



Notes
Quarterly Meeting
Wednesday, June 2nd, 2021

10:00am-12:30pm

Meeting was held remotely via Zoom

Please note: All voting items are indicated by an *

1. Call to order and Roll Call

Commissioners present: Philip DeGaetano (Chair-NY), Bruce Friedman (NJDEP), Patricia Sesto (Vice-Chair-CT), Jeffrey Myers (NY), Selvin Southwell (NYSDEC), John Atkin (CT), Nisha Patel (CTDEEP), Pamela Scully (CTDPH), Judith Baron (NY), Virginia Wheatley (NJDOH), David Wrinn (CT AGO), Rose Trentman (NY).

Others in Attendance: Evelyn Powers (IEC), Lauren LaRusso (NJ GAU), Michael Flood (EPA Region 2).

A quorum was not present.

2. Approval of minutes from the March 2nd, 2021 Annual Meeting (Appendix A) *

Approval of the Minutes from the March 2nd, 2021 Annual Meeting was tabled due to lack of a quorum for a vote.

- a. April 14th 2021 Executive Meeting Summary (Appendix B)
- b. May 5th 2021 Executive Meeting Summary (Appendix C)

3. IEC Finances and Current Grant Funds Update

- a. Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet (Appendices D and E)

Commissioner Atkin noted that he and Evelyn had reviewed the financials over the phone and asked Evelyn to present the financials. Evelyn reviewed the Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet (appendices D and E). The Profit and Loss shows the financial activity from October 1, 2020 through March 31st, 2021. Total Income was \$317,943, total Expenses \$337,161. Evelyn reminded the Commission that most operating expenses are funded through federal grants, which are reimbursement grants, and funds can not be drawn down until they are expended, which results in an income slightly less than expenses typically. Balance Sheet shows reserve funds in the amount of \$626,377 in the Chase reserve account, with \$31,245 in the Chase operating checking account, for a total of \$657,622 in cash. Assets also include available federal grant funds in the amount of \$1,663,872. A review of the budget vs. actuals table included with Appendix E shows IEC has expended about 54% of the budget that it would be projected or estimated to have been expended at this point in the year. Note this is *not* 54% of the total year budget. Total approved annual budget for FY21 was \$1,242,099; total expenses October 1, 2020 through March 31st, 2021 were \$337,161. Evelyn noted that expenses will ramp up with the

monitoring season, as additional full-time and seasonal staff have been hired. Travel associated with sampling, supplies and professional services expenses such as boat charters will also escalate in the coming months.

b. Funding and Grants Update

- CWA §106 FFY21 Grant status (\$727,000)
- Long Island Sound Study (LISS) FFY21 Base Program Budget Request (\$315,068)
- LISS FFY21 Enhancement Budget Request (\$300,000)
- NJDEP Harbor Monitoring Project (\$228,000)
- CWA §106 FFY18 Remaining Funding (\$10,007)
- CWA §106 FFY 19 Remaining Funding (\$551,075))
- CWA §106 FFY 20 Remaining Funding (\$727,000)
- LISS Remaining Funding (\$247,347)
- Save the Sound Funding (\$77,936)

Evelyn reviewed the balances in the current funding sources and anticipated funding. IEC has remaining carryover funds in both its CWA §106 FFY19 and CWA §106 FFY18 awards. It is anticipated that the FFY18 award will be closed out shortly, and the FFY19 award will require a no-cost time extension request, due to delays of some activities due to COVID and the delays in the permanent lab relocation, for which there are funds earmarked in the FFY19 CWA §106 award. IEC also has a pending CWA §106 FFY21 award of \$727,000. Evelyn is working with Michael Flood, IEC's new 106 Project Officer to make some revisions in the workplan and budget necessary to finalize the award. Michael Flood was present at the meeting and confirmed the workplan and budget are working its way through the approval process. Evelyn notes that IEC submitted budget requests totaling \$615,068 to the Long Island Sound Study, which were approved by the LISS Management Committee at its April meeting. Evelyn will be submitting the required grant documents to officially apply for this funding through the grants.gov portal in the next few days, and the funding should be available beginning October 1, 2021. The funding supports both IEC's long-term monitoring program and a special "enhancement" project to address shellfish harvesting water closures in the vicinity of Wading River and Baiting Hollow Creek, in Suffolk County. Evelyn also highlighted the Harbor Monitoring Project developed in partnership with NJDEP, which is funding the project. The project began in May, and consists of monitoring 25 sites weekly during the recreation season for pathogens, turbidity and field parameters (i.e., pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature and salinity) and monthly for nutrients. The project will continue year-round, with frequency reduced to monthly for all parameters from October through April. Commissioner Myers asked whether the network includes shared waters. Evelyn explained that yes, in addition to sites along the Passaic, Hackensack, Raritan River and Newark Bay, the network includes stations in Harbor, the Arthur Kill, Raritan Bay and the Hudson River. Evelyn reviewed slides (Appendix I) which highlighted both the NJDEP Harbor Monitoring project and the LISS Enhancement project focused on pathogen source trackdown. Commissioner DeGaetano thanked Bruce Friedman and NJDEP for working with IEC to develop and fund the Harbor monitoring program and hoped that NYSDEC would similarly look to IEC as a partner for monitoring needs in and around the Harbor.

4. Laboratory/Office Space Search Update

- a. Update on Staffing and Current Laboratory Operations
- b. Review Updated BioBat Cost Analysis (Appendix F)
- c. Update on Architectural Services (Linearscape)
- d. Update on draft lease

Evelyn updated the Commission on the current laboratory operation and progress toward moving to larger, permanent space at BioBat. The majority of activities and staff are based at the Downstate Biotechnology Incubator in Brooklyn due to the continued access restrictions at the College of Staten Island. Evelyn reviewed the updated BioBat Cost analysis (Appendix F) and the timeline developed by the architect, Linearscape. The cost analyzes the specific budget line items that are impacted by the proposed lease and buildout. This, in conjunction with project budgets, was used to develop the proposed FY22 Commission budget. Linearscape is in the process of working with a cost estimator to develop an initial cost estimate for the buildout, based on a schematic design developed by Linearscape. The buildout cost estimate remains the major unknown in the cost analysis. The schematic design cost estimate should be completed by mid-June, with a more detailed cost estimate, a basis of design cost estimate, completed by end of July. Linearscape has also developed a proposed a timeline for design and construction, which has construction beginning by end of November and the space completed and ready for occupancy by end of March 2022. Pamela Scully thanked Evelyn for developing the detailed cost analysis which shows how the proposed buildout and move will impact the Commissions budget, and reserves over the next 10 years. Evelyn mentioned that many members of the Commission assisted in developing and reviewing the cost analysis, including Chair DeGaetano, Commissioner Scagnelli, Commissioner Atkin and Commissioner Myers.

Evelyn also updated the Commission on the draft lease, which was received from BioBat a week prior to the June meeting. Evelyn and Chair DeGaetano will be working with Commissioner Scagnelli and the Commission's lease attorney, Jennifer Schecter, to review, redline, and comment on the lease and return it to BioBat.

5. IEC FY21-22 Budget (Appendix G) *

Although there was not a quorum, Evelyn reviewed the proposed FY2021-2022 budget, which was also reviewed at part of the BioBat cost analysis discussion. A motion, duly made and seconded, to approve the budget. All present were in favor of approving the budget, with none opposing. Evelyn suggested continuing the meeting to obtain the vote of Commissioner Scagnelli at a later time, who was unable to attend the meeting. No objections to continuing the meeting were made.

6. Director's Report (See EPA Progress Reports, Appendix H)

- a. Project Highlights and Updates:
 - NJDEP Harbor Monitoring Project (Appendix I)
 - Coordinated Volunteer Pathogen Monitoring
 - Long Island Sound Monitoring
 - Unified Water Study
 - Harlem River Urban Waters Federal Partnership
 - National Park Service Beach sample analyses

- Compliance Monitoring Inspections
- Laboratory Proficiency studies

Evelyn reviewed additional project highlights and updates. In addition to the Harbor monitoring project and Long Island Sound Study monitoring, IEC continues its Coordinated Volunteer Monitoring Program, now in its fifth year, which enables citizen and watershed groups to collect samples in their local waterways. IEC provides training, equipment and analytical support, analyzing samples collected by volunteer groups for pathogens (fecal coliform and *Enterococcus*) in IEC's laboratory. IEC is also continuing its participation in the Unified Water Study, coordinated by Save the Sound, Inc., performing monitoring in Little Neck Bay and Manhasset Bay. IEC is also partnering with USGS to analyze weekly samples collected along the Harlem River for total suspended solids and *Enterococcus* as part of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership. IEC also is competing compliance inspections with sampling, of 12 municipal wastewater treatment plants in Connecticut, from Greenwich to New Haven. IEC continues to help coordinate the Continuous Monitoring Subcommittee with NY-NJ Harbor and Estuary Program, and recently co-chaired a panel with USGS during the recent National Water Monitoring Conference, which was held remotely. IEC is also assisting with a pilot eelgrass restoration project (Conference House Park, Staten Island).

b. Staffing

Heather Miara, FT Environmental Analyst II (DOH April 5th, 2021)
 Kimarie Yap, FT Environmental Analyst II (DOH May 10th, 2021)
 Stephen Biazio, Seasonal Intern (DOH April 26th, 2021)
 Mia Pereira, Seasonal Intern (DOH June 1st, 2021)
 Samantha Wilder, Seasonal Intern (DOH June 1st, 2021)

Evelyn was pleased to report a significant increase in staffing since the March meeting. Heather Miara joined IEC full-time on April 5th, 2021 as an Environmental Analyst Level II. Heather's primary responsibility will be coordinating IEC's new Harbor monitoring project. Heather has a M.S. in Environmental Policy from Johns Hopkins University and served as a NJDEP Watershed Ambassador, working with the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership. Kimarie Yap joined IEC on May 10th, 2021 as a full-time Environmental Analyst II. Kimarie recently received her M.S. in Biology from Fordham University. Her thesis focused on Harmful Algal blooms in NYC lakes. Kimarie will be coordinating IEC's Long Island Sound monitoring programs, including the Long Island Sound monitoring and IEC's participation in the Unified Water Study. IEC has also hired three seasonal interns: Mia Pereira, a student at Rutgers University, Stephen Biazio, a recent graduate of the College of Staten Island, and Samantha Wilder, a recent graduate of Hofstra University. The seasonal internships are anticipated to extend through October 31st, 2021.

7. Old Business

a. Commissioner vacancies

IEC continues to have two vacancies for citizen commissioners from New Jersey. Evelyn will continue to work with the Governor's Authorities Unit to fill these vacancies, as these vacancies continue to impact the ability of the Commission to obtain a quorum.

8. New Business

- a. Proposed policy updates
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice (DEIJ) policy

Evelyn encouraged the Commission to consider adopting a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice policy or statement. Evelyn recently attended a Zoom meeting with the other interstate agencies to discuss issues related organizational structures, COVID policies and other policies, during which DEIJ was an area of particular discussion. Evelyn has obtained DEIJ policies from similar organizations, including some interstates. IEC also participates on a DEIJ subcommittee of the New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program.

9. Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday, September 1st, 2021

Wednesday, December 1st, 2021

Wednesday, March 2nd, 2022

10. Adjourn

The meeting was not adjourned, but continued to record the vote of Commissioner Scagnelli.

APPENDICES:

A- March 2nd, 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes

B- April 14th, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting Notes

C-May 5th, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting Notes

D- Profit and Loss Statement

E-Balance Sheet

F-Updated BioBat Budget Analysis

G-Proposed IEC FY2021-2022 Budget*

H- EPA Awards Progress Reports

I-NJDEP Harbor Monitoring Project