



# Niantic River Watershed Committee, Inc.

[www.nianticriverwatershed.org](http://www.nianticriverwatershed.org)

FILED

Minutes  
NRWC Board of Directors  
June 4, 2020, 6 pm  
Via Zoom Video Conferencing

July 1 20 20 AT 2:30 AM/PM  
Karen Melm  
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Attendees: Ralph Bates, Town of East Lyme; Melissa Bezanson, Town of Salem; Donald Danila, Town of East Lyme; Susan Gonzalez, Town of East Lyme; Donald Landers, East Lyme Harbor Management and Shellfish Commission; Doug Lawson, Town of Waterford; Chris Tomichek, Town of Waterford; David Turner, Town of Montville; Judy Rondeau, Watershed Coordinator; Rick Kanter, Waterford-East Lyme Shellfish Commission; Maureen Fitzgerald (Town of Waterford); Eric Thomas, CT DEEP.

Excused: Peter Harris, Waterford-East Lyme Shellfish Commission; David Bliven, Town of Montville.

Absent: None

1. Call to Order: Chair C. Tomichek called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.
2. Seating of Alternates: A motion was made by D. Landers to seat R. Bates for Waterford and R. Kanter for the vacant Montville seat, seconded by D. Danila. All in favor, the motion passes. Members welcomed Susan Gonzalez as the new representative from East Lyme.
3. Review and Approval of May 7, 2020 meeting minutes: D. Landers made a motion to approve the May 7, 2020 minutes as presented, seconded by D. Danila. All in favor, the motion passes.
4. Treasurer's Report: D. Danila reviewed the Treasurer's Report. D. Landers made a motion to accept the report as presented, seconded by R. Kanter. All in favor, the motion passes.
5. Coordinator's Report: Several outreach initiatives/efforts related to the Healthy Lawns campaign have been delayed as a result of COVID-19. Alternatively, Judy has and will continue to use social media (Facebook) to disseminate tips and relevant information to the general public. Judy requested that NRWC members "like" the NRWC page and share posts to engage more followers. Judy submitted a proposal for the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Long Island Sound Futures Fund proposal to support the Niantic River outfall sampling program. Looking forward, the National Estuary Program released a request for proposals, due August 7, 2020. D. Landers suggested submission for wetland restoration for the wetland behind Boat Valet that is constricted by the railroad. The contract for the 4-Town bioretention project is still pending review at the CT Attorney General's office as a result of multiple rounds of review related to contract terms/language. The Coordinator's Report will be posted on the Niantic River Watershed website for review.
6. DEEP Liaison Report: DEEP Open Space Acquisition Grant deadline was extended to the end of the month. Biannual Water Assessment draft is circulating for review and comment. No new freshwater assessments were performed due to time and resource limitation. Many Niantic resources are listed as impaired. Public comment related to the Assessment will be held on June 5, 2020 via Zoom. The Watershed Bureau is adding more staff, and will be looking to post a position for an individual whom specializes in Water Modeling and a candidate has already been identified.



