

*Stormwater Coalition of Albany County
Board of Directors*

**Friday, January 15, 2021
Skype for Business – Videoconference
8:38 am to 10:08 am**

MINUTES

Board of Directors Attending:

Lucas Rogers, Albany County (Liaison to County Executive's Office and Board alternate)
Dennis Feeney, Albany County
Neil O'Connor, City of Albany
Paul Penman, Town of Bethlehem
Garry Nathan, City of Cohoes (Note Taker)
Peter Barber, Town of Guilderland
Sean Ward, Village of Green Island, Chairperson (alternate)
Maggie Alix, Village of Green Island (Board alternate)
Paul Reuss, Village of Menands
Frank Fazio, Village of Voorheesville and University at Albany – SUNY
David Dressel, City of Watervliet
Joe LaCivita, City of Watervliet (Board alternate)

Also Present:

Nancy Heinzen, Coalition Stormwater Program Director
Adam Wands, Town of Colonie
Katelyn Reepmyer, Town of Colonie

Absent:

Doug LaGrange, Town of New Scotland

I. Appointment of Board of Directors chairperson and alternate (IMA/MOU Section 5.4)

Sean Ward explained that John Dzialo, chairperson of the Coalition Board retired from the Town of Colonie. Various Board members acknowledged John's contribution to the Stormwater Coalition and thanked him for his service.

Given John's retirement, Nancy Heinzen explained that because Sean Ward was appointed alternate chair of the Coalition Board last January, to prepare for this Board meeting she reached out to him. Sean Ward explained that he was willing to temporarily serve as Chair but that the Board needed to select a chairperson and alternate.

Nancy Heinzen explained the role of the Chair and its importance to the Coalition and some of the responsibilities. A discussion followed but there was no Board action.

II. Approval of November 13, 2020 Board Minutes

A motion to approve the November 13, 2020 Board Meeting minutes was made by Garry Nathan and seconded by Paul Reuss. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Reports

A. Coalition Administration

1. 2020 Budget Report (EOY Forms-Enc's/Reserve; SW Prog Tech – Reimburse 4 MS4s –2020 Svce Hrs)

Nancy Heinzen reviewed the status of four salary lines in the 2020 budget pointing out that the County hiring freeze due to Covid resulted in no new hires in 2020. Only one salary was active, hers and that salary line was fully spent down.

She explained that funds remaining in the GIS Coordinator line (\$65,000) were generally covered by the County (County Share/General Fund) as part of the Staff Support Supplement language in the Coalition IMA.

Funds remaining in the Coalition Outreach Specialist line (\$18,720) were covered by member dues. As such these unspent funds should roll into the Coalition reserve.

Funds remaining in the Coalition Stormwater Program Technician line, which includes a base of \$18,720, plus social security + retirement for a total of \$23,328 were covered by “Additional Fees” from the City of Cohoes, Town of New Scotland, Village of Menands, and City of Watervliet.

This past summer, Nancy Heinzen provided some of these Technician services for a total cost of \$5,776. This leaves \$17,552 to reimburse back to the municipalities if they so choose. Nancy Heinzen asked if they'd like to be reimbursed. All present said, yes.

She explained that once the 2020 reserve balance is set, funds from the reserve will need to be transferred to the 2021 Miscellaneous Contractual line. Then, checks can then be cut to each municipality.

Nancy Heinzen noted unspent funds in other budget lines, pointing out that several were a consequence of the hiring freeze. There was minimal demand for office supplies, no travel reimbursements, and minimal printing.

Unspent funds in the Miscellaneous Contractual line will be encumbered (\$5318.50) and applied to contract costs associated with our VHB contract for GIS services.

There is a \$32,413.76 charge for Hospital and Medical insurance, which for one staff person is excessive. Typically, insurance costs are estimated at 30.6% of base salary. For the Coalition staff person, that should in the range of \$20,487 of (30.6% x \$66,952)

Sean Ward mentioned that health insurance overcharges have been a problem off and on and advised Nancy Heinzen to look into the specifics, correct if possible and include Lucas Rogers in any emails.

2. 2021 Budget Report (2021 Invoices)

Invoices for member dues were sent our early January and checks have been received from the Village of Voorheesville and City of Cohoes. Nancy Heinzen pointed out an error in the amount of funds transferred from the reserve to cover the 2% raise in her salary voted in by the Board at the November meeting. It should have been \$25,603, not \$23,810 as indicated in the budget report. Management and budget agreed to make the correction as part of a routine clean up RLA later in January.

