on BIL funding recommendations, noting that \$32M has been allocated to date, with \$22.5M considered by the SC and \$1.5M used for EPA administration. He reviewed program grants under consideration, excluding updates from a new Executive Order (EO). The SC was asked to determine whether to continue with the current funding approach or reallocate resources.
 - Tree Nursery Grants: MaryJo asked for clarification on the \$1M allocation, and Eric explained it remains TBD until proposals are reviewed. Neil suggested confirming continued demand with partners; Meg noted that our partner agencies confirmed ongoing interest. The RFP closes in March.
 - Land Acquisition & New York Wetland Restoration: Eric explained that prior funding was set aside, but a second RFP was delayed to give LCBP time to assess demand. Erin noted that initial lack of interest from New York applicants to the Wetland Restoration program led to adjustments in future funding. Neil emphasized coordinating with both NY and VT for proposal reviews.
- Funding Freeze Impact: Tom highlighted that the new Executive Order froze BIL funds, potentially affecting availability next year.
- Eric concluded by resharing the proposed budget and confirming general Executive Committee approval while noting that adjustments could be made as RFPs are reviewed in the coming months.

FY2024 RFP priorities for Public Access Funds

- Sonya provided an overview of the efforts to support public access funding, detailing the survey conducted with partners to determine the best approach for fund distribution. Based on feedback, an RFP was identified as the preferred method, though other options remain open depending on interest levels. She reviewed the draft RFP, including

priority areas, outcomes, and scoring criteria. Matt reiterated that the funding had been previously approved and sought EC feedback on the direction.

€ Key discussion points included:

- **South Lake Access:** Neil supported the CAC recommendation for South Lake access, suggesting options such as land acquisition or easements. Matt noted that large infrastructure projects may be beyond the RFP's scale but could be prioritized in future funding cycles.
- **Funding Allocation:** The approved budget is \$400,000, though it remains undecided if all will be allocated to the RFP. Neil emphasized the importance of focusing on access and expressed interest in how financial assistance components will be structured.
- **Clarifying RFP Priorities:** Neil raised concerns about the broad scope of some priorities, particularly around education and outreach (E&O) and infrastructure improvements. Sonya clarified that these priorities were based on partner input, including adaptive sailing programs and extended seasonal engagement for underserved communities. Pete suggested refining these areas before a formal vote in February.
- **Overlap with Water Quality Programs:** Emily inquired about potential overlap with clean water restoration projects. Matt clarified that the RFP focuses on recreational access while requiring environmental impact mitigation strategies. Emily suggested considering follow-up access projects for previously implemented efforts.

€ The committee agreed to refine the RFP language and review the revised draft before a formal vote. Neil, Emily (or Sarah), and Erin volunteered to review the updated version.

Meeting Wrap-Up: Eric reminded the group that the next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for February 11 and will include discussions on the FY25 budget, grant programs, economic assessments, organizational support, workforce development, and proposed TMDL tasks from NY and VT.

ADJOURN

12:30 PM