

## Vermont Clean Water Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Friday, October 11, 2024, 9:00-10:30 am

Virtual Option to Attend: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Physical Location to Attend In-Person: Agency of Natural Resources, One National Life Drive, Montpelier, VT 05620-3510 in the Catamount Room (Davis Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room D215).

Meeting details, materials, and recordings available at: <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/cwi/board/meetings>

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### Clean Water Board Members/Designees:

Douglas Farnham, Agency of Administration (AoA) Chief Recovery Officer and Designated Clean Water Board Chair (Present)  
Tayt Brooks, Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) Deputy Secretary (Present)  
Bob Flint, public member (Present)  
Joe Flynn, Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Secretary (Present)  
Julie Moore, Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) Secretary (Present)  
Jim Giffin, public member (Present)  
Anson Tebbetts, Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM) Secretary (Present)  
Chad Tyler, public member (Present)  
Jeanne Voorhees, public member (Present)

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### 1. Welcome

**Recording Time Stamp 00:01<sup>1</sup>**

*Douglas Farnham, Agency of Administration Deputy Secretary and Clean Water Board Chair*

The Chair, AoA Chief Recovery Officer Douglas Farnham convened the meeting at 9:00 am and introduced Jeanne Voorhees, a new public member of the Board. Chair Farnham invited any edits to the February 14, 2024 meeting minutes. No edits were offered, and minutes were adopted through the consent agenda.

### 2. Review State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026 Clean Water Budget Process

**Recording Time Stamp 6:00**

*Gianna Petito, Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) Grants Supervisor*

Gianna Petito presented the budgeting timeline and highlighted key dates for public comment and future Clean Water Board meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the available meeting recording to learn more about discussion content under each agenda item. Recording Time Stamps are highlighted to direct focus on the recording. Recording can be directly accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPVYj8G7Vtg>

- Chair Farnham highlighted that the Emergency Board usually meets twice a year but may also call special sessions as needed in response to economic conditions.

**3. Review Clean Water Fund Operating Statement Recording Time Stamp 11:27**

*Nick Kramer, Department of Finance and Management Budget Analyst*

Nick Kramer provided an overview of the Clean Water Fund Operating Statement, including actuals for State Fiscal Year 2024 and updated revenue forecasts for State Fiscal Years 2025, 2026 and 2027.

- Nick flagged that the reversion line-item on the Operating Statement is due to the audit Request for Proposals that never received a bid. He also highlighted that this year's property transfer tax clean water surcharge revenue projections were determined through a slightly different methodology in response to changes to the tax structure through Act 181 of 2024. The new methodology will be included as a consent agenda item for the Board in an upcoming meeting to approve.
- The Board briefly discussed fund interest and whether interest income projections should be included in the Budget estimate for State Fiscal Year 2026.

**4. Review draft SFY 2026 Clean Water Budget recommendation**

*Emily Bird, DEC CWIP Manager and Gianna Petito Recording Time Stamp 38:06*

Gianna Petito presented an overview of the draft SFY 2026 Clean Water Budget and the drafting approach. Emily Bird shared an outline of the SFY 2026 Clean Water Policy Document and summarized updates to this year's proposed budget compared to last year, including proposed strategy for the One-Time Funds.

**5. Discuss and adopt draft SFY 2026 Clean Water Budget to post for public comment Recording Time Stamp 59:00**

*Full Board*

Chair Farnham opened the floor for Board discussion but acknowledged more time might be needed.

- The Board asked several questions related to the proposed financing program in support of Tier 2 and Tier 3 regulatory compliance in the forestry and stormwater sectors. The Board requested more time for discussion on this concept.
- Chair Farnham asked for a motion to request that the Department of Finance and Management make a recommendation on how to calculate and include interest income projections on the Operating Statement and to highlight interest income when the draft budget is posted for public comment.
  - Joe Flynn, Agency of Transportation Secretary, moved to make the request. Anson Tebbetts, Secretary of the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

- Chair Farnham pointed to other items that he would like addressed at a future meeting in addition to the financing program concept: developing guiding principles on cost share and inflation adjustment of budget targets. Chair Farnham proposed extending the November 8<sup>th</sup> meeting by one hour to allow time for these discussion items.
- Chair Farnham acknowledged the outstanding Board questions and asked whether the Board was comfortable releasing the current draft Budget for public comment knowing the November 8<sup>th</sup> public hearing would allow for more discussion.
  - Bob Flint, public member of the Board, moved to post the draft SFY 2026 Clean Water Budget as presented for public comment. Chad Tyler, public member of the Board seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

## **6. Public comment**

**Recording Time Stamp 1:19:45**

*Douglas Farnham*

- Ernest Englehardt, Lake Carmi Camper's Association – Ernie thanked the Board for their work and expressed that he is cautiously optimistic about the alum treatment in Lake Carmi.
- Peter Benevento, Lake Carmi Camper's Association – Peter reiterated Ernie's thoughts and thanked the Board. He expressed that Lake Carmi had a difficult summer but that there is a light at the end of the tunnel thanks to the alum treatment.
- Jared Carpenter, Lake Champlain Committee – Jared thanked the Board for maintaining level funding for enhancement grants. He raised concern with not including more money for the Clean Water SRF this year. He said he was intrigued by the proposed financing program in support of Tier 2 and Tier 3 regulatory compliance acknowledging he has heard there is concern about regulatory compliance costs.
  - Eric Blatt, DEC – Eric clarified with the Clean Water SRF balance at zero is feasible without foregoing any federal dollars, given excess match dollars from the SFY 2025 appropriation.
- Kathy Urffer, Connecticut River Conservancy– Kathy asked to see a geographic breakdown of the Budget to be transparent about where the money is being spent. Emily Bird shared that the new plain language budget table has a geographic column that may answer Kathy's question.

## **7. Preview SFY 2026 budget public comment communications plan**

The CWIP team will email the Board information under this agenda item and revisit it at a future Board meeting due to a shortage of time.

## **8. Wrap-up, summarize next steps**

**Recording Time Stamp 1:27:43**

*Douglas Farnham*

Chair Farnham shared plans for the November 8<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing including adding an additional hour for further Board discussion.

**9. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.

**Recording Time Stamp 1:28:59**