Nancy Heinzen pointed out the two salary lines (GIS Coordinator and Coalition Stormwater Program Technician) which are now the focus of a Coalition hiring effort.

3. Verizon Wireless Data Plan Decisions - Drop/Transfer Update (Telephone line)

4. ESRI ArcGIS Online Licenses (End Date 2/6/2021) **Drop/Transfer Update** (Computer Supplies line)

Nancy Heinzen explained the contents of a spreadsheet which itemized for each Coalition member whether or not they had dropped the Verizon Wireless data plan paid for by the Coalition in 2020 or taken over payment. Of the 12 data plan lines from 2020, 3 were terminated, 6 were transferred to municipalities, 3 were retained by the Coalition for anticipated staff and of those 2 were temporarily deactivated.

The same spreadsheet included information about ArcGIS Online subscriptions to expire February 6, 2021. Some of the municipalities will take over these subscriptions using their existing municipal ESRI licenses, others will rely on Coalition staff to use the ArcGIS Online technology on their behalf, while others may need to purchase a subscription.

Nancy Heinzen acknowledged that managing the continued use of this technology will depend on our ability to hire a GIS Coordinator. In the interim, VHB is available to provide assistance.

5. VHB SwIM/GIS Services Contract (Services used/\$ Remaining)

Nancy Heinzen explained that \$17,467 remains of our \$18,480 contract with VHB for SwIM and ArcGIS Online services. She mentioned recent services received from VHB which included a set of questions about converting SwIM to the ArcGIS online platform; the technology and software needs related to that task; and a potential role for the GIS Coordinator. She is reluctant to use VHB services unless completely necessary. It can get expensive.

6. ACWPD ORI Kit Service Contract (Decision/Status)

The Coalition has a contract with the Albany County Sewer District (signed January 28, 2012) which details services provided by the Sewer District to the Coalition at what cost. The services generally consist of re-stocking kits used to conduct stormwater outfall inspections and running chemistry tests on water samples as needed.

Over the years, staff from the Sewer District, now called the Albany County Water Purification District (ACWPD), who were familiar with the ORI Kit arrangement have since left and when explaining these kits to new staff, it became clear that the actual ACWPD lab testing capability now had little to do with the type of water testing needed for the MS4 Permit program. Working Group representatives also explained at a recent monthly meeting that they preferred to have the ORI Kit contents housed at the Coalition office and restocked from there, not the ACWPD.

Rather than continue to pay for ACWPD services (kit management and water tests) contracting for lab services from the vendor Adirondack (ADK) Environmental Services and managing the ORI kits in house seemed to make more sense.

There is currently ~\$2000 available in the Coalition budget for water testing services and kit supplies. To date, water testing has been infrequent and assuming that would be the case going forward this \$2000 would according to the prices provide by ADK cover the cost of ~6 water sampling events where 9 industrial parameters are tested and ~ 5 fecal coliform tests. Expired test strips could be replaced by the Coalition in house.

Frank Fazio made a motion to terminate the Albany County Sewer District contract and approve the new vendor ADK Environmental which was seconded by Paul Reuss and passed unanimously.

7. Coalition Contact List – Updates (Staff changes/Retirements)

Nancy Heinzen reviewed her most current Coalition Contact List which notes who serves on the Coalition Board of Directors and Working Group. She pointing out recent retirements, upcoming retirements, and who was in the wings now to take over. Where clear Board representation was missing, she asked the municipality to clarify who was on the Board and Working Group and how they were selected. She also explained the various ways municipalities can appoint Board representatives.

B. Other

1. NYS Environmental Facilities – Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP)

(Applications due 2/12/2021, 4pm. Coalition Letters of Support?)

Grant applications for the NYS Environmental Facilities – Green Innovation Grant Program

are due February 12, 2021. Nancy Heinzen asked Board members if any MS4/municipalities anticipated applying for funds and did they want a letter of support from the Coalition. The City of Cohoes; University at Albany; and City of Albany asked for a support letter and Frank Fazio agreed to share a letter from the Coalition used previously by the University which could be used as a template for these support letters.

