



NEW HAMPSHIRE DRINKING WATER  
& GROUNDWATER TRUST FUND

## NEW HAMPSHIRE DRINKING WATER AND GROUNDWATER TRUST FUND ADVISORY COMMISSION



November 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes

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The meeting was convened at 10:00 a.m. at Department of Environmental Services, Rooms 111-114, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, N.H.

**Members present included:** Representative Bill Boyd, Senator David Watters, Representative Linda Gould, Representative Peter Petrigno, Josh Elliott, Michael Dionne, Jason Gagnon, Rick Russman, Marco Philippon, Bernie Rousseau, Debra Paul, Karen Umberger

**Members absent:** Rachel Miller, Robert Scott, Senator Jeb Bradley, Andrea Kenter, Michelle Roberge, Bruce Breton, Michael Bergeron

**Department of Justice representative in attendance:** None

### Opening Remarks – Representative Bill Boyd

Adoption of the October 16<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting minutes as presented were moved by Rick Russman, seconded by Senator David Watter. Motion adopted unanimously.

Adoption of the October 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Construction Project Assistance subcommittee meeting minutes as presented were moved by Marco Philippon, seconded by Bernie Rousseau. Motion adopted unanimously.

Adoption of the October 16<sup>th</sup> and November 17<sup>th</sup> Source Water Protection subcommittee meeting minutes as presented were moved by Rick Russman, seconded by Bernie Rousseau. Motion adopted unanimously.

Representative Bill Boyd delivered opening remarks and stated that Senator Bradley, Michelle Roberge, and Andrea Kenter, Bob Scott, and Michael Bergeron were excused for the day.

Representative Bill Boyd introduced Karen Umberger as the newest member of the Commission, having been appointed by Senator Bradley. She served as a member of the House from Carroll County and served as chair of House Finance.

**Public Comment: No comments were expressed.**

### Program Updates:

#### Drinking Water Construction Protection Assistance Program

Cheryl Bondi provided an overview of the 29 construction applications received. \$22,147,250 was received in loan requests, \$27,199,146 received in grant requests, with \$47,928,914 in total leveraged outside funds. The Commission has already approved 7 projects with asks of \$5.4 million so far in 2023.

Two projects in 2022 withdrew, Raymond with \$2.65 million in loan and \$875,000 in grant, and Rebecca Lane Water System, with \$450,000 in loan and \$337,500 in grant. Trust fund balance as of December 2022 was \$108.9 million.

Marco Philippon, as the Construction Project Assistance subcommittee chair, reviewed the subcommittee's list of projects recommended for funding. He thanked the subcommittee members for their time and efforts in reviewing the projects as well as DES staff who provided valuable support and feedback.

Changes made prior to the annual round have greatly improved the quality of the applications, with this round seeing the largest loan request to grant request ratio for list of recommended projects to date. 12 projects were recommended for funding, \$11.3 million in loan and \$2.66 million in grant. It is estimated that the loans will bring in roughly \$4.8 million in interest payments over the life of the loans.

Four projects were recommended for special project status. In one circumstance, outside funding was not settled yet; in another wastewater project was included in the scope.

Of the 13 projects not funded, all were pure infrastructure projects and either not ready, had a low affordability index, all grant request, or low affordability index and an all grant request.

Sen. Watters asked about the urgency of some of the special projects.

Marco Philippon stated that the funding from St. Gobain for the Londonderry project had not been nailed down yet. The ask is very large and the project not quite ready yet, but progress has been made. Once they are ready, they can come back to the Trust Fund at any time.

Brandon Kernan relayed Commissioner Scott's stress on the importance of this project and that DES looked forward to this project coming back to the Trust Fund for funding.

Rep. Boyd related the conversation he had with Speaker Packard and conveyed that it was a priority of the Trust Fund to fund this project, but that Londonderry had to have some skin in the game.

Joshua Elliott disclosed that he knew one of the realtors involved with the parcel in question for the Goffstown project on the unfunded list and that he did not participate in discussions during the subcommittee on this project.

Cheryl Bondi brought up the question of manganese contamination in regards to Rochester, which was on the unfunded list. The project cost had increased from \$2 million to \$10 million. The question posed was do we issue grants on emerging contaminants?

Marco Philippon stated that there is other funding available from DES for these types of projects and the precedent it sets by giving grant funding for non-enforceable MCLs.

Jason Gagnon disclosed that he was one of the applicants reviewed by the subcommittee on the funded list, and that he did not participate in discussions during the subcommittee on this project.

Cheryl Bondi informed the Trust Fund that Rochester was seeking input from the Commission on this project.

Rep. Boyd stated their application needs to make sense for them financially.

Adoption of the subcommittee's recommended funding list was moved as presented by Marco Philippon, seconded by Deb Paul. Motion adopted unanimously, with Jason Gagnon abstaining.

## **Source Water Protection Program**

Laura Weit-Marcum presented an overview of the Source Water Protection grant round. 21 preapplications were received, with 14 applications filed. 1,208 priority acres were covered by the requests, with a total ask of \$3,516,081 made by the applicants.

Rep. Boyd as subcommittee chair stated there were a range of applicants, with 10 recommended for funding, with one conditional funding approval (Milan), provided they remove a parking lot from the request. The inclusion of the parking lot in the request was the only issue.

Laura Weit-Marcum stated that the applicant had already filed an updated application with the parking lot removed.

Rep. Boyd related that the total funding request of these applications was \$2,375,931.

Sen. Watters asked if the Commission would need to vote again for Milan to be approved.

Rep. Boyd answered that the Commission does not, as it received conditional approval, and if it meets the conditions, it will receive funding.

Michael Dionne stated that he had a conflict as he was part of the Rochester application and will therefore abstain from the vote.

Adoption of the subcommittee's recommended funding list was moved by was moved as presented Rick Russman, seconded by Bernie Rousseau. Motion adopted unanimously, with Michael Dionne abstaining.

## **PFAS Removal Rebate Program Update**

KC Moran of DES provided an update on the PFAS Removal Rebate Program.

9,000 private wells have been tested, with 3,500 having an exceedance of one or more PFAS AGQS. The rebate allows \$5,000 for installation of a remediation system, or \$10,000 to connect to a public water system. 870 applications were received to date, with 780 approved and processes. \$2.9 million has been disbursed, with an average rebate of \$3,900. Most of the applications have been received from Londonderry (370) followed by Amherst (112) and Bedford (81).

Senator Watters asked about the remaining 1,100 that have not filed applications.

KC Moran stated the Department has mailed every household with an exceedance and connected with health officers in those communities, but it is up to the homeowner to act. The only applications that were denied were those that did not qualify for the program.

Senator Watters suggested a renewed information campaign to remind them. Rep. Umberger asked if the upfront cost installing the system and then getting a rebate was an issue for uptake.

KC Moran stated that based on the information they have, they do not think it is a hindrance. They also work with contractors that will do the work upfront and seek the rebate on behalf of the homeowner, resulting in no

out of pocket expense for the homeowner. If they know of someone having trouble paying the upfront cost, DES will refer them to one of these contractors.

Deb Paul suggested that posting notices in towns would encourage these people to come in and get the rebates. She also remarked that government could not do anything right and remarks generally critical of the outreach efforts.

Rep. Boyd relayed that he was concerned about the low numbers in Merrimack and was speaking to the Town Council to get the word out, with assistance from DES. He suggested that Deb Paul do the same and present to the Londonderry Town Council.

**Meeting was adjourned at 10:52 AM**

**JWE**