



Notes
Quarterly Meeting
Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020

10:00am-12:30pm

Call-in number: 866-873-0727

Please note: All voting items are indicated by an *

1. Call to order and Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Philip DeGaetano (Chair, NY), Judith Baron (NY), Jeffrey Myers (NY), Selvin Southwell (NYSDEC), Virginia Wheatley (NJDOH), Loel Muetter (NJDOH), Bruce Friedman (NJDEP), Alena Baldwin-Brown (NJDEP), Philip Trowbridge (CTDEEP), David Wrinn (CT AGO), Pamela Scully (CTDPH), Patricia Sesto (CT), John Atkin (CT).

Others in Attendance: Evelyn Powers (IEC Executive Director), Lauren LaRusso (NJ GAU Senior Counsel), Aimee Boucher (EPA Region 2, IEC Project Officer).

A quorum was not present. Chair DeGaetano asked Evelyn Powers to run through the agenda.

2. Approval of minutes from the March 4th, 2020 Annual Meeting (Appendix A) *

Minutes could not be approved due to lack of quorum.

- a. March 16th 2020 Executive Meeting Summary (Appendix B)
- b. April 17th 2020 Executive Meeting Summary (Appendix C)

Summaries from the March 16th, 2020 and April 17th, 2020 Executive Committee meetings were reviewed.

3. IEC Finances and Current Grant Funds Update

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

Evelyn Powers reviewed the Profit and Loss statement (Appendix D) for the period October 1, 2019 through March 30, 2020. The Profit and Loss statement includes a comparison of prior period. David Wrinn asked about the significant difference between the periods in two areas: insurance and indirect professional services. As insurance premiums are an annual expense, they were paid up front when the policies were renewed and bound at the end of FFY2019 for policies extending through FFY20, with no further premium payments. The increase in indirect professional services can be primarily attributed to legal fees related to the Falchi lease negotiations, as well as website maintenance and hosting fees. Ms. Powers also indicated that there may be some re-classification of expenses necessary before the fiscal year financials are finalized. Philip Trowbridge asked about TRNA, which is a term and line item in the prior period but not in the current six-month period. Ms. Powers was unsure why that was included

previously. It relates to the federal grant funds released, but is probably not an appropriate indicator for a non-profit or government agency.

b. Accounting Services Update (Appendix F-Summary of proposals)

Ms. Powers reiterated her displeasure with the current accounting firm, MBSATA, which has been slow to respond to requests for information and clarification, and in some cases completely unresponsive despite repeated inquiries. The Executive Committee discussed this in its April 2020 call. Ms. Powers has since procured an additional proposal from Jitasa, which has a much more structured, fixed pricing schedule for services than the other proposal from Your Part-Time Controller. Both proposals are more expensive than the current service plan which is \$700-800/month. However, the current level of service is unacceptable and inappropriate. Ms. Powers will be asking the Executive Committee to take action on a change in accounting firms prior to the September quarterly meeting so a new firm can be onboarded prior to the end of the current fiscal year. Philip Trowbridge advised that it is not uncommon to change accounting firms and any increase in fees can likely be justified by an increase in level of service.

