

**MINUTES
INTERSTATE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**Quarterly Meeting
Wednesday, December 6th, 2017
10:00 am**

**Hudson River Foundation
17 Battery Place
Suite 915
New York, NY 10004**

1. Call to order and Roll Call

Commissioners in Attendance:

New York:

Judith Baron (via phone)

Robert Elburn, NYSDEC

Rose Trentman (via phone)

New Jersey:

Jill Lipoti (via phone)

Bruce Friedman, NJDEP (via phone)

Katie Lebindinsky, delegate for Loel, Muetter NJDOH (via phone)

Connecticut:

Patricia Sesto (via phone)

John Atkin (via phone)

Pamela Scully CTDPH (via phone)

Denise Ruzicka CTDEEP (via phone)

Also in attendance:

Evelyn Powers, IEC

Danielle Alexander, IEC

Heather Radcliffe, NEIWPC (via phone)

Aimee Boucher, EPA Region 2 (via phone)

Phil DeGaetano (via phone)

A Quorum was present. Chairwoman Sesto called the meeting to order at approximately 10:15am

2. Approval of minutes from the September 6th, 2017 Quarterly meeting (Appendix A)

Commissioner Sesto requested a motion to approve the minutes of the September 6th, 2017 quarterly meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Baron, which was seconded by Commissioner Scully. With no Commissioners opposing, the minutes were approved.

3. IEC Finances

a. Treasurer's Report (Appendix B)

Ms. Powers reviewed the income and expenditures reflected in the Treasurer's Report (Appendix B). Commissioner Atkin requested a motion approve and file the Treasurer's report. Chair Sesto made a motion to approve the report, which was seconded by Commissioner Trentman.

b. FY2017-2018 Appropriations Update

Ms. Powers updated the Commission on status of appropriations. The FY17-18 appropriation from New York (\$41,600) has been received. The FY17-18 appropriation from New Jersey (\$15,000) has been invoiced but not received. The FY17-18 appropriation from Connecticut has not yet been invoiced.

c. Appropriations for FY2018-19

Ms. Powers provided an update on appropriation requests for FY2018-2019. Ms. Powers met with Venetia Lannon, NYS Deputy Secretary for the Environment in October to request increased appropriation in Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget, and to request Ms. Lannon to see what she can do push for appointments to IEC's Commissioner vacancies in New York. Ms. Lannon indicated she was willing to advocate for IEC in the area of increased appropriations and the filling of vacancies. Commissioner Baron inquired about what steps should be taken by next in terms of letters from legislators. Ms. Powers replied that the guidance she has received from legislators is to wait and see what the Governor puts in his Executive Budget, then reach out to legislators in the IEC District, especially those on the Environmental Conservation Committees. Annual reports to Governors and Legislators are due January 25th. Reports will be accompanied by a letter highlighting the need for member states to increase appropriations in order to ensure IEC's eligibility to apply for and receive CWA Section 106 grant. Commissioner Lipoti suggested that the letters also get sent to Governor Murphy's transition team.

4. Senior Manager's Report

a. FFY 18 Fourth Quarter Report of Grant Activities (Appendix C)

Ms. Powers referred to the FY18 fourth quarter report of grant activities. Ms. Powers said some of these activities will be highlighted in the Senior Manager's report, but that Commissioners should refer to the quarterly report for more details. Commissioners should reach out to Ms. Powers if they would like more information on any project activities.

b. NJDEP Laboratory Audit

NJDEP completed an on-site assessment of the IEC Laboratory on November 15th. IEC was still awaiting the final report from the Office of Quality Assurance. IEC has a limited number of parameters that are certified through NJDEP. IEC will have to apply for an updated dissolved oxygen method certification, to reflect the use of optical (or luminescent) DO probes, and will be working with NJDEP to possibly change the method by which we analyze Chlorophyll a.

c. Update on Historical WLIS Hypoxia Data Synthesis Project

The project to synthesize, analyze, and summarize IEC's historical Western LIS dataset is moving quickly. The QAPP was approved in October by EPA Region 2. Ms. Powers has had several webinar meetings with the contractor, with another scheduled for this afternoon after the meeting, to review progress and provide input on tasks completed and in progress

d. Project Highlights and Updates:

