



Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance

Cattaraugus, Chautauqua and Erie Counties

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LEWPA Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 1:00 pm

Webex

Voting Board Members present: Cattaraugus: Megan Boberg (Chair) and Crystal Abers; Chautauqua: Cassandra Pinkoski (Secretary), Zen Olow, and Rebecca Wurster; Erie: Mark Gaston (Treasurer) and Bonnie Lawrence.

Others in attendance: Joanna Panasiewicz (Coordinator), Adam Hopper, Dave McCoy, Carol Markham, Stephany Tatarevich, Ryan Elliott, Jim Lehnen, Aimee Clinkhammer, Don Zelazny, and Kim Peck.

1. **Call to order** by Chair M. Boberg at 1:03 pm
2. **Welcome and roll call** by J. Panasiewicz
3. **Approval of the January 11, 2022 meeting minutes.** A motion to approve the minutes as emailed to the group was made by M. Gaston, was seconded by M. Boberg, and was carried.
4. **Financial report by Treasurer** since November 2022 meeting. Treasurer M. Gaston reported that the account had \$8,186.54 at the last report. There was an administrative fund transfer including \$7,000 for Community Rating System work to pay Coordinator salary, \$454.34 for water quality sampling, and \$2.08 each to Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) for previous close-out miscalculations. \$25,573.72 was paid from Erie County as reimbursement for SVAP work on watershed management plan into the LEWPA account then out again for expenses of salaries, travel, and mileage. This is from NYS Department of State funds. Final reimbursement from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) EPF funds for the first contract was \$50,000 of which \$25,000 went to reimburse Erie County SWCD for covering the final county pay-outs. Final LEWPA account balance is \$25,726.07 which includes \$25,000 allocated for Coordinator position and remaining funds from previous funding that is used for LEWPA meeting expenses.

A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as read was made by B. Lawrence was seconded by C. Abers and was carried.

5. Outreach

- a. **Winter #SaltSmart campaign** – Freshie the Frog account was created and posts have begun on Instagram and Facebook. Adam Hopper is the new LEWPA intern and was going to take some photos to use to promote www.tinyurl.com/roadsaltstory. This all started because preliminary data from the USGS water sampling showed elevated chloride in Crooked Brook and Ellicott Creek and we are trying to prevent some of the chloride extremes seen elsewhere in the country. Salt cannot be easily removed from the water and has potentially detrimental impacts on wildlife.

- b. Municipal Training and checklist – J. Panasiewicz will send to Highway Supervisors, Supervisors/ Mayors, Clerks, Planning/Zoning Board members, and Code Enforcement Officers. Chautauqua County contacts came from Dave McCoy and Rebecca Wurster. Cattaraugus and Erie Counties will send to their respective lists. Municipal Training website can also be sent to Erie County Water Quality Committee, Erie County Environmental Management Council and WNY Storm Water Coalition.

J. Panasiewicz received checklists used by Erie County Planners from One Region Forward used for reviewing projects from urban, suburban, and rural communities. She and A. Hopper will work to add some additional items to the checklists (SWCD resources, flooding considerations, additional water quality land use considerations, etc.) to checklists and send around for comment.

- c. #WNYEarthDayChallenge – B. Lawrence explained the idea of challenge for the public and schools to learn about environmental organizations and issues by doing activities during Earth month for prizes. J. Panasiewicz will send invitation to non-profits or municipalities to participate and assist with challenge planning. LEWPA will have folks visit website and watch Watershed 101 video and find out about their waterway using EPA widget at www.tinyurl.com.lewpany.

6. EPF funding

- a. Contract update – J. Panasiewicz reported there were some execution edits by DEC and LEWPA but the contract has some NYS signatures on it and is moving. M. Gaston will submit a voucher for 75% upfront costs to be processed once contract in place, hopefully before the black-out period to try to avoid spring construction delays.
- b. Work Plans – Edits were made based upon the January special LEWPA Board meeting discussion and were sent to DEC. DEC sent back comments. Year 2.1 edits have all been submitted and approved. J. Panasiewicz working on 2.2 edits to be submitted this week hopefully. They are mostly needing more explanation language.

7. EPA beach green infrastructure project update – M. Gaston reported that they are evaluating how to finalize the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funded beach projects. Need to clean debris and touch up plantings with Erie SWCD staff to save costs. R. Elliott drafted a lessons learned document for future shoreline GI projects.

8. Projects for implementation discussion – Discussion occurred on finding potential areas for nature-based solutions before areas become an infrastructure problem. Calls come to SWCDs when conditions are bad, not small issues, so it's hard to find those projects. Vegetation (shrub/trees) should be incorporated in all projects but rock is the most cost effective and vegetation is washed out without rock protection due to slopes and soil in southern areas. LEWPA contract prioritizes nature-based solutions, but does not prevent using gray infrastructure. DEC would like some projects as case studies. M. Gaston has some potential streambank projects that are expensive but more comprehensive in Cattaraugus Creek Sub-watershed that may fit this. Erie and Cattaraugus can work on developing a pilot project and R. Elliott will bring up to Shannon Dougherty and Cattaraugus Integrated Watershed Action Plan Team for possible inclusion.

J. Lehn reported potentially using EPA implementation funding for nature-based Cattaraugus Creek shoreline pilot once there is a design. Two Chautauqua County projects at Hyde Creek/Wright beach and Chautauqua County fairgrounds projects have been submitted to EPA for this round of funding.

9. Watershed Management Plan Update:

- a. GIS intern update – J. Panasiewicz reported that Adam Hopper is the new LEWPA intern. Ran Ning has moved on to a new position and Veronica Medina starts on Monday as the new GIS intern for the Watershed Management Plan.
- b. SVAP results – Veronica will work on finalizing the SVAP data summaries to go to SWCD for developing potential projects. J. Panasiewicz will draft a template sheet with data needed for potential projects. J. Panasiewicz will bring draft maps to Chautauqua County offices or Lake Erie Management Commission meeting this spring. M. Gaston plans to have 3 teams this summer for SVAPing including his technicians.
- c. Next Steps – Community Outreach Plan is being drafted for comments and planning a virtual public meeting later this spring.

10. County Representative update reports:

- a. Cattaraugus County – M. Boberg reported that they are responding to technical assistance calls due to flooding on Cattaraugus Creek and S. Branch Cattaraugus Creek. They plan to submit an Agriculture and Non-point Source grant for waste storage and transfer. County wide hydroseeding and rock stabilization for ditches is funded. Envirothon happening soon. The Farmer Neighbor Dinner is April 13, 2022. J. Panasiewicz requested a table for LEWPA outreach. A motion was made by M. Gaston, was seconded by M. Boberg, and was approved.
- b. Chautauqua County – C. Pinkoski reported that they are working on gearing up for EPA funding and LEWPA funding for projects. They may do some projects with Agricultural environmental Management funding.
 - i. Lake Erie Management Commission – D. McCoy reported that they cofounded a study at the Dunkirk harbor, fence at lighthouse, emergency dredging at Barcelona Harbor, drain marking campaign in partnership with LEWPA funding by Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy, PSAs on lawn maintenance, and hidden harbor shoreline project. The next meeting is March 21st. March 8th is Great Lakes Conference at Michigan State.
- c. Erie County – M. Gaston reported that round 6 of climate resilient farming (double funding) and round 28 Agriculture and Non-point Source grants are out now and SWCD is applying. Busy construction season. Governor announced EPF budget line for Climate Resilient Farming fund is proposed at \$17 million, up from usual \$4 million and may work for Resilient NY projects if NY projects will impact a nearby farm.

11. NYSDEC update – R. Elliott reported that NYS Parks is opening a nursery in Canandaigua to combat invasive species in NYS Parks that will be a new source of native plant materials for the region. He was out looking at impacts of ice jam flooding. Evans and Big Sister Creek are an area that was not part of

Resilient NY and would be good for a subsequent round. Looking at cross checking Resilient NY project spreadsheet with DEC priorities and may look at creating a map for projects. Contact J. Panasiewicz if you'd like that draft spreadsheet. Great Lake Action Agenda will be edited this spring. J. Lehen mentioned that EPA and Environment and Climate Change Canada are coordinating a binational outreach committee and LEWPA should think about good before and after photos and videos for sharing as a presentation for them (also for annual LEWPA newsletter and annual reports to DEC).

12. Announcements – none

13. Adjourn – There was a motion to adjourn at 2:26 pm made by M. Gaston, was seconded by B. Lawrence, and was carried. The next meeting will be May 24, 2022 from 1-3pm an most likely virtual unless someone has a meeting location suggestion.

Minutes recorded by J. Panasiewicz and submitted by Secretary C. Pinkoski.