Water Quality Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 11, 2026

Submitted for approval November 9, 2026

Members and alternates present: Andrea Beard, Jerry Buhrow, Zuri Carter, Garrett Chamberlain, Matt Choma, Jon Eckel, Mike Hill, Bill Hintz, Josh Hollinger, Brittney Klockowski, Kevin Laughlin, Alex Lytten, Ben Pushka, Ryan Simmons; **Members excused**: Isaac Bailey, Joe Cappel, Mark Coppeler, Dennis Kennedy, Nick Komives, Andy McClure, Scott Miller, Angie Ruiz; Bob Vasquez; **Partners and guests present:** Walter Ariss, OEPA Central Office (joined virtually); Kris Barnswell, OEDA; Jenny Carter-Cornell, Verdantas; A.J. Coleman, City of Perrysburg; Jason Fyffe, OEPA Central Office (joined virtually); Boden Fisher, ODA; Matt Griggs, City of Maumee; Tom Jasinski, City of Toledo; Edith Kippenhan, City of Toledo; Mike Libben, Ottawa County; Archie Lundsey, OEPA; Jennifer Mayer, Civil & Environmental Consultants; Elisabeth Schlaudt, U.S. EPA Office of Wastewater Management (joined virtually); Austin Serna, Office of U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur; **Members of the Public:** Marj Mulcahy, Lake Erie Advocates; **Lake Erie West staff present:** Kari Gerwin, Tiara Gonzalez, Melissa Hopfer, Kingsley Kanjin, Jennifer Allen

Welcome and Call to Order – The Water Quality Council met on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 1 p.m. in the Lake Erie West Regional Council Boardroom. Chair Kevin Laughlin welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order, noting a quorum had been reached.

Chair Laughlin noted that TMACOG had officially changed its name to Lake Erie West Regional Council. Lake Erie West Regional Council's Code of Ethics was distributed at the meeting. Water Quality Council members were asked to complete the acknowledgement form, stating that they have received the Code of Ethics before leaving the meeting.

Guest Presentations – There were four guest presentations including the following.

National Sewershed Dataset: Elisabeth Schlaudt from the U.S. EPA Office of Wastewater Management joined the meeting virtually. She gave a presentation on the EPAs national sewershed dataset. A sewershed is the geographic area from which all the sewers flow to a single endpoint wastewater treatment facility. The EPA National Sewershed Dataset provides shapefiles of the sewersheds for certain publicly-owned wastewater treatment works (POTWs). A webpage dedicated to sewersheds can be found on U.S. EPA's website: https://www.epa.gov/cwns/sewersheds. Council members who view the webpage were asked to report any discrepancies to Lake Erie West or U.S. EPA.

Ohio EPA Permitting Updates: Jason Fyffe and Walter Ariss from OEPA's central office in Columbus joined the meeting virtually. Archie Lunsey attended the meeting in person. Mr. Fyffe gave an overview and update on the MS4 stormwater permit. Walter Ariss discussed the proposed general permit for stormwater and wastewater discharges from data centers. Mr. Lunsey, shared information about the OEPA's first Environmental Permitting Conference that is scheduled to take place on May 19 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Quest Conference Center – Polaris in Westerville, Ohio. OEPA staff will be on hand to answer questions about permitting.

Approval of Minutes – The attendance list in minutes from the November 10, 2025, meeting was amended to correct the spelling of Brittney Klockowski's first name. A ***motion*** was made by Garrett Chamberlain and ***seconded*** by Mike to approve the minutes as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

2026 Water Quality Council Roster – Kari Gerwin presented the 2026 council roster for approval. The WQC voted in November to approve an update to its operating procedures, which only allows for one voting member from each of the participating member units. Alternates and proxies are no longer part of the council structure. Also, only employees of member units are eligible to be appointed to council. The roster contains one vacancy for the Schools and Universities Caucus. A ***motion*** was made by Ben Pushka and ***seconded*** by Matt Choma to accept the 2026 Water Quality Council roster. The motion carried unanimously.

Water Workforce Coalition Formalization – Ms. Gerwin gave a presentation on the water workforce program. Ms. Gerwin sought action from the council to change the activities of the Water Workforce Development, Section 51510, in the FY 2026 annual work program and proposed the creation of ad hoc committee that would recommend a scope, timeline, and funding for the Water Workforce Coalition.

A ***motion*** was made by Jon Eckel and ***seconded*** by Garrett Chamberlain to change the activities of Section 51510, in the FY 2026 Water Quality Council Annual Work program. The motion carried unanimously.

A ***motion*** was made by Matt Choma and ***seconded*** by Mike Hill to approve of the formation of an ad hoc committee that would recommend a scope, timeline and funding for the Water Workforce Coalition in FY27 and into the future. The motion carried unanimously.

FY 2027 Water Quality Annual Work Program – Ms. Gerwin explained that staff are currently developing the FY 2027 AWP, which will be effective July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027. A draft will be circulated to members for review and feedback. Approval of the final FY 2027 AWP will be sought at the May 11 WQC meeting.

Staff and Advisory Group Reports

- Andrea Beard, chair of the Stormwater Coalition, announced that the coalition is gathering information for SWC reports, which are due April 1. Stormwater training for municipal inspectors and contractors is scheduled on March 18 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Oregon Municipal Building. Attendees will be eligible for professional development hours.
- Melissa Hopfer gave an update on the recent WLEB Advisory Group meeting and announced that Lake Erie West has applied for Lake Erie Protection Funds to support the development of a nonpoint source mapping tool for the region.
- Kingsley Kanjin reported on the 208 Plan update. The updated plan has been submitted to OEPA and posted on the website. A new Drinking Water chapter was added to the Plan. Speakers are being sought for the operator training.

Next Meeting/Adjournment – The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Water Quality Council will take place in person on Monday, May 11th at 1 p.m. Kevin Laughlin adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Kevin Laughlin, Chair, Water Quality Council
Lake Erie West Regional Council

Kari Gerwin, Director, Environment
Lake Erie West Regional Council

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