Lake Champlain Executive Committee

Meeting Summary

January 22, 2026 9:45AM – 1:00PM
(Via Microsoft Teams)

ATTENDANCE:

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Bryan Dore (Chair, EPA R1), Yuan Zeng for Joe Zalewski (NYS DEC), Julie Moore (VTANR), Karina Dailey (Chair, VT CAC), Buzz Hoerr (Chair, E&O Committee), Susan Evans McClure (Chair, HAPAC), Neil Kamman (Chair, TAC), Susan Sullivan (NEIWPCC), Brian Steinmuller (NYS Dept. Ag & Markets), Daniel Tremblay (MELCCFP for Stefanos Bitzakidis), Antony Tseng (EPA R2)

STAFF: LCBP: Eric Howe, Mae Kate Campbell, Kerry Crowningshield, Lauren Jenness, Elizabeth Lee, Ryan Mitchell, Meg Modley Gilbertson, Matthew Vaughan, Erin Vennie-Vollrath (LCBP NY Coordinator NYS DEC), Sarah Coleman (VT ANR), Sarita Croce (NEIWPCC), Jim Brangan, Beth Whitmore-Stolar (NEIWPCC/LCBP), Anna Vold, Emma Dannenberg, Ali Jackson; Michele Fafette (EPA R2), Theresa Vander Woude (EPA R1), Karyn Hanson (NYSDEC); Kevin Burke (VTANR)

GUESTS: none

MEETING BEGINS 9:45 AM

INTRODUCTIONS: **Bryan Dore, EPA R1,** chaired this meeting. He began the meeting with a round of introductions.

Approval of Summary of previous meeting

ACTION ITEM: Approve Meeting Minutes from **December 8, 2025,** Executive Committee Meeting

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: Julie Moore
- Discussion on the motion: none
- Vote: all in favor
- Abstentions: none

PUBLIC COMMENT 9:55 AM

- No members of the public present.

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES 10:00 AM

- None present

DRAFT FY2026 LCBP/CVNHP BUDGET 10:15 AM

LCBP Key Functions Review

- Eric presented a draft of the FFY2026 LCBP/CVNHP budget (pre-appropriations) that will be further developed and presented during the April SC meeting. Section 120 funding proposed at $25.5M. EPA FY26 base at $17.5M, EPA 2016 TMDL at $8M, EPA IIJA at $7.522M, NPS at $500,000, and GLFC at $1.8M for a total of $35.322M

Eric reviewed the Key Functions budget covering staffing coordination, OFA goals, and program management. No new staff positions were proposed, and the structure largely mirrors prior years. Updates include new columns showing the percent change from FY25 to FY26, differences from the original FY26 request, and a Draft Task cumulative total. An FTE adjustment was made to CVNHP & CABN coordination to better support Thriving Communities/CAC work.

Neil questioned whether the VT Coordination FTE and the LTM budget line were accurate. Matt said the core project budget summary better explains the changes, noting that while costs rose again this year, they remain lower than several years ago, when a large spike occurred to cover a funding gap related to the VT Environmental Laboratory that analyzes the LTM samples.

Sarah flagged that VT coordination should reflect 3 FTE rather than the 1.8 listed. Yuan asked why the line shows about a 20% increase despite no added staff. Sarah explained the change reflects sustained need and capacity for grant management and coordination in Vermont, and that earlier budgets had been set too low at roughly 2 FTE. Eric confirmed the increase was just under one full FTE and agreed the topic should return for further discussion at a future meeting.

State Line Items (tabled from December SC Meeting)

- Sarah Coleman reviewed the four FFY26 VT State line item requests summarized in the meeting files.
    - Ag Riparian Buffers - $200K
    - Flood resilience - $250K
    - Regulatory SW - $2M
        - Karyn asked for more detail about the underlying need, the types of projects envisioned, and how public-private partnerships would function in practice.
        - Sarah explained that Vermont’s 3-acre stormwater general permit affects many residents, HOAs, and municipalities. The state is developing funding programs to address compliance in a way that is accessible and efficient, recognizing the complexity of the regulatory environment and the limited borrowing capacity of many affected entities.
        - Sarah noted that the existing public-private partnership model is an older initiative currently advancing seven projects that link municipalities with private lands to meet permit requirements. Future efforts would build from

that approach but may be broader and more universal given the scale of need. She also highlighted ongoing demands in MS4 communities and described a concept to pair adoption of regulated sites with funding support so communities can meet phosphorus control and flow restoration obligations

- Beaver Wetland Conservation - $263,384

EO Line Items (tabled from December SC Meeting)
Ryan reviewed the task summary from the meeting materials, noting it reflects input from both LCBP staff and the E&O Committee.

Ryan estimated roughly 30 videos had been produced over the past several years, with a mix of lengths, and said recordings of meetings and events would likely be included. Eric highlighted the Artist-in-Residence program, citing the Water is Life painting, and noted it effectively sparks conversations about water quality, local environments, and cultural heritage.

Neil asked whether Stream Wise was included within the property assessment work; Ryan confirmed it is. Neil also requested clarification on the distinction among Unified Stormwater, Lakewise, Streamwise, and VTDEC Lakewise. Lauren explained that VTDEC Lakewise funds Vermont staff conducting assessments, but coordination with LCBP ensures there is no unnecessary overlap.

Land Conservation Review, Matthew Vaughan
Matt presented on the RFP process, program development, and the projects selected for 2025.

Neil asked whether another funding round is envisioned. Eric noted this is the second round; depending on executive session discussions and Steering Committee direction, it could be the last, though a third round remains possible. If pursued, it would likely occur later this year to allow enough time for completion before the funding agreement ends in 2030.

Yuan asked whether projects from the first round were fully funded by the Basin Program or supplemented by other sources. Matt replied that awards covered full project costs, though some recipients also brought matching funds.

Enter into Executive Session

ACTION ITEM: Motion to enter into Executive Session to consider grant awards

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: Buzz Hoerr
- Discussion on the motion: none
- Vote: all in favor
- Abstentions: none

Exit Executive Session.

OPEN SESSION:

<u>ACTION ITEM:</u> Motion to postpone Land Conservation decision until February 12, 2026 Executive Committee Meeting to allow for more discussion surrounding award decisions

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: Brian Steinmuller
- Discussion on the motion: none
- Vote: all in favor
- Abstentions: none

<u>ACTION ITEM:</u> APPROVE the Record of Decision for Education and Outreach- Small grants

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

UPDATES (if time allows)

- **N/A**

ADJOURN **1:00 PM**