c. FY2020 Budget Update

d. Funding and Grants Update

- CWA §106 FFY20 Grant status (\$728,000)
Ms. Powers reported that the workplan for the Commission's FFY20 106 assistance agreement has been approved and EPA was finalizing the budget review and an award should be forthcoming.
- LISS FFY20 Base Program Budget Request (\$192,797)
Ms. Powers has submitted the Commission's FFY20 grant application via grants.gov for Long Island Sound Study Base Program funding of \$192,797, as approved by the LISS Management Committee, to support its ongoing water quality monitoring program in far Western Long Island Sound. Thanks to the Town of Greenwich, IEC was able to document a match for the first time, which is critical since as the level of federal appropriation to the Long Island Sound Study increases, so does the required non-federal match.
- CWA §106 FFY18 Remaining Funding (\$219,651.94)
Ms. Powers reported that she will likely request a no-cost time extension from EPA to extend the project period and budget period of the FFY18 CWA §106 assistance agreement, which is currently set to close on September 30, 2020. Due to COVID-19.
- CWA §106 FY 19 Remaining Funding (\$833,667.45)
- LISS FY19 Remaining Funding (\$220,303)
- Save the Sound Funding
IEC is once again partnering with Save the Sound to participate in the Unified Water Study monitoring as well as perform analytical services related to chlorophyll a analyses on samples collected by study participants. Funding for IEC's monitoring is \$45,152. Ms. Powers is finalizing the agreement for chlorophyll a analyses with Save the Sound, which is estimated to be approximately an additional \$30,000 in funding.
- Indirect Rate Proposals
Ms. Powers reported that EPA Headquarters has approved a Final indirect rate of 45.2% for FFY19 and a provisional rate of 45.2% for FFY20 and FFY21.

e. IEC FY20-21 Budget Adoption (Appendix G) *

Ms. Powers reviewed the proposed FY20-21 Commission budget of \$1,207,275, which represents an approximate 5% increase over the FY19-20 budget. All operating funds in the budget are funded through awarded or projected grant funds as of 10/1/2020. Chair DeGaetano indicated that although a quorum was not present, Commissioner Scagnelli indicated via email that if his vote was needed on the budget or other voting item, he suggested the meeting be continued to obtain his vote. Philip Trowbridge suggested that the budget should consider and take into account the potential need for equipment to facilitate staff to work remotely, such as additional computer equipment or furniture.

4. Laboratory/Office Space Search Update

Ms. Powers gave an update on the search for new laboratory and office space for the Commission. Due to COVID-19, no significant developments have been made. Ms. Powers continues to keep in contact with BioBat and a broker from Cushman and Wakefield. There was a possibility of one space in BioBat where a tenant had requested additional time and management reached out to Ms. Powers as there was a possibility the tenant would not sign a lease for the space. The space was leased ultimately. Focus lately has been on the impact of COVID-19 on access to the Commission's facility in Staten Island.

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

a. Project and Updates:

- COVID-19 Impact on Laboratory and Field Operations

Ms. Powers gave an update on the impact COVID-19 has had on laboratory and field operations. As reported in the Executive Committee Meeting summaries, IEC went primarily remote mid-March. Although Ms. Powers was reporting to the laboratory 1-2 times per week through April, CSI further restricted access in late March and access has been limited to picking up the Commission's mail at the front gate. Staff have been working remotely, performing data entry and data reviews, reviewing and updating SOPs and QAPPs and preparing for the field season. Grant administration tasks such as progress reports, grant workplan and budget revisions, audit reports, laboratory certifications and renewals have also been the focus of staff activities. With the monitoring season upon us, Ms. Powers is focusing on getting water quality monitoring activities, particularly field activities, up and running. Ms. Powers requested one-time access to the laboratory last week to retrieve essential field equipment (YSI sondes, calibration materials, coolers, etc.) to enable water monitoring to resume. This request must be approved by the Dean of Science and Technology and permission is still pending.

It is unclear at what point laboratory activities at the College will be able to resume. Ms. Powers is working on a return to work plan, focused on field activities currently, based on guidance from the CDC, state and local health officials and resources on field monitoring in the time of COVID generated by others agencies and organizations. In addition to standard PPE and face coverings. this will include limiting staff, self-monitoring, dedicated equipment. When laboratory operations resume, IEC may go to 6-7 day a week operation to enable us to maintain work schedule while limiting lab capacity to 2 persons at a time. Ms. Powers is looking into one backup plan which is temporary, shared lab space at a biotechnology incubator owned by SUNY

Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn. This was suggested by BioBat when Ms. Powers first reached out to BioBat to inquire about temporary lab space.