- 2017 western LIS Hypoxia Season Summary
IEC completed its 27th consecutive year of WLIS monitoring in September. IEC will be working with CTDEEP to produce a combined season summary.
 - Unified Water Study Little Neck Bay
The Unified Water Study Little Neck Bay monitoring wrapped up on October 17th. IEC will hopefully be continuing and expanding its participation in the program in 2018.
 - Chlorophyll a sample analyses for Unified Water Study
Chlorophyll a sample analyses for the Unified Water Study was completed by end of November. IEC performed chlorophyll a analyses on samples from all New York participants in the study. Through an agreement with Save the Sound, IEC received \$6,000 in funding to perform these analyses.
 - FY17 Facility Inspections
FY17 scheduled inspections were complete as of September 30th.
 - FY18 Inspections
FY18 inspections planned include 12 inspections, with sampling of expanded parameters including Enterococcus and Nitrogen at Connecticut Water Pollution Control Facilities and approximately 10-11 Industrial facilities, also in Connecticut.
 - Federal Urban Waters Partnership (Harlem River)
IEC performed some analyses at the request of EPA in support of a project along the Harlem River coordinated by USGS. The project is assessing water and sediment quality in the vicinity of a proposed public access site along the Harlem River. IEC performed analyses of sediment and water samples for metals, TDS, Enterococcus.
 - Passaic
Work on the Passaic and Second River Pathogen Trackdown project is essentially on hold while EPA and NJDEP discuss the approach to compliance and enforcement actions they will take as a result of some illicit discharges detected.
 - IEC Quality Management Plan (QMP)
IEC's Quality Management Plan was submitted to EPA Regions 1 and 2 for approval. Approval of the QMP is a critical step toward allowing IEC to prepare QAPPs and move ahead on work once the FY18 106 workplan is approved.
- e. Other meetings and project/grant updates
- Partner Management and Workgroup Meetings
IEC continues to participate on committees and workgroups of regional partnerships. Recent and upcoming meetings include the NY-NJ HEP Management Committee and Water Quality Workgroup, LISS Management Committee, NJ Water Monitoring Council.
 - Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
IEC will be holding at least one meeting of the TAC in the coming months. Ms. Powers will schedule the TAC in conjunction with EPA. Ideally the TAC will provide a forum to discuss work products, such as the draft report from Industrial Economics on IEC's western LIS data. Commissioner Sesto stated that the TAC is important and asked whether the TAC has matured, and encouraged that the membership and meeting schedule be considered closely to ensure it is fulfilling its mission and remains central to IEC's workplan development. Commissioner Lipoti added that she has attended the last TAC meeting and found it a positive forum, and added that greater academic representation on the TAC would be beneficial and should be pursued.
- f. Update and Discussion on Website Re-design
IEC had a kick-off meeting with the website contractor, Acuta Digital, in November.

- Commissioner and stakeholder input
The contractor will be holding a stakeholder meeting to gather thoughts and feedback on current website. The contractor is also willing to hold one-on-one telephone meetings with Commissioners or other stakeholders and will be developing survey questions to solicit additional feedback on the website
- Logo Re-design
The contractor will also be developing a logo. The contractor emphasized that if the Commission is considering a new logo, now is the time to do it. The logo will be incorporated into the website, and the design should factor in the fact that as the Commission re-invents itself, web pages and social media feeds tend to be viewed on smaller platforms (phones, tablets) and logos get scaled down in size. Ms. Powers and Commissioners expressed the need for an updated logo. The contractor will distribute concepts for consideration and feedback.

5. Staff Presentation: 2017 WLIS Hypoxia Monitoring and Unified Water Study Monitoring in Little Neck Bay

(Evelyn Powers and Danielle Alexander, IEC Intern)

Commissioner Friedman asked about timing of monitoring in light of the fact that DO conditions tend to be lowest early in the morning. Ms. Alexander and Ms. Powers explained that the staff do try to get start sampling as early as possible. The WLIS survey sampling spans approximately 6am to 11am. As 22 stations are visited in one day, not all stations can be visited in the very early morning hours. Commissioner Friedman encouraged the Commission to explore continuous DO monitoring and suggested IEC reach out to Bob Schuster with NJDEP Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring, who does a lot of work with continuous monitors. Ms. Powers indicated this is an area of great interest, both from the TAC and Shared Waterways Monitoring Workgroup as well as other regional partners, and is an area that would be logical for IEC to expand its participation. There are logistics with maintenance costs, risk of sensor loss, and data retrieval that need to be considered and researched.

