

Lake Gaston Weed Control Council (LGWCC)

January 28, 2025, 7pm Zoom Meeting Minutes

Directors Attendance by County:

Mecklenburg- Elton Brown, Morris Aycock Northampton- Julian Phillips
Brunswick- John Zubrod, Reggie Owens, Wally Sayko
Warren- Jeff Zimmer, John Franz, Tare Davis
Halifax- Dia Denton, Christina Wells, Lynn Little, Jimmie Silvers, Chris Fitts

Guests: Troy Goldsby, Tracy Thompson, Judy Waters, Rob Emmens, Mark Matthews, Rob Richardson.

Call to Order: President Elton Brown. 7pm

Roll Call of Attendees: Secretary Wally Sayko reported 14 directors, all counties represented, and Quorum met.

Note: At an earlier meeting on January 9, 2025, the July 2024 meeting minutes were approved. Motion by John Zubrod and 2nd by John Franz and approved.

Additions to Agenda: Include an old business item of action; strategy to address Dominion Energy support. Motion to approve amended agenda: Jeff Zimmer, 2nd John Franz and approved.

Election of Officers for 2025: Secretary Wally Sayko, read the By-Laws on approving election of officers. The floor was open for nominations. A motion was made to vote on the current Executive Board for another term. Motion to approve by Jeff Zimmer and 2nd by Reggie Ownes and approved.

Treasurer Reports:

Treasurer Jeff Zimmer sent via email the Treasure's Report prior to the meeting. Income YTD\$1,580,693 vs. Budget of \$1,592,875. All counties except for Halifax have made \$116,000 contributions. Expenses YTD \$670,358. Funds in short term CDs: \$1,200,000.

Jeff shared the Treatment Cost per Calendar Year: 2023- \$1,048,239, 2024- \$1,444,411 and 2025 estimated \$1,511,000.

Halifax County discussion on funding:

Halifax has not budgeted or approved any funding for the fiscal year 2025. Halifax is awaiting approval from N.C. DEQ for the delegation of statutory authority for hydrilla management. It is anticipated that approval will be prior to April 1, 2025. D. Reid Wilson has just recently assumed the role of Secretary of DEQ. Ms. Denton expects the new secretary to respond quickly. DEQ has budgeted \$75,000 for hydrilla management to LGWCC. Ms. Denton says that Halifax is considering funding the LGWCC with matching funds for this amount.

Ms. Denton indicated that additional funding above that for hydrilla management would depend on NC DEQ rules revising cyanobacteria treatments and funding. DEQ must review and publish rules about cyanobacteria before any funding is available. Rob Emmens with DEQ said he was not aware of any progress by a work group that was assigned last year to begin the rules revision process. His best guess is that this will not happen this year, but possibly in 2026.

Jeff noted the clock is ticking. Funding is required by April 1st so that 2025 treatment plans can include Halifax County. Commissioner Silvers noted he would carry the message back to the Halifax County commissioners.

Future of the Pete Deschenes Lake Gaston Stakeholders Board:

Jeff shared a brief history of the Stakeholders Organization. It was formed in 2006, and the primary stakeholders were: the 5 counties, LGA, DEQ, LGWCC, fishing and wildlife organizations from N.C./Va. The participation has fallen off in the past years. The LGA is starting a discussion on the future of this organization. Since the departure of Pete Deschenes last year, it has not had a leader. The Stakeholders have been instrumental in bringing Hydrilla into a “maintenance mode”. The use of grass carp and herbicides helped achieve this goal. The fishery is healthy. A Stakeholders meeting is now scheduled for the morning of March 11th. (More information will be available when plans are finished). There will be some speakers to share the history, purpose, and results of the Stakeholders efforts.

Following that meeting there, the LGWCC will hear Technical Advisory Group (TAG) recommendations for 2025. Jeff made a motion to amend the fy25 budget to add \$1000 which should cover half the expenses for the March 11 meetings, refreshments, and meals. It was 2nd by John Zubrod and approved.

Dominion Energy Support: John Franz

John reminded us that there was an action request at our July 2024 meeting by Commissioner T. Davis. How can the LGWCC gain additional support from Dominion Energy? John and Jeff had several discussions. John did his research into their license and shoreline plan. No direct link was found but there were some indirect possibilities. John will continue the action.

Public Comments: NONE

Closed Meeting: At 7:35 pm the board of directors went into a “closed meeting” per the code of North Carolina.

The discussion centered around bids for applicator services and chemical supply for 2025-2027.

Open Meeting: At 7:50 pm the directors came back into an “open meeting” per the code of North Carolina.

Vote: A vote was taken on approval of what vendors to be awarded the contracts.

The following were awarded contracts; Cygnet Enterprises- chemicals. PLM-hydrilla treatments, and Aqua Services- lynchbya treatments. A motion by Jeff Zimmer and 2nd by John Zubrod and approved.

The directors agreed on a summer meeting Thursday evening July 17th at the Lake Gaston Volunteer Fire Department (Bracey).

Adjournment: at 8pm a motion by John Zubrod and 2nd by John Franz and approved.

Submitted by:

Wally Sayko, Secretary, Lake Gaston Weed Control Council

January 30, 2025