



## MEETING SUMMARY

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE | MEETING #1  
CAYUGA COUNTY WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY | REGIONAL MASTER PLAN  
NOVEMBER 1, 2017

### OVERVIEW

The Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority (CCWSA) held the first Citizen Advisory Committee meeting on November 1, 2017, from 3:00 – 4:30 PM at 7413 County House Road, in Auburn, New York. This document contains a summary of the meeting.

### WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Doug Selby, Advisor to CCWSA welcomed the group and thanked them for attending the first meeting of the Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting.

Susan Hopkins, Highland Planning, reviewed the agenda for the meeting, which is summarized below:

- Introductions
- CCWSA Purpose and Project Background
- Role of the CAC
- Scope and Purpose of the Study
- Importance of Clean Water

Susan asked each committee member to introduce themselves by providing their name and affiliation. A list of meeting attendees can be found in Appendix A.

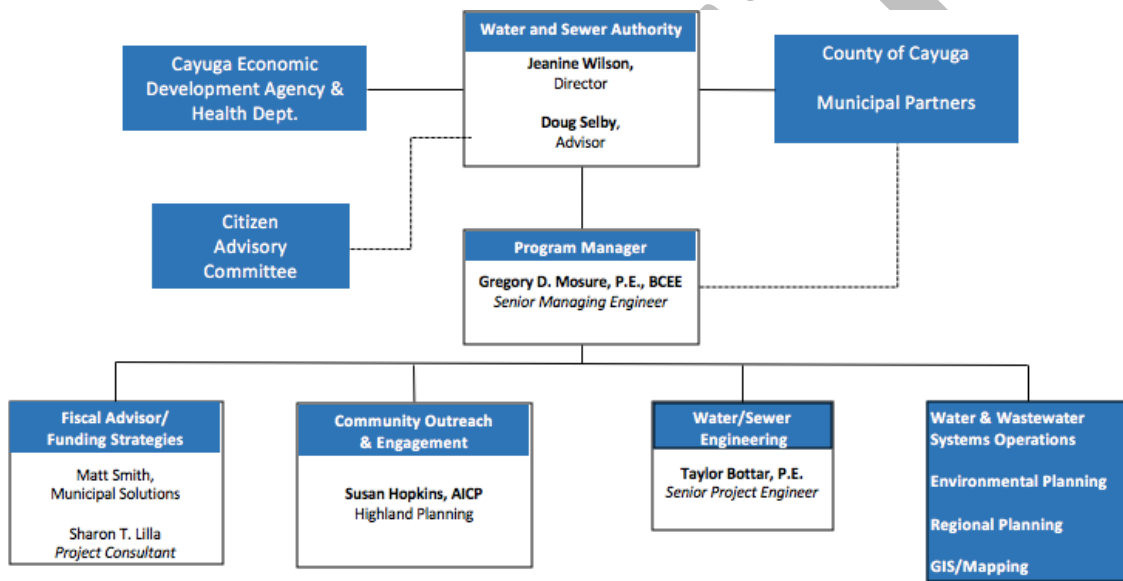
### PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Greg Mosure (Barton & Loguidice) presented the project scope, background and purpose, the role of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and the project's public engagement process.

There has been interest in Cayuga County in developing a regional master plan driven by concerns about public health and water quality, redundancy and resiliency of water supplies,

aging infrastructure, financing of capital improvements, and the desire to identify opportunities for improved operational cost-savings. After securing a \$100,000 Local Government Efficiency Grant through the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS), with a matching commitment of \$100,000 from Cayuga County, the Authority is moving forward with a regional master plan that will include assessments of the current water and sewerage system, exploration of the possibility of utilizing alternative water sources as well as studying and making recommendations about expansion of the current public water system to unserved areas.

The role of the CAC is to provide feedback and guidance on the project, share information on the project with constituents and help promote participation among community members. The chart below illustrates the relationship between the CAC, the CCWSA and other project partners.



The slides used in the presentation are attached as Appendix B.

## DISCUSSION

Susan Hopkins and Christopher Dunne (Highland Planning) facilitated a discussion with the entire group, organized around four questions. The discussion is summarized below.

### Question 1: Existing Systems

#### Have you ever experienced a failure of water or sewer infrastructure?

- Cayuga Lake last summer: had to boil water due to a water main break in Auburn
- Local business has experienced water system failures because of broken lines;

- The sewer lines below the Chamber of Commerce have had occasional filtration issues possibly related to capacity (or grease);
- Others experienced main tank failure in February due to the cold; it was extremely expensive to fix;
- Other businesses have seen issues with backing up. We can't discharge water fast enough;
- Wells College experiences pumps, sanitation, main breaks. All of this is costly to the college. An alternative water source would be great;
- Water level issues around local dam exposed various layers of bureaucracy (Army Corps of Engineers, local authorities, etc.);
- Local farm has water supplied by GE and they've seen a host of problems.

### Question 2: Water Quality

#### **Have you experienced algal blooms or other water quality issues (turbidity, public health advisories) on Owasco or Cayuga Lake?**

- Wells College has experienced this and seen firsthand the impacts on recreation;
- Nucor uses silt density index (SDI) and used to see high SDI;
- Tourism has been adversely affected by algal blooms. It is even for those who do not want to swim. There are negative visual impacts. These blooms will continue to affect short-term rentals, hotels, etc.;
- Owasco has slowly gotten more reeds, more blooms and just generally seen the water quality decrease. The medical facility does not want to expose patients and staff to poor water quality. We need to get aggressive about treating algal blooms;
- Poor water quality could impact employee recruitment for local businesses;
- Owasco Lake does have an advantage: quick flush time (just five years), compared to Seneca which is 80 years; Quick flush time makes it easier to clean; we also have a strong septic inspection system in the area and we're all in this together!
- Almost had to issue "Do Not Drink" order last year;
- 250 people still take water directly from the lake.

### Question 3: The Unserved

#### **Do you live in an area where no public sewer or water infrastructure exist?**

- One individual has a well. The water quality is good but if anything goes wrong (fire in the house, etc.) it would present a challenge; aware of others in county with wells who have seen them run dry; avoids public water because of quality issues but has found that bottled water is not necessarily the best either;
- Some people only have a holding system on the lake so water quality is something that we have to act quickly on;
- One business's customer spent \$10,000 on their own water filtration system and still has health concerns about the public water supply;

- From a development perspective, areas not having public water infrastructure can impact decisions;
- Area of County along Lake Ontario is extremely under-developed in terms of public water infrastructure and there have been impacts on tourism as a result;
- Fire protection is always a concern in areas without public water infrastructure;
- Sometimes it is difficult to determine capacity in a given area which presents a challenge for businesses;
- Towns really need to improve zoning; this is outside the project's scope but is certainly noted.

#### Question 4: Defining Success

##### **What would a successful Regional Master Plan for Water and Sewer include?**

- A successful plan will provide visibility on the current system and areas where there can be growth;
- "Will-nilly" pricing system creates inconsistency and is prohibitive to growth; we need to regionalize rates;
- understand where we can upgrade;
- need to expand sewer to protect water quality;
- consolidate to take advantage of economies of scale; get rid of the fiefdoms
- get out of our siloes (collaborate); for example, when the DPW rips up a road, they should talk to the water authority to see if anything needs to be done to pipes underground;
- abatement: are different cleaning methods (skimming, divers ripping up reeds, etc.) worth exploring?
- Best remediation practices worth exploring but at the end of the day you need to go to the source;
- Water can be an emotional issue; a successful plan needs to determine priorities and be implementable;
- Don't lose sight of social justice issues (inequity) like health and poverty;
- Need to unify County around making water the #1 priority; this could help open up funding opportunities;
- Consult others who have already been thinking about this issue; don't reinvent the wheel.

#### **WRAP-UP**

After the discussion, Greg Mosure asked if there were any additional comments people wanted to share. He announced that the next CAC meeting would likely be held in January of 2018.

## APPENDIX A: MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Jim Beckwith, Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA)  
Brian Brown, Wells College/Town of Aurora  
Keven Bucklin, Cayuga Milk Ingredients  
Sue Edinger, Inns of Aurora  
Gordon Elwell, Nucor Steel  
Larry Lipfert, Honoco Rd. Assoc.  
Ray Lockwood, Cayuga County Farm Bureau  
John McCadden, Cayuga Milk Ingredients  
Tom Minicucci, Health Central Medical Facility  
Fran Mitchell, CCWSA Board  
Demetrius Murphy, Lyons National Bank  
Eileen O'Connor, Cayuga County Health Department  
Kelly O'Hara, Oakwood Dairy LLC Cayuga Milk Ingredients  
Bill Ryan, Cayuga Lake National Bank  
Janice Sarnicola, Senior Clerk, CCWSA  
Doug Selby, CCWSA Advisor  
Meg Vanek, Cayuga County Tourism  
Tracy Verrner, Cayuga Economic Development Agency (CEDA)  
Grant Wall, Cayuga Milk Ingredients  
Jeanine Wilson, CCWSA Director

### Consultant Team:

Greg Mosure, Barton & Loguidice  
Susan Hopkins, Highland Planning  
Christopher Dunne, Highland Planning

## APPENDIX B: PRESENTATION SLIDES

(see project website)