2. American Public Works Association (APWA) – New York Chapter

(Capital Branch Awards Program – Citation for Exemplary Service to Public Works)

Nancy Heinzen mentioned receiving an email from the APWA – New York Chapter about their awards program. Given John Dzialo’s retirement and time he spent helping the Coalition she thought he might be eligible for the “Citation for Exemplary Service to Public Works”. She asked the Board if they would like to nominate John Dzialo for the award. If so, she would prepare the paperwork on behalf of the Stormwater Coalition.

Joseph LaCivita made a motion to submit the nomination which was seconded by Garry Nathan and passed unanimously.

3. NYSDEC MS4 Permit Update

NYSDEC appears to be moving closer to releasing the draft MS4 Permit. The actual wording of an email from Carol Lamb-Lafay to Nancy Heinzen dated January 6 reads, “getting closer to a draft permit for executive review. No info on timing but will be re-noticed for comment once we get executive approval.”

IV. Discussions/Decisions

A. Hiring Update/Considerations – Outreach, Applications, Interviews, Decisions (Repeat?). Set Up and Training.

1. Coalition Stormwater Program Technician

2. GIS Coordinator (Interview questions & answers; immediate needs; long term goals?)

3. Covid Realities/Guidance (Indoors/Jan-April/Max Social Distanc’g. Outdoors/April-October. 80% vac-12/2021?)

January 15, 2021 is the submission deadline for the Coalition Stormwater Program Technician and GIS Coordinator positions. Job posting efforts included posting on INDEED; Handshake postings (17 colleges and universities); group emails to local and Hudson River contacts and organizations; posting on the Coalition website; and posting on the NYS GIS Clearinghouse listserve (GIS Coordinator position).

To date, 4 complete applications were received for the Tech position and 5 applications for the GIS Coordinator position. A complete application includes the County application, transcript, and resume. Additional applications were submitted earlier today, but not in this tally. Several were not residents of Albany County which could be a problem given residency requirements.

Two interview teams, one for the Stormwater Program Tech position, the other for the GIS Coordinator position will review the applications, decide who to interview, and participate in the interview. Due to Covid social distancing mandates, these will be conducted remotely using the Teams videoconference platform. The application review process will start next week.

The Stormwater Program Tech interview team includes: Paul Reuss (Village of Menands); Jeremy Cramer (Town of New Scotland); Dave Dressel (City of Watervliet)l Garry Nathan (City of Cohoes).

The GIS Coordinator interview team includes: Laura DeGaetano (Albany County); Joe Seman-Graves (City of Cohoes), and possible Joe Cleveland (Town of Bethlehem).

Nancy Heinzen will organize and participate in all interviews.

Depending on how the interviews proceed, down the road it's unclear how best to train staff during Covid. Social distancing is likely to remain a concern, but there are also unknowns related to vaccinations and the potential spread of the virus. Safety remains a top priority and more work outdoors eventually will be helpful.

B. Stormwater Coalition –Annual Report 2020 ‘Save Colonie’ Comments

1. Review content of Coalition Response
2. Follow-up with Town of Colonie & Save Colonie

Nancy Heinzen explained events to date regarding the Save Colonie comments.

In May and June of 2020, the Town of Colonie citizen group submitted comments pertaining to the Town of Colonie MS4 Permit Annual Report (AR2020) which covers the reporting period March 10, 2019 to March 9, 2020. The comments were sent to the Stormwater Coalition of Albany County via the Coalition website email address and cc'd to the Town Supervisor, among others.

Several of the comments referenced Stormwater Coalition led activities which involved the Town of Colonie and in an effort to clarify the purpose and substance of these activities, Nancy Heinzen provided text for John Dzialo to review, use, drop, or keep as needed. Before retiring, he reviewed that text but unclear is what to do with it.

Although the Coalition received the Save Colonie comments, the Coalition is not a MS4 Permit operator, but at the same time the Coalition provides distinct MS4 Permit services to the Town. Board members raised a variety of questions, but no consensus was reached regarding how best to proceed.

Representatives from the Town of Colonie participating in the meeting agreed to follow up with others from the Town with the intention of providing some direction for the Coalition.

Garry Nathan made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Frank Fazio. The motion passed unanimously.

NEXT BOARD MTG: Friday, March 19, 2021, 8:30am – 10:00am, videoconference.

These minutes were approved by the Coalition Board of Directors at the March 19, 2021 meeting.