

St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council
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MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday May 18, 2022 at 6:00 PM
2nd-Floor Conference Room, Public Safety Complex
49½ Court Street, Canton, NY

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Rau called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Tenbusch read a Land Acknowledgement, provided by Tony David, SRMT Environment Division:

“As we meet today, let us first give thanks and acknowledge that the land upon which we are gathered is part of traditional indigenous territories, including the Rotinonshionni (Low-dee-no-SHOO-nee), the People of the Longhouse, also known as the Iroquois Confederacy; and the Kanienkehaka (Ga-nyun-geh-HA-gah), the People of the Land of Flint, also known as the Mohawk Nation.”

3. Roll Call, Determination of Quorum. *A quorum was present.*

Members present: Catherine Bennett, Chair; Herb Bullock; Lucas Hanss; Richard Marshall; Sue Rau; Lance Rudiger; Tiernan Smith; William Stephens III; Nicole Terminelli; Rod Tozzi; Brian Washburn.

Members absent: Dustin Bowman, Secretary; Joe Brant.

There are three vacancies.

Guests: Chris Navitsky, Lake George Association.

Staff: Dakota Casserly; John Tenbusch.

4. Acceptance of Order of Business, Items for New Business, Items for Unfinished Business

New Business

- Discussion on nuclear energy/power (Tenbusch).

Unfinished Business

- Follow-up with Jon Montan about Oswegatchie River canoe launch (Bullock).

5. Approval of the Minutes of the March, April 2022 EMC Meetings

a. Bullock commended Tenbusch for his presentation on river advisory councils (RAC) and suggested there be more public notice.

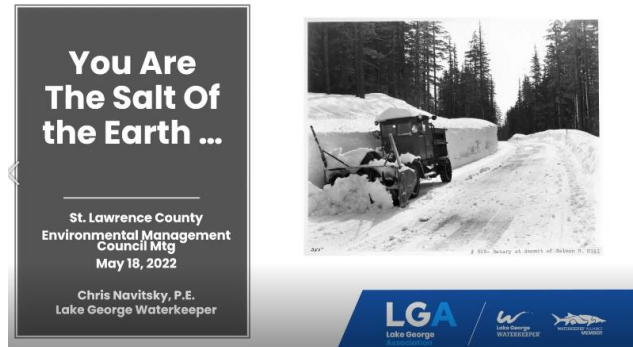
b. The minutes were unanimously approved (Smith/Bullock).

6. Comments from the Public / Speaker: The speaker was Chris Navitsky, who is the [Lake George Association's \(LGA\) Waterkeeper](#). The Waterkeeper uses a science-to-

EMC: Everybody Must Care!

solutions approach to protect Lake George and its watershed. For this EMC meeting, Chris spoke about road salt reduction initiatives in the Lake George Watershed with a presentation titled “You are the Salt of the Earth.”

Navitsky began by introducing the [International Waterkeeper Alliance](#), for which he is involved, as the LGA’s Waterkeeper. There are hundreds of Waterkeepers across the globe, a majority of whom are in the U.S. The presentation will focus on the following topics: Science; Model for Protection; Best Practices; [SWiM Certification](#); Successes; and Takeaways.



Navitsky began by asking, is salt really that bad? Images were shared of a rusted car and bridge, freeze-thaw impacts on roads, excessive salt application, and tree discoloration.

Navitsky talked about the increase in chloride levels in Lake George from 1980 (6 mg/L) - 2015 (18 mg/L). This is still well below what the EPA considers toxic at 240 mg/L. However, the trend is concerning because the Lake is a drinking water source for many. Annually, roughly 15,000 metric tons (~300 rail cars) of salt is applied in the Lake George Watershed. Salt content in streams, from runoff, can be 300 times higher than the Lake and private wells are also showing impacts. There are significant differences in runoff salt content between local and state roads (sometimes 100x higher). Zooplankton and phytoplankton are also impacted from salt contamination, sometimes resulting in algae blooms and reduced fish hatchling size.