Several statutory representatives provided updates on state environmental monitoring operations, which have been similarly halted or curtailed. Philip Trowbridge reported that CTDEEP is currently not up and running regarding field operations, but they are hoping to get out mid-June. Modifications include a detailed safety plan and modification to starting and ending locations of boat surveys. Alena Baldwin-Brown reported that NJDEP has made some progress to slowly resume marine water monitoring, particularly with shellfish sanitation program, beach monitoring and cyanobacteria related to HABS. A return-to-work plan is being developed/reviewed by upper management. Selvin Southwell reported that permittees are continuing to self-monitor on essentially an honor system and may discuss inspections with IEC. Commissioner Baron expressed concern that NYC permittees are not being monitored or have active oversight by an independent or outside agency

- Citizen Science Activities update

IEC's Coordinated Volunteer Monitoring Program has been postponed due to COVID-19. We are working with groups on safety plans and hope to begin the program at the end of June. IEC is working with three groups this year: Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership, FreshKills Park Alliance, and Hackensack Riverkeeper, who have all confirmed their interest in continuing their participation including the collection of water samples.

- Long Island Sound Monitoring

IEC's Long Island Sound water quality monitoring program is scheduled to resume weekly surveys on June 30th, with weekly sampling for 12 weeks through mid-September. IEC's April and May monthly runs were cancelled due to COVID-19. A joint report combining CTDEEP and IEC 2019 hypoxia season data was released in May.

- Unified Water Study

IEC's participation in the Unified Water study, which consists of monitoring in Little Neck Bay and Manhasset Bay twice a month, is scheduled to resume mid-June. The study, which normally runs May through October, has been pushed back to a June start date by Save the Sound, the study coordinator.

- USGS

USGS has indicated it hopes to again work with IEC to perform monitoring in the Bronx and Harlem Rivers for pathogens and other parameters in support of the Federal Urban Waters Program

- Laboratory Proficiency studies and audits

Laboratory certification activities have been ongoing, including renewals, some proficiencies, and audit reports. NYSDOH has cancelled its April Non-Potable water proficiency study and July non-potable water chemistry proficiency study.

b. Other meetings and project/grant updates

- Continuous Monitoring Subcommittee with NY-NJ Harbor and Estuary Program

IEC continues to coordinate a Continuous Monitoring Subcommittee of the HEP water quality workgroup and IEC shared waters monitoring workgroup with HEP. Remote meetings occurred in March and May, with presentations by groups that have continuous monitoring programs. Meeting minutes and presentations will be available on IEC's website. The next meeting is scheduled for August.

- Social Media and email newsletter launch

The Commission is very close to launching its social media platforms and email newsletter. Social media platforms will include Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, and pages should be launched by end of June. The email newsletter will be developed using the Mailchimp platform and should be launched by end of summer (September). Email newsletter will be quarterly and highlight 1-2 features stories on IEC activities, as well as shorter updates that may include partner updates, staff profiles, upcoming events.

- Other meetings

All partner meetings continue to be held remotely due to COVID-19. IEC continues to participate in HEP, LISS, NJWMC committees and workgroup.

c. Staffing

Staffing is status quo with hiring and onboarding frozen due to COVID. Ms. Powers hopes to be able to resume hiring, particularly interns, in the coming months.

6. Old Business

a. Commissioner vacancies

As most of you know, Robert Elburn retired at the end of March. Bob was a dedicated statutory representative from the NYSDEC for many years and will be missed. Ms. Powers thanked him for his service and expressed a desire to make sure his service to the Commission was appropriately recognized with a resolution at the appropriate time, ideally when we can all be together again in-person.

7. New Business

No new business.

8. Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020

Wednesday, September 2nd, 2020

Wednesday, December 2nd, 2020

9. Adjourn

APPENDICES:

- A- March 4th, 2020 Annual Meeting ~~Notes~~-Minutes
- B- March 16th 2020 Special Executive Committee Call Notes
- C- April 17th, 2020 Executive Committee Call Notes
- D- Profit and Loss Statement
- E-Balance Sheet
- F-Accounting Services Proposals Summary
- G-Proposed IEC FY2020-2021 Budget
- H- EPA Awards Progress Reports