

Vermont Clean Water Board December Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Tuesday, December 3, 2024, 2:00–3:30 PM

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, 2nd Floor, Room D215).

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

Clean Water Board Members/Designees: -

- Present - 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
 - Absent - Joe Flynn, Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Secretary
 - Present - Jim Giffin, public member
 - Present - Julie Moore, Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) Secretary
 - Present - Anson Tebbetts, Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM) Secretary
 - Present - Chad Tyler, public member
 - Present - Jeanne Voorhees, public member
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1. Welcome

Recording Time Stamp 00:00¹

Douglas Farnham, Agency of Administration Chief Recovery Officer and Clean Water Board Chair

- Chair Farnham convened the meeting at 2:00 PM and reviewed the agenda for the December Board Meeting. Chair Farnham invited any edits to the October and November meeting minutes. No edits were offered, and minutes were adopted through the consent agenda.

2. Review summary of public comment on draft State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026 Clean Water Budget

Recording Time Stamp 1:33

Gianna Petito and Colleen Miller, Dept. of Environmental Conservation Clean Water Initiative Program

- Gianna Petito and Colleen Miller provided an overview on the Agency of Natural Resources' (ANR) approach to developing the Public Comment Responsiveness

¹ Please refer to the available meeting recording to learn more about the discussion under each agenda item. Recording time stamps are highlighted to direct focus on the recording. The recording can be directly accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlzZiUPWDp4>

summary and walked through each public comment category as well as suggested responses for Board consideration. No edits were proposed.

3. Agency of Administration proposal for interest income in SFY 2026 Clean Water Budget **Recording Time Stamp 24:41**

Nick Kramer, Department of Finance and Management Budget Analyst and Chair Farnham

- Nick Kramer and Chair Farnham reviewed how the Agency of Administration created the proposal to include projected interest income in the SFY 2026 Clean Water Budget totals and explained how proposed uses would fit into the line items of the Clean Water Budget.

4. Public comment **Recording Time Stamp 40:30**

Led by Gianna Petito, Dept. of Environmental Conservation Clean Water Initiative Program

Commenters:

- **Dana Doran**, Professional Logging Contractors of the Northeast – Dana expressed appreciation for the Board’s decision to use interest income for the portable skidder bridge program. He asked a clarifying question if funding for the low interest loan program for logging equipment as proposed in October was still in the Budget. Gianna confirmed it was.
- **Clare Ireland**, Vermont Association of Conservation Districts – Clare shared that she submitted a comment with the request to increase funding to the Tactical Basin Planning line-item. She expressed appreciation of the Board’s consideration of the request. This year’s request was based on an estimate developed in collaboration with Regional Planning Commissions and watershed groups to look at costs over time. She expressed that there are existing unmet needs within Natural Resource Conservation Districts and would appreciate any increase because level funding will translate to reduction in effort over time given increasing costs.
- **John Costa**, Lake Carmi Campers Association – John thanked the members of the Clean Water Board for their past and continued support in addressing the cyanobacteria blooms on Lake Carmi.

5. Board discussion on draft SFY 2026 Clean Water Budget

Recording Time Stamp 48:20

Full Board led by Chair Farnham

- The Board discussed the proposed linked deposit program for three-acre compliance and low-impact logging equipment. Board members expressed concern over capacity limitations within the Water Investment Division, hesitation with approving this program before seeing an implementation plan, and preference for a grant program over a finance design.
- Neil Kamman, Water Investment Division Director, DEC, responded that there are ongoing internal discussions regarding how this program would function,

but given limited staff capacity, he doesn't want to begin work on developing this program until it's clearer the program will move forward.

- Emily Bird, Clean Water Initiative Program Manager clarified that the capacity constraints that were noted in February 2024 were based on the Clean Water State Revolving Fund as the primary source for the linked deposit program. The use of Clean Water Fund dollars will help with this limited staff capacity.
- Oliver Pierson, Division of Forests Director, Department of Forests Parks and Recreation, shared that the benefit to implementing a linked deposit program rather than a grant is that the funds will be replenished and could continue operations in the long term.
- Jim Giffin expressed discomfort approving the financing proposal without further details and wanted a contingent budget approval pending further program details.
- Chair Farnham expressed hesitation with overprescription of program design as could occur with Board oversight. He pointed to an informal report-back as the best mechanism for the Board to stay involved.
- Board members expressed tentative support for the Budget provided the minutes included a request from the Board to bring back a status report on uses of non-federal match funds supported with the projected interest income revenue and progress on potential loan program. An update for both will be shared at a future Board meeting.

6. Adoption of the SFY 2026 Clean Water Budget for recommendation to Governor Scott **Recording Time Stamp 1:00:00**

Full Board led by Chair Farnham

- a. Chair Farnham asked for a motion to adopt the SFY 2026 Clean Water Budget Recommendation as proposed in the Responsiveness Summary.
- b. Bob Flint, Public Member of the Board, moved to adopt the Budget.
- c. Secretary Moore, Agency of Natural Resources, seconded the motion.

All in favor.

The motion passed with no opposition.

7. Legislative proposal to repeal sunset on Property Transfer Tax Clean Water Surcharge revenue stream **Recording Time Stamp 1:18:07**

Full Board led by Chair Farnham

- a. Chair Farnham asked for a motion to support the recommendation to the General Assembly to repeal the sunset of the Property Transfer Tax Clean Water Surcharge revenue stream to the Clean Water Budget.
- b. Bob Flint moved to support the recommendation.
- c. Secretary Moore seconded the motion.

All in favor.

The motion passed with no opposition.

8. Wrap-up, summarize next steps **Recording Time Stamp 1:19:00**
Douglas Farnham and Gianna Petito

- Gianna Petito provided an update on the upcoming Clean Water Performance Report which will become available in January 2025.

9. Adjourn

Recording Time Stamp 1:22:00

- Chair Farnham asked for a motion to adjourn this meeting of the Clean Water Board.
- Secretary Moore moved to adjourn the meeting.
- Chad Tyler, Public Member of the Board seconded the move to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:26 PM.