The LGA’s Model for Protection includes three components: partnership (municipalities, hwy departments), investment (funds from LGA and grants), and innovation. Historically, LGA and nine surrounding municipalities signed a M.O.U. to battle invasive aquatic species; and they added road salt more recently (2015). A commitment to road salt reduction was in place and based on the science to drive the decision making. Also, an annual ‘salt summit’ was planned to bring together stakeholders. Innovation, in this Model, included best practice agreements, expert consultations, and data-based SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures). Lastly, investment included funding science and technology (plow truck black box data devices), techniques and equipment (live edge plows), and education and training.

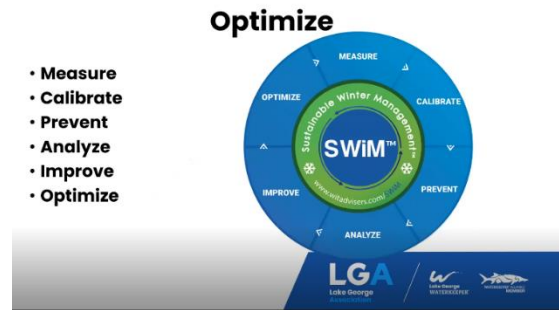
Navitsky continued with examples of best practices: Measure, Calibrate, Prevent, Analyze, Improve, and Optimize.

- To measure their actions, plow trucks had additional sensors, GPS tracking, and in cab computer tracking system;
- Second, calibrating these tools often is critical in providing measurement data. This became a source of pride among



hwy operators because they could realize the environmental and cost savings from their actions, ultimately, using less;

- Third, with prevention comes the [live edge plow](#), which has flexibility to form to the road surface for improved scraping to prevent snow and pavement bonding. In practice, the use of a live edge plow resulted in less salt application. Brining, which is salt water, was also used successfully to prevent bonding;
- Fourth, analysis is important because it provided a level of data that helped prepare and alter practices and at the end of a storm there were data de-brief sessions;
- Fifth, improve resulted in hwy operators relying on exterior temperature data to dictate the amount of salt applied; and
- Lastly, optimize all of these practices to reduce road salt application. These best practices were used for SWiM (Sustainable Winter Management) Certification which is an organization that can assist municipalities with road salt reduction initiatives.



It should be noted that some hwy operators doubted these new practices.

There were many road salt reduction successes and Navitsky highlighted the Town of Hague, NY. [The Town evolved from non-believers, to believers, to leaders in road salt reduction.](#) The Town's reduction efforts (live edge plows and brining) led to a 1600 tons to 550 tons decrease (saving ~\$45,000) in road salt use from 2016 to 2021. Water quality also improved with a 4% annual decrease in chloride counts in Hague Brook.

Navitsky concluded with a handful of considerations: this is not easy because change is hard when up against deep institutional practices, however they remained consistent and persistent to implement change; continue with brining expansion (emphasis to the NYS DOT); waiting for NYS road salt task force guidance; change in the private sector (winter maintenance companies); share the [LGA's The Road Map to Road Salt Reduction: Success Stories from Lake George](#); and use the [LGA and their resources for local trainings](#).

Discussion

- Washburn asked if NYS DOT snowplows have any of the same technology. Navitsky replied that the state is experimenting with some of them. They are not fans of the live edge plow.
- Washburn asked if NYS DOT follows its own road salt polices. Navitsky thinks that they do, however there can be some variation in how the local yards operate.
- Washburn asked about the cost difference between standard and live edge plows. Navitsky replied that a standard plow is ~\$10,000 and a live edge is ~\$18,000. The live edge can reduce other labor and material costs and realize a ROI in 3-4 years.
- Tenbusch asked about local government participation challenges. Navitsky replied that it started with invasives species and once the municipalities were at the table, road salt reduction became a common goal. Also, he is willing to share

the MOU with those interested and hwy operators in the Lake George area are willing to act as trainers.

- Marshall asked if the County Hwy Dept has heard of these practices. Casserly replied that he has talked briefly with the Hwy superintendent about road salt use and there is room for further discussion.
- Terminelli asked about road wear and tear data. Navitsky replied that live edge plows can impact broken pavement and reduce snow build up (freeze/thaw)
- Marshall asked about useful life of live edge plows. Navitsky replied that the manufacturer continues to work with hwy departments to replace parts as needed.
- Bullock asked about the State's road salt task force and their plan. Navitsky replied that a report is due in September in response to the [State's Act](#).

There was a 5 minute break.