6. Grants, Funding

g. FFY17 consolidated budget report (Appendix D)

Ms. Powers reviewed the FFY17 consolidated budget report, which shows a “carryover” balance in available funding of \$693,232 as of September 30th, 2017. This is approximately one year of funding, and includes funding from all grant sources, including 106 funds, Long Island Sound grant funds, and funds associated with Unified Water Study.

h. FFY18 consolidated budget report (Appendices E)

Ms. Powers also reviewed the consolidated FFY2018 budget report, which lists the anticipated sources and amount of funding for FFY2018. Ms. Powers noted that the FFY18 budget is not finalized, with the government operating under a continuing resolution. IEC submitted a budget and workplan for \$665,000 for EPA CWA Section 106 funds, which has not yet been awarded (although the workplan has been conditionally approved) pending the federal FY 18 budget being finalized. IEC has been awarded \$81,245 in Long Island Sound funding (FY17 funding) to fund IEC’s summer 2018 WLIS monitoring.

i. Western Long Island Sound (LISS) funding for 2018

IEC had submitted a pre-proposal for FY2018 to fund Summer 2019 WLIS monitoring. IEC continues to request LISS to incorporate IEC's WLIS monitoring program into the LIS Water Quality Monitoring program, which is an LIS "Base" funded activity. Base-funded activities can be reasonably assured to receive funding from year to year.

- j. Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program Grant Opportunity
Ms. Powers presented a funding opportunity as a result of an RFP released by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Among eligible activities the RFP lists expanding a current citizen science water quality monitoring program and incorporating restoration efforts. Ms. Powers indicated this is a very promising opportunity to bring together regional partners. As IEC is not a 501(c)3 organization, IEC cannot apply directly. Options include partnering with NEIWPC, which is a 501 (c)3, or partnering with the College of Staten Island (CSI) which is eligible. Commissioners Sesto, Elburn, and Baron expressed that it would be most desirable to pursue the funding through a partnership with CSI, since we have been trying to strengthen our partnership with the College. Ms. Powers agreed and said she would contact the College and explore the RFP with the staff.
- k. Unified Water Study
As mentioned above, IEC's monitoring in Little Neck Bay, supported by the Unified Water Study, wrapped up in October. IEC hopes to continue and expand its collaboration with the Unified Water Study in 2018

7. Transition to Independence

Ms. Powers reviewed the milestones that have been completed in regards to transition, as well as new milestones and those still pending.

Milestones:

- a. Grants.gov registration updated
- b. Provisional Indirect Rate Approved
- c. FY17 Long Island Sound Monitoring Budget Award (for Summer 2018 monitoring).
- d. Transition Plan to EPA
- e. FY18 CWA Section 106 Application Submission Update
- f. FY18 Long Island Sound Monitoring Budget Pre-proposal submitted (for Summer 2019 monitoring).
- g. October 13th transition meeting at NEIWPC
- h. Staff Transition Date (9/30/2018)
- i. Quality Management Plan Submitted to EPA Regions 1 and 2

Next Steps:

- a. Identify FFY19 CWA 106 Grant Match
Commissioner Sesto indicated that she anticipates that the Town of Greenwich match to continue.
- b. Commissioner briefing book
- c. Employee handbook and Administrative SOPs
- d. Payroll company (ADP)
- e. Part-time bookkeeper

f. Insurance

8. Old Business

a. Commissioner vacancies

Ms. Powers is continuing to work along with member state Commissioners, on filling vacancies with valuable candidates. With the Gubernatorial transition in New Jersey, nominations will probably need to be re-submitted.

b. Executive Committee vacancies

Commissioners were reminded that the bylaw revision in 2014 expanded the Executive Committee to include two members from each state. With elections to be held at the Annual meeting in March, Ms. Powers and Commissioner Sesto urged Commissioners to consider serving on the Executive Committee.

9. New Business

10. Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday, March 7th, 2018

Wednesday, June 6th, 2018

Wednesday, September 5th, 2018

Wednesday, December 5th, 2018

11. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:20pm

APPENDICES:

A- September 6th, 2017 Meeting Minutes

B- Treasurer's Report of IEC finances (August 1st 2017-October 31st, 2017)

C- FY 18 Fourth Quarter Report of Grant Activities

D- FFY17 consolidated budget report

E- FFY18 consolidated budget report

Respectfully Submitted,

Evelyn Powers
Executive Director