7. Old Business:
  - a. Town Matters: D. Danila provided an update on the Waterford solar development – the final exchange of interrogatories between participants is imminent and the next hearing is scheduled for June 25 via Zoom 2-5pm, and the public portion will be at 6:30pm. C. Tomichek suggested that NRWC submit a letter.
  - b. Director and Officers Insurance Discussion: Waterford and Salem representatives need to check with their elected officials to see if they are covered under their respective town's policy.
8. Subcommittee Updates
  - a. Monitoring Group: D. Danila indicated that he will be installing temp probes at outfalls at Stony Brook.
  - b. Education/Outreach Group: Activities were reviewed in the Coordinator's Report. East Lyme Day was cancelled as are most of the community summer events due to Covid-19.
  - c. NRWPP Update Steering Committee: Fuss and O'Neil (F+O) requested photographs of the watershed for the cover of the Plan Update, specifically upper watershed photos with people in foreground actively using the water. F+O's contract ends June 30<sup>th</sup> and they will be paid in-full and their scope of work approximately 90% complete with the only task remaining is to facilitate the Watershed Summit to present the Plan to the 4-Towns. The funding contract with DEEP expires October 30, 2020. Discussion ensued related to the pros/cons related to extending the contract because the Summit likely won't happen until the fall at the earliest. In order to close the contract, the Plan Update must be adopted and the associated checklist completed. The discussion was tabled until the July meeting to determine if NRWC needs to extend the contract.
9. New Business:
  - a. Vacancies on NRWC Board need to be filled: alternate for Waterford, alternate for Montville, board member and alternate for Salem. Board to think of possible candidates. It was suggested that we solicit candidates from other organizations with interests in the watershed, such as Salem Land Trust.
  - b. F+O May Invoice has been forwarded to Eric for approval. Motion to pay \$3,835.00 when paid from DEEP (\$3,500 remaining from DEEP fund, and small balance will remain from the Community Foundation). One more invoice from F+O is anticipated. A motion was made by D. Landers to approve payment of the \$3,835.00 F+O invoice, seconded by R. Kanter. All in favor, the motion passes.
10. Public Comments: None.
11. Next Meeting: July 2, 2020, 6 PM, via Zoom.
12. Adjournment: A motion was made to adjourn at 7:35 PM by D. Danila, seconded by D. Landers. All in favor, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Bezanson  
NRWC Secretary, Town of Salem Representative



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## **Niantic River Watershed Coordinator's Report**

**July 2, 2020**

Good evening,

Following is a summary of my activities since the June meeting.

**Outreach/Education:** The first week of June, I began posting weekly tips on our Facebook page (Niantic River Watershed Committee) for the Healthy Lawns, Healthy River CBSM project. I intend to post weekly tips through mid-October. Please watch for them and like and/or repost so we can distribute our message broadly (and get big counts to report back to our funder).

**Monitoring:** I located fisheries data on Latimer Brook and Cranberry Meadow Brook on the CT ECO DEEP Fish Community Data Viewer (<https://cteco.uconn.edu/projects/fish/viewer/index.html>) and shared the data with the Monitoring Committee. We had been interested in the fisheries data following a fish survey of Latimer Brook several years ago, which indicated that fish species and population numbers were uncharacteristically low. As a result of the survey, Latimer Brook has been listed by DEEP as non-supportive for aquatic habitat.

**NRWPP Update:** The draft plan has been completed. I received the final Plan from Fuss & O'Neill on July 1<sup>st</sup> for final review. Thank you to everyone who reviewed and submitted comments.

**Healthy Lawns, Healthy River CBSM Outreach Campaign:** I submitted a request for a six-month extension on the project due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As previously stated, I have started to conduct outreach through our Facebook page. Once the NRWPP Update has been concluded, I will have more time to start working on this project, preparatory to launching the interactive part in the late winter/early spring of 2021.

**Grants:** I still hope to investigate the potential for applying for the National Estuary Program (NEP) Coastal Watersheds Grant (CWG) Program. Letters of Intent are due on August 7<sup>th</sup>. The Town of Waterford had previously expressed interest in restoring erosion at Grimsey Park, and it was suggested that we evaluate the potential to restore the marsh behind Boat Valet that is constricted by the railroad (and full of Phragmites).

**Water Quality Improvement Projects:** ECCD has received the contract for the Four-town Bioretention project contract. We will be reviewing the project and developing an implementation schedule over the next month.

**Staff hours:** In June, I worked approximately 54 hours on Niantic River Watershed Committee business and projects. Of that, about 21 hours were for core NRWC activities (administration, outreach and monitoring activities); 5.25 hours went towards the Long Island Sound Futures Fund proposal; about 21.5 hours were applied to the Watershed Plan Update, and about 6.25 hours were applied to the new LISFF CBSM campaign.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Judy Rondeau", written over a horizontal line.

Judy Rondeau  
Watershed Coordinator