7. Report by the Representative of the Board of Legislators

- a. Terminelli talked about the following.
 - i. Context surrounding the Earth Day Resolution and nuclear/solar EMC question.
 - 1. Rau asked if any nuclear plants are being considered in the County. Washburn replied that no new plants are planned in the State according to the regulatory agency.
 - ii. The appointment of Legislator Jim Reagen to the Oswegatchie River Advisory Council (ORAC).
 - 1. Rau asked what would happen if Reagen resigns from the Board. Tenbusch replied that Reagen wouldn't necessarily leave the ORAC, nor would his Board replacement take his place. The county could appoint someone else.
 - iii. The Finance Committee selected thirteen properties for cleanup with spill funds.
 - iv. Potential chemical treatment to Black Lake.
 - v. Bio solids project feasibility study funding with DANC.
 - vi. Open meetings law remote meetings extension at the State and County level.

8. Report of the Committees

- a. **Executive Committee**
 - i. Tenbusch said the Executive Committee drafted a letter in support of SLC Recreational Trails Advisory Board request for expanded trail access in Greenwood Creek State forest in the Town of Pitcairn.
- b. **Conservation of Resources Committee.** [See attached report.](#)
 - i. Casserly gave the report.
- c. **Environment & Economy Committee.** [See attached report.](#)
 - i. Casserly gave the report.
- d. **Invasive Species Committee.** [See attached report.](#)
 - i. Tenbusch gave the report.
- e. **Watershed Management Committee.** [See attached report.](#)
 - i. Tenbusch gave the report.
 - 1. Washburn said the Black Lake lake management plan has been

shared with Staff and Tenbusch will share with those interested.

9. Report of the Staff

- a. Tenbusch talked about needing volunteers for Household Hazardous Waste Day. Rau shared that this is a fun event and encouraged others to volunteer. Also, Washburn said that latex paint is now accepted. Marshall said that the Massena Rotary is looking to dispose of a dental x-ray machine. Hanns suggested the SUNY Potsdam x-ray lab for donation. Bullock shared that Coakley's Hardware accepts used paint, and Tenbusch referenced the [State program](#).

10. Unfinished Business

- a. Oswegatchie River canoe launch. Rau asked which committee should take on this project. It is assigned to the CRC.
- b. Tenbusch talked about an upcoming Rights of Nature workshop at St. Lawrence June 25-26 and they have two spots for EMC members. Hanss and Bennett both expressed interest in attending.

11. New Business

Discussion on nuclear energy/power.

- a. Tenbusch read the draft letter for the EMC's position on nuclear energy/power.
- b. Tozzi said that nuclear power first came on line about 60 years ago, not 70.
- c. Tozzi asked why no new nuclear power plants using current technology. Tenbusch replied that problems with existing technology should be avoided with future plants. Tozzi replied that the problems aren't that significant in the U.S. because plants are constructed well and maintained. Also, fresh water use in a counter current exchange is not radioactive.
- d. Rudiger talked about different cooling techniques, e.g., liquid sodium (nuclear submarines), other than water. Chernobyl was not a nuclear catastrophe, rather a human caused catastrophe.
- e. Smith talked about a documentary on 'stage 3' nuclear energy, current technology only uses 30-40% of energy in fuel rods, and that 'stage 3' can extract 90% of the remaining energy from spent rods.
- f. Washburn said that spent fuel rods are not buried, rather they are kept in wet or dry storage.
- g. Bullock said he liked the letter and also expressed his concern with any nuclear development in the County and that it could further exploit our resources.
- h. Washburn said the 765 KV and Smart Path electric lines are not directed solely to New York City, rather they head south to a substation that distributes to the State's grid. Also, a new line connecting Hydro Quebec to New York City is planned.
- i. Tenbusch said the letter is a reflection of Council members' comments.
- j. Tozzi asked about the context of why a County Legislator asked this of the EMC. Tenbusch replied that it was a result of discussion around the Earth Day resolution.
- k. Rudiger suggested changing "numerous hazards" to "potential hazards" and the Council agrees
- l. Rau talked about: impacts from mining uranium (dust, water use, leaching), the salt cooling plants have wastes, catastrophic failures are rare, potential for human error (Diablo Canyon Power Plant, CA), the real cost of the waste (Hanford, Washington), and there are no new plants being constructed in the U.S. Washburn

replied that 2 new plants are proposed in Georgia and they are using existing technology.

