



# Onondaga County Legislature

**JAMIE McNAMARA**  
Clerk

**TIMOTHY T. BURTIS**  
Chairman

**TAMMY BARBER**  
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York 13202  
Phone: 315.435.2070 • [onondagacountylegislature@ongov.net](mailto:onondagacountylegislature@ongov.net) • [www.ongov.net/legislature](http://www.ongov.net/legislature)

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES – APRIL 16, 2024** **JULIE ABBOTT, CHAIR**

**MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Kelly, Ms. Cody, Mr. Romeo, Mr. Brown**

**ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, also see attached list**

Chair Abbott called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

### **1. OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENT: Jesse McMahan, Director**

#### **a. Amending the 2024 Onondaga County Budget to Accept Grant Funds from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (\$156,000)**

##### **PURPOSE:**

This is a budget transfer resolution to accept grant funding through the NYSDEC WQIP Program.

##### **OBJECTIVE/ WORK PLAN:**

Onondaga County will partner with Skaneateles Lake Association (SLA) to install a series of check dams, vegetated swales and soil stabilizing mats in two intermittent streams in the Town of Skaneateles within the Winding Way residential neighborhood. The project will reduce the velocity of stormwater flow and reduce sediment loading to nearby Skaneateles Lake. The County will act as a pass-through for funding in contracting with SLA and Winding Way Association.

##### **FUNDING SOURCE:**

Funding is through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC) Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) for non-agricultural nonpoint source projects or programs that improve a documented water quality impairment, promote flood risk reduction, enhanced flood and climate resiliency, and restoration or that protect a drinking water source.

##### **BUDGET:**

\$156,000

- Project started with Home Owners Association on Skaneateles Lake called Winding Way Association
- Winding Way approached Office of Environment to help with Skaneateles Lake issues:
  - Bank stabilization
  - Erosion
  - Sediment loading
- County grantor of \$30,000 directly to SLA and Winding Way to start engineering drawings for this project
- Next step
  - Town of Skaneateles overwhelmed with Nine Element Project - did not want to be submitter/applicant for money
  - SLA/Winding Way asked if Office of Environment/CNY Planning Board would submit on their behalf
- Pass through money
  - Goes into contract with SLA who will be the contractor/project manager
  - Will manage funds to be sure funds used appropriately

- Will work with SLA to ensure they meet progress reports and anything else needed

#### **Questions/Comments from the Committee:**

- With runoff and stream bank stabilization – the nutrient load from the soil feeds the harmful algae blooms
- Algae Blooms are the poisonous problem for the unfiltered drinking water source (city of Syracuse and Skaneateles)
- First time the county has done private partnership with homeowner association
  - 25% match from SLA and homeowners who have fronted that
- Where is this located?
  - 1/3 of the way down on west side of the lake; quite steep
  - Appropriated stormwater measures were not put in
  - Overtime as build out happened, HOA realized they were big contributors to the mass settlement going in
- Are there other spots where other groups are contributing to this? Could the county work with them?
  - Skaneateles has different projects going on
  - One area on the east side is Shotwell Brook
    - DEC has taken this under new program called Resilient New York Program
    - Program looks at flood resiliency in specific water bodies
    - Also doing one at Nine Mile Creek (Marcellus to Onondaga Lake)
    - DEC is looking at modeling and run off
  - Almost done with Nine Element Plan that has a lot of this in it, but plan is more robust
  - Once Nine Element goes to public meeting in May, this will spur more projects and looking at specific areas
- SLA does a great job with fundraising and hired Mark Burger (Soil & Water Conservation District) to help with projects
- Shotwell outside the village and goes directly to the intake pipe
  - DEC had a kickoff meeting for Shotwell and Mark Burger provided binder of information to them about the project
  - A lot of focus around this body of water
- Does the Nine Element plan look at all the watersheds?
  - Yes, Nine Element will take on more
  - It is scientifically modeled and data driven vs. a watershed management plan (surface level)
- Are grants an area that the office of Environment is targeting as much as they can?
  - Yes and no
  - There is a CFA period (Consolidated Funding Application) – one-stop shop portal to apply for grants
  - With this process a lot of people approached office
  - Office of Environment started to apply and there is a lot of money given to these projects by NYS
  - The Environmental Bond Act is \$4.2 billion for projects like this
  - Managing grants can be onerous; each grant unique in what they request
  - Nine Elements is a Department of State funded grant – much more strict for requirements
  - DEC continuously asks why people are not applying for money
    - Restricting just municipalities; county does not have the resources all the time
    - Suggested opening up to Lake Associations, Regional Planning Boards, OCRRA's, OCWAs
    - State authorities that are not always the appropriate applicant
    - Would see more funding opportunities if opened up
  - Managing contracts is not a straight forward process
    - e.g. DEC switched to new financial system and half of office of Environment grants did not get transferred

***A motion was made by Mr. Romeo, seconded by Ms. Cody, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

**2. WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION:** Ben Yaus, First Chief Deputy County Attorney, Law Department; Jesse McMahon, Office of Environment Director

**a. Authorizing the County Executive to Renew or Enter into Intermunicipal Agreements to Provide Services to Municipalities within Onondaga County to Assist those Municipalities in Complying With Department of Environmental Conservation Stormwater Permit Requirements**

- Same 5 year renewal program (2008, 2013, 2019)
- MS4 - Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems
- For municipalities that have separate stormwater discharge to a water body and need MS4 permit
- 4 pieces:
  - Hotline – no cost
  - Outflow Inspection – no cost
  - Source track (if requested) – \$60/hour
  - Laboratory Analysis of MS4 constituents – charge cost
- 19 villages, 14 towns eligible
- Approached CNY Stormwater Coalition (towns and villages in urban area) and re-asked if they are interested
- Reassessing with new permits that came through in January
- Anticipate 25 municipalities again
- The new agreement incorporates the updates to the MS4 permit regulations into the new IMA
- It is open to any MS4 municipality who would like to partake for the next five years

**Questions/Comments from the Committee:**

- Please explain the MS4 permit
  - The County has an MS4 permit
  - In the Syracuse Urban Area, which is most of the county
  - Hold a service through an IMA with every town/village interested in hiring County to track an illicit discharge
    - e.g. kitchen grease being dumped into a grassy swale
    - The hotline is called to report
    - WEP goes out to investigate
    - The restaurant was tossing cooking oil not kitchen grease
- Do these incidents happen day to day?
  - No, however, the hotline is always there
- Does the county do spills too, or is that just Soil & Water?
  - No, not under this specifically

***A motion was made by Dr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Respectfully submitted,

COMMITTEE: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE  
DATE: APRIL 16, 2024



DEBBIE KAMINSKI, Assistant Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Jesse McMahon	Environment
Darcie Lesniak	Leg
Nancy Koway	EX
Jim Beube	Leg
John DeSantis	Leg
Joe Fratantoni	Counsel
Ben Yaus	Law