

# Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission

## Minutes

**Wednesday September 26, 2012**

**Location:** Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG), Auburn, Maine

**Time:** Meeting began at 3:31 PM

**Commissioners Present:** Bruce Rioux, Dave Jones, Bethel Shields (arrived at 4:00PM), Dick Thibodeau, Joe Grube, John Butler, John Bonneau (arrived at 3:40PM), Bob Thompson

Commissioners Absent: Steve French

### **Others Present:**

Kevin Gagne, Richard Burnham, Mary Jane Dillingham, John Storer, Sid Hazelton, Dan Bilodeau, K.C. Geiger, Tizz Crowley, Heather Hunter, Lee Upton, Scott Williams, Eric Cousens, Scott Taylor

Commissioner Grube called the meeting to order at 3:31 PM

*For the sake of time, Secretary Storer recommended addressing Agenda item 4 Lake Auburn Water Quality Issue first*

### **Agenda Item 4: Lake Auburn Water Quality Issue – Mary Jane Dillingham & John Storer**

Scott Williams from the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) walked the Commission through a comprehensive power point presentation on the current phenomenon that is occurring on Lake Auburn. Low dissolved oxygen levels in the Lake are resulting in a fish kill, which at this time is limited to Lake Trout. The low oxygen levels are due to the presence of algae in the water. As the algae die off in the cooler weather, they sink to the bottom. The bacteria that feed on the dead algae use up the available oxygen. The presence and increase in algae is due to several factors, including late ice-in, early ice-out, warmer water temperatures over time, prolonged drought conditions, and intense rain events that wash phosphorus containing sediment into the Lake. Currently, drinking water quality has not been affected as our intake is located in more shallow water that is still well oxygenated. We expect that cooler Fall weather will discourage the growth of more algae.

We need to further study the short and long-term solutions to this problem. There are controls which have been used elsewhere including aeration, and chemical treatment. The pros and cons of each must be considered carefully. We are in contact with experts in the field to determine the best course of action to take. An important step will be to reduce the amount of waterborne phosphorus that is entering the lake.

Commissioner Thibodeau noted that IFW took dissolved oxygen readings in Little Wilson Pond this summer, and recorded low readings as well.

### **Agenda Item 1: Approve Minutes of Regular Meeting of July 25, 2012**

There were two revisions to the minutes of the July 25, 2012 meeting:

1. Commissioner Bonneau was not present at the meeting
2. Agenda Item 4: Check Signing Authority (back-up?) – Heather Hunter

Vote to authorize the Vice Chair, by position, not individual, of the Lake Auburn Watershed Commission to sign checks.

**Vote 1**– Motion by Commissioner Shields and seconded by Commissioner Thompson to accept the minutes of July 25, 2012, with revisions, and place on file.

**Passed 8 -0**

### **Agenda Item 2: Emergency Boat Motor Replacement – Mary Jane Dillingham & John Storer**

The motor on the pontoon boat was over ten years old, and has been in the shop several times. With the need for increased sampling, a new motor was purchased after receiving three quotes.

**Vote 2** – Motion by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Thompson to ratify the purchase of the new boat motor from Auburn Marine.

**Passed 8-0**

### **Agenda Item 3: Quarterly Financial Update – Heather Hunter**

The report reflects expenditures through September 20, 2012.

On the revenue side, Auburn pays monthly, so we will see incremental increases through the rest of the year. LWD is processing their subsidy next week. For grants, we have exceeded our original budget by \$1,250.

On expenditures, we are doing well. Under capital, we have not spent the funds for the dock. In the upcoming budget talks, Commissioners can decide what to do with those funds.

Under source protection, boat inspections and Police patrols accounted for those expenditures, but we are still within budget.

**Vote 3**– Motion by Commissioner Butler and seconded by Commissioner Shields to accept the quarterly Financial Update.

**Passed 8-0**

### **Agenda Item 5: Water Quality Update & Activity Report – Mary Jane Dillingham**

- With the current condition of the Lake, staff is extremely busy collecting data, and will continue into the coming months.
- We are done conducting boat inspections for the year. Over 700 were inspected. Not one boat was from out of state. No invasive plants were noted.
- Milfoil Management – we have gone back into the wetland by the pump station, and put down 6'X6' clamshell mats for the winter. Jackie Bailey and another diver have been placing benthic mats in the upper Basin. It was a very favorable growing season for invasive plants and algae.
- Forestry – we just completed the North end of Spring Road, and they have moved over to Johnson Road. That will be the last project for this year. We met independently on-site with the Regional Forester, and a representative from the Department of Environmental Protection to make sure we were following good forestry practices in accordance with the Best Management Practices Management (BMP) Manual. We have applied hay and seed on the sensitive areas to minimize erosion.