- m. Terminelli offered additional comments to edit to assist with consensus.
- n. Marshall said that international border concerns are significant, no new plants will be built in our area, and that this is a waste of our time.
- o. Washburn said that nuclear and hydro make up the baseload of our State's energy and provide constant stable power 24/7/365.
- p. Smith talked about the future demand issues on the grid's infrastructure due to electrification of motorized use.
- q. Washburn said the Energy [Information Administration published in its latest annual report](#) that the high end of new electricity demand in 2050 will be 1.1% and low end .98%. Smith is surprised at these numbers.
- r. Tenbusch said we should table, review, and reconsider at the next month's EMC meeting.
- s. Bullock said that with a few edits the letter would be supported by the Council.

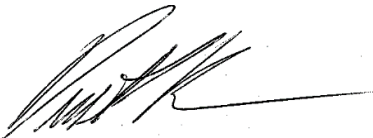
12. Announcements

- a. Membership and reappointment reminder
- b. Speakers
- c. CEDAR Right of Nature in the North Country workshop, 6/25-26, @ SLU, two spaces for EMC members to fill.
- d. Pollinator garden project

13. Message to Board of Legislators. None.

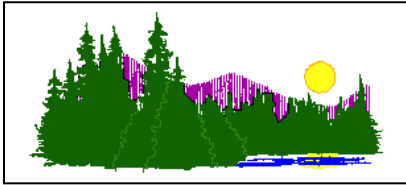
14. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm (Washburn/Smith).

Respectfully submitted,



Dustin Bowman, Secretary

Minutes prepared by Dakota Casserly



SLC EMC Action Item Agenda for Conservation of Resources Committee

Members: C. Bennett; D Bowman; L Hanss; R. Marshall; S. Rau

STAFF: Dakota Casserly **Guest:**

Meeting Date: **Wednesday May 11, 2022 at 5:00 PM via Zoom**

Time	Item	Outcome	Responsibility	Next Steps / Notes
5:00pm	Meeting starts	Join Zoom Meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81820123194?pwd=NINJSjRFdThaSU1OTFBnSThJcUpsZz09 Meeting ID: 818 2012 3194 Passcode: 868437 One tap mobile: +19292056099, Meeting ID: 818 2012 3194 Passcode: 868437		
5:05	Review Report of last committee meeting (April 2022)		All	
5:10	Discuss Priority Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS Climate Act Scoping Plan comments - Update • Working with Youth Advisory Board - Update • Organic Pollinator Garden Project - Update • Nuclear energy discussion • Wise use of resources - table • Conservation of flora/fauna - table 	All	
5:40	Discuss speakers for EMC meetings (1-3 speakers per year)	Pollinator garden	All	
5:45	Discuss ideas for EMC Public Service Announcements	This Committee will develop 1-3 PSAs per year on CR topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollinator garden project 	All	
5:50	Set date/time for next mtg.	Next Mtg: June 8, 2022		
5:55pm	Adjourn			

Attendance: Cat Bennett (CB), Dustin Bowman (DB), Herb Bullock (HB), and Dakota Casserly (DC)

NYS Climate Act Scoping Plan

- CB will share what she has written on Friday.

YAB: One person, a student from Parishville has contacted Staff with interest in EMC happenings.

Pollinator Garden

- DB will coordinate with Little River School for volunteer activities.
- 2022 plan: build the soil for, develop social media presence, and keep neighbors (and other stakeholders) involved.

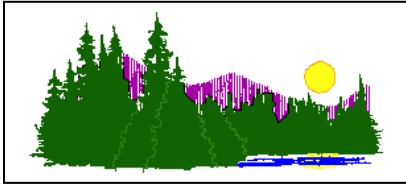
- HB asked about planting lupines. DB thinks this will not be included with this project.
- Master Gardner chart for plants (succession), self-sustaining after 3 years.
 - DB will share.
- Seeds were donated from Little Grasse.
- CB has plants to donate.
- Cardboard, CB has, and will bring to site on work day.
- DC, reach out to the Canfield's to keep in the loop.
- Press release: NCPR, North Country Now, Watertown Times, any others?
- First proposed work day: 5/22, 9am, 2 hrs.
- Name of site, Sandy Corners.

