



Water Quality Council February 10, 2025, 1:00 PM TMACOG Grand Lobby

Attendance:

Dennis Kennedy, Randy Mahlman, Ben Pushka, Mark Coppeler, Andy McClure, Nick Komives, Angie Ruiz, Kevin Laughlin, Matt Choma, Alex Lytten, Josh Hollinger, Jon Eckel, Steve Pilcher, Brittney Klockowski, Jay Wright, Joe Cappel, Garrett Chamberlain, Bill Hintz, Chris Varwig

Partners and guests: Jeff Lamson, Edith Kippenhan, Boden Fisher, Sally Gladwell, Deanna Bobak, Kris Barnswell, Austin Serna, John Hull, Kris Patterson, Brian Dicken, Mark Stoffan, Sandra Kosek-Sills, Ryan Gierhart, Nancy Larson, Tahree Lane, James Sleek, Mike Hill, Tom Jasinski, Sara Guiher, Tiffani Kavalec

TMACOG Staff: Kari Gerwin, Melissa Hopfer, Tiara Davis, Ann Nair, Kingsley Kanjin, Alex Aspacher, Marissa Bechstein

Welcome:

Kevin Laughlin, Vice-Chair, City of Northwood, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked for round table introductions. He asked if quorum was established. It was. He then congratulated Steve Pilcher on his retirement in March and thanked him for all he has done to support TMACOG during his career and wished him well.

Nominations for 2025 WQC Leadership

Kari Gerwin, TMACOG, announced that Melissa Hopfer has become a new water quality program manager at TMACOG and therefore resigned from her position as Chair of the Water Quality Council. With this change, WQC needs to elect new leadership. Kevin Laughlin, City of Northwood, Mike Libben, Ottawa County SWCD, have self-nominated for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair respectively. She then stated that nominations can be made from the floor as well if anyone is interested. She asked for a motion to open nominations for the 2025 leadership positions. Nick Komives, Toledo City Council, *moved to open nominations*, Ben Pushka, Lucas County Commissioner's Office, *seconded*. Jon Eckel, Perrysburg Township, *moved to nominate* Kevin Laughlin and Mike Libben as Chair and Vice Chair respectively, Angie Ruiz, City of Fremont, *seconded*. Steve Pilcher, Village of Whitehouse, *moved to close nominations*, Mark Coppeler, Ottawa County Commissioner, *seconded*. Jay Wright, Metroparks Toledo, *moved to approve* Kevin Laughlin and Mike Libben as Chair and Vice Chair respectively, Andy McClure, City of Toledo, *seconded*. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Kevin Laughlin asked for a motion to approve November 2024 meeting minutes. Ben Pushka *moved to approve*. Nick Komives *seconded*. **Motion carried.**

2025 Water Quality Council Roster Approval

Kevin Laughlin asked for a motion to approve the meeting roster as presented. Kari Gerwin stated that the roster had been updated and sent a final time the week before but that it was also on the screen if anyone wanted to review it again with the final changes. Ben Pushka *moved to approve* the roster as presented, Steve Pilcher *seconded*. **Motion carried.**

Approval of FY2026 Annual Work Plan

Kari Gerwin gave an overview of the AWP that had been sent by email. She noted that the Stormwater Coalition did not have a quorum at its January meeting and would need to approve their portion of the AWP at their next meeting in April. Kevin Laughlin asked for a motion to approve the AWP and recommend to TMACOG Governing Board for approval. Steve Pilcher *moved to approve and recommend*, Angie Ruiz *seconded*. **Motion carried.**

Ohio EPA Update -Ohio Water Reuse Section and Regional Water Studies

Kevin Laughlin introduced Tiffani Kavalec from the Ohio EPA and gave a brief bio about her. Ms. Kavalec stated that Columbus is booming, and the expectation is that it will grow by one million more people in the next 20 years. It is one of the top 10 areas for data centers in the country with more than 1700 of them and is expected to triple the number of data centers. Data centers need water for cooling and people need water to survive. OEPA is looking at water reuse to help provide all the water that will be needed. One option is WWTP treated effluent for the cooling systems. Because water reuse is not part of the clean water act, there are not set standards. OEPA has formed the Ohio section of WaterReuse to create action plans to allow for water reuse by end of 2025.

Central Ohio Water Study- Continuing on the topic of the need for water utilities to prepare for expanded development, Ms. Kavalec gave an overview of the Central Ohio regional water study that is intended to identify gaps and provide planning tools as central Ohio's water demand increases. These studies will be done in all areas of the state with different focuses depending on the needs of the area. Ohio EPA plans to conduct a study in northwest Ohio beginning in 2026. The presentation was followed by Q&A.

Staff Report

Water Quality Program Manager filled by Melissa Hopfer. Kari Gerwin explained that Melissa will be working with WLEB advisory group as well as supervising water quality planners. Kingsly Kanjin is working on the 208 Plan comprehensive update. He is coordinating with transportation on the climate resiliency components of the plan. Tiara Davis is working on the Lake Erie Starts Here mass media campaign and website, sponsored by the Stormwater Coalition. WLEB Water Quality Advisory Group met in January and identified several areas of focus for the upcoming year. The Community Water Resources (CWR) Advisory Group also met in January and heard a presentation on the use of rare earth elements for phosphorus treatment. They will focus on input for the 208 plan updates and creating a drinking water chapter.

TMACOG and Ottawa County Sanitary Engineer both provided public comment to the Port Clinton TMDL objection.

Member Updates

None

Public Comments

Kris Patterson Ohio Lake Erie Commission stated that requests for proposals will open in March and will be due in June. Updated guidance is available for the Lake Erie Protection Plan. See their website.

Tahree Lane, Lake Erie Waterkeeper, asked that TMACOG and WQC request that OEPA and USEPA address the discharges from large manure piles at several Schmucker cattle operations in the WLEB watershed. She asked Kari to share the request with the WQC.

Adjourn

Kevin Laughlin announced that the next meeting will be May 12th. He then asked for a motion to adjourn. Ben Pushka *moved to adjourn* the meeting at 2:17 pm