DRAFT Meeting Notes for the State Water Plan Implementation Workgroup
August 10, 2021; 1:30 – 3:00PM

Zoom Meeting

**Members**: Virginia de Lima (Co-Chair), David Radka (Co-Chair), Corinne Fitting (DEEP), Dan Aubin (DPH Alternate), Bruce Wittchen (OPM), Ally Ayotte (PURA), Denise Savageau (SWCD), Tom Tyler (MDC), Janice Ehlemeyer (River COG)

**Note Taker(s):** Ali Hibbard (DEEP)

**Public:** Iris Herz Kaminski (New Haven), Andrew Brown

**Meeting Started: 1:30 p.m.**

**Topics of Discussion**

**Changes to Agenda**

* Implementation Tracking Workgroup discussion was moved up in the agenda

**Approval/Modification of Notes from previous meeting**

* Meeting notes approved with date of previous meeting corrected

**Domestic Wells Water Quality sub-workgroup**

* It was noted the Report was accepted by the Water Planning Council (WPC), with members conceptually agreeing to support the recommended legislative revisions

**Drought Plan topical sub-workgroup**

* It was reported the Drought report was accepted by the WPC
* Report was referred to the Interagency Drought Workgroup for their review and discussion, as they would primarily be responsible for implementing the recommendations

**Implementation Tracking Workgroup (Group Discussion)**

* Chair is needed for the group
	+ Dan Aubin and Corinne Fitting agreed to co-lead this workgroup
* Discussion on if a brainstorming session should take place in a regular IWG meeting or a special meeting
	+ Decided to have a special meeting on Tuesday, September 28th
* It will be critical to get the WPC view or concurrence on basic tracking system goals. Ideally, WPC members will be available to participate in the brainstorming session
* A tracking system should be a useful tool for both agency and non-government needs
	+ This shouldn’t be used as a tool only for an annual legislative report, but to consistently provide all stakeholders with an update on SWP implementation accomplishments, priorities, and future efforts
* Agencies like DPH and Department of Social Services should have in-house program and tech evaluators that may provide valuable perspective for this workgroup
* Ask the WPC to help distribute notice of the brainstorming session
* Approved workgroup proposal to be re-shared with the IWG (note: done via e-mail)

**Outreach & Education topical sub-workgroup (Denise Savageau)**

* The workgroup will be meeting this week to discuss next steps and future projects
	+ Steps to include developing generic educational information covering topics such as: *What is the State Water Plan? What is a watershed?* and *Source Protection*

**Alliance for Water Efficiency Rates Workshop Follow-up survey (Virginia de Lima)**

* The survey could be formatted as a 6-month post-workshop follow up
* Iris Herz Kaminski will pull together some questions with help from other attendees

**Possibility of a Water Director (Group Discussion)**

* Responsibility, authority, and chain of command are all questions that need to be figured out before moving forward.
* This group’s feedback should be coordinated with the Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG) before going to the WPC
* Corinne Fitting and Ali Hibbard will draft a job description/duties and share with the group, and then it will be shared with the WPCAG
* Appendix A includes Zoom Chat Comments

**WPCAG**

* No Update Given

**Public Comment**

* No Public Comment

**Meeting Adjourned:** 3:09 PM

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.**

Appendix A: Zoom Chat Discussion on Water Director

Comments from the Zoom “Chat” function on what responsibilities a water director would have to implement SWP, and what conflicts may exist.

* Need someone whose job is about the State Water Plan (SWP). Could also support the WPC generally. To be determined if both or just SWP
* SWP talked about a Water Planning Chief that would be tasked with oversight & coordination of Plan implementation - serve as a liaison between WPC & legislature
* SWP also mentioned possibly functioning as a non-regulatory member to avoid potential for tie votes on WPC
* Keep on task, priorities, not directing policy. Staff to WPC and advocate for SWP
* Coordinate funding needs and help administer funding if obtained
* Someone as a facilitator, and moderator and a steward of the SWP. An accountable central point for all the different components
* Identifies what resources are needed, go to agency, say I need this. Can staff be made available?
* Identify what other resources might be available to get the task done
* Coordinate as central point of contact, work on behalf of the PLAN, be a facilitator and moderator
* Agencies have legislative liaisons that work on behalf of the department, but there are certain things that are outside of their responsibility - a water director could serve as a liaison for that legislation
* Conflict point: can’t be perceived as speaking for the WPC; can’t usurp WPC role
* Candidate should be senior staff person with great communication skills, inside or outside person
* It would be a challenge if this person was from one agency
* Possible fix: independent consumer advocate for SWP; don’t answer to a specific agency
* Perhaps modeling an independent advocate like MDC has
* Director sort through conflicting expectations, need foundational competency
* Is it more expedient to not have this as an agency position? Consultant? Easier to fund? Contractor would still report to a particular agency
* Funding could come and go if it were for a consultant
* Could this go through the Office of Legislative Research (OLR)? That would make boss state legislature. OLR has a narrow mission
* Could be assigned to a committee or another leg. Group
* OPM has “Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs”; state hiring at low pay scales.
* Could be durational employees – often retired – will have specific scope/task
* Could WPC coordinate themselves on assignments for this person?
* SWP has potential to present WPC agencies with controversial issues. Need to determine how they will approach these
* Other looming questions: if not now, when? How to get more folks involved?
* Is there enough of a workload to sustain this position?
* Not enough agency folks or volunteers to carry workload…a water director could help recruit. Need to encourage more involvement somehow
* Could help run these meetings and help identify other folks for workgroups
* Need a job description to include what we need them to do, what skills, and what tasks
* Job Description for MDC Independent Consumer Advocate:
	+ <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OCC/MDCJobPosting091517crspdf.pdf>
	+ <https://themdc.org/independent-consumer-advocate/>