Nuclear Discussion

- DB
 - We should continue to use the existing plants and not build new plants.
 - We are not fully recognizing the dangers to nuclear, waste and operation, especially when it's profit driven.
 - Don't have time to wait for new nuclear to be built to address climate change.
 - Acknowledges that it is a part of the mix, however, there are other options.
 - The county should consider a "vehicle-to-grid" ([GMP example](#)) system, could the County implement this?
 - More micogrids and smarter grids that are more resilient (solar, wind, hydro).
 - Netflix 3-mile island documentary.
 - Environmental cost of nuclear.
 - Emphasizing the need to reduce to carbon emissions.
 - Solar and energy co-ops, keep them and their dollars local.
- DB, solar panel recycling is happening, mostly glass and metal.
- CB
 - More cost efficient and effective ways to reduce carbon emissions, nuclear is not the future.
 - Nuc plants have a history of giving people cancer.
 - There are other options that are more environmentally friendly.
 - How can we better understand the local economic impact of different electric power producing sources?
- HB,
 - Submitted written comments on the nuclear topic.
 - Supports DB's thoughts, gave a bit of background for K Acres and his question about nuclear energy.
 - Potential accident could be catastrophic.
 - Additional powerline impact.
 - No tree cutting for solar arrays.
 - Some corn that is grown in the County is sold to Bordeau Brothers and shipped to Syracuse to an ethanol plant.
- DB, local power from solar panels is a good thing
- DB, value added uses (grazing, pollinators) on solar site, what are additional local benefits.
- DB asked HB about his memory of winters
 - HB, much colder and on his family's property he is seeing changes in the trees.

- CB, she is seeing changes on her family's farm (birds, bugs, etc..)
- DB, can the County hold a visioning conversations to talk about what the future holds.
 - CB, this could be a monthly community dinner at her family's farm, can the EMC host one of these?
 - DB, recommends a facilitator to lead a visioning conversation.

Adjourn @ 6pm



SLC EMC: Agenda for Environment + Economy Committee

Members: Herb Bullock; Rick Marshall; Tiernan Smith (Chair); Rod Tozzi

Staff: D. Casserly **Guest(s):**

Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2022 at 6:00 PM via Zoom

Time	Item	Outcome	Responsibility	Next Steps
6:00 PM	Meeting starts	Join Zoom Meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81820123194?pwd=NINJSjRFdThaSU1OTFBnSThJcUpsZz09 Meeting ID: 818 2012 3194 Passcode: 868437 One tap mobile: +19292056099, Meeting ID: 818 2012 3194 Passcode: 868437		
6:05	Review Report of Last Committee Meeting (April 2022)		All	
6:10	Priority Projects for 2022			
	Nuclear Energy Discussion			
	Fish Ladders/Passage Project on the Grasse and Oswegatchie Rivers			
	DEC Deer Management Program	Preparation/Update (All)		
	Ogdensburg Dam FERC Relicensing	5/31/22 - Plan to track/participate in the project.		
	Road Salt Recreation	Speaker for 5/18 EMC meeting SLC Snowmobile economic impact, speaker in the fall		
6:45	Discuss speakers for EMC meetings	DEC Deer Management Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joe Lydon (DEC), postponed until in person (?) • Chris Navitsky (Lake George Association), May 18 • Scott Schlueter, USFWS, June 15 	All	
6:50	Develop Pub. Service Announcements	This Committee will develop 1-3 PSAs per year on E+E topics	All	
6:55	Set date/time for next meeting	Next Mtg: June 8, 2022		
7:00	Adjourn			

Attendance: Herb Bullock (HB), Dakota Casserly (DC), and Rod Tozzi (RT)

Deer Management:

- DC will reach out to DEC again via Dan Huntley's contact.
- HB, DEC is handing out more doe permits.

- RT, supports continuing with this project, with the other contact, he wants to ask “is the DEC willing (consider) to do this?” If not, then we should move on. What’s the downside of our plan to take nuisance deer to get the meat to food pantries?

Ogdensburg Dam FERC

- DC shared that Legislator Jim Regan was appointed at the County’s rep to the