## **Agenda Item 6: Open Session – Public Comments**

Dan Bilodeau – concerned about the amount of exposed soil left over from the forestry activity. He believes the Commission should develop a policy that requires exposed areas to be re-vegetated. He recommends planting new trees by hand in other areas.

Tizz Crowley – would like the Commission to issue regular reports on the condition of the Lake as information emerges, including explanations to increase public trust and confidence. She sees this as an opportunity to let the community know more about LAWPC, as she feels that few people know who we are.

*John Storer – we are partnering with a Public Relation Firm to address this through multiple mediums.*

She would like the Commission to know that she supports the swimming study, to be discussed later on.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness month – many activities will be planned locally, and she is hoping we will support them.

## **Agenda Item 7: New Business**

- **Project Canopy Grant Application – John Storer**

Our current ten year forestry management plan is expiring. Mayor Labonte suggested that the Community Forestry Board could write a letter of support , which would help us in applying for funds to update our plan under the Project Canopy grant. The deadline for a new grant application is Oct 22, 2012. We have budgeted money for a match.

Commissioner Rioux asked is we could include wetland mitigation identification in the forestry plan. We will look into this once we have a consultant on board.

- **“Swimmability” Study, Outlet Beach – John Storer & Dave Jones, and possibly City Manger Clint Deschene**

John Storer and Dave Jones recently met with Auburn City Manager Clint Deschene. Since swimming is not allowed on the Lake, Mr. Deschene asked if the Commission would fund a one- time study to investigate the feasibility of keeping the water clean enough for swimming.

Comprehensive Environmental Inc. (CEI) has extensive history on the watershed, and could do a study for the City to have in 2013, letting them know if it would be worth their while to invest capital dollars to improve the facility.

This study could be funded under the current land acquisition account.

**Vote 4** - Motion by Commissioner Jones, and seconded by Commissioner Butler to fund a one-time study from the current land acquisition fund to determine the “swimmability” of the Outlet Beach.

**Passed 8 – 0**

- **Recommendation from AG’s Office after Dan Bilodeau’s FOAA complaint**

We need to develop and incorporate in the by-laws language that allows action and expenditure of funds by the Clerks- potentially under threat of life, property or watershed quality.

John, Dave, Rick will develop language for consideration at the next meeting.

### **Agenda Item 8: Old Business**

- **Public Education and Outreach – Bruce and Bethel visited Portland Water for some ideas**

Commissioners Rioux and Shields visited the Portland Water District, and met with Lynne Richard, who publicizes watershed efforts through newsletters and teaching 50 – 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes every month throughout Cumberland County. They have a good outreach effort that we may be able to capitalize on. Commissioner Rioux distributed copies of their newsletter to the Commissioners, and recommended offering our own newsletter.

MJ is familiar with the program, which is called project “WET”. This comes from the American Water Works Association (AWWA), which is a national organization. We can look into this if the Commission so desires.

Bruce and Bethel were targeting this program for consideration in September 2013.

We may want to consider using the Auburn Land Lab – possibly send a Land Lab instructor to the Lynne Richards training program so we can offer local watershed classes.

We need to get a small committee together to keep the momentum going. We need to make this part of a broader campaign to make sure it meets the needs of all affected parties (AWD/LWD).

- **Lake Auburn Half Marathon, *follow-up***

By all accounts, the event was a success, and it should be supported in the future.

**Agenda Item 9: Executive Session regarding negotiations of possible land transaction in accordance with MRSA § 405(6) (C)**

*No item to discuss*

**Agenda Item 10: Adjourn Meeting**

**Vote 5** - Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Bonneau, and seconded by Commissioner Jones to adjourn the meeting.

**Passed 8 - 0**

**The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 PM**

A true record, Attest:

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Robert Thompson,  
Secretary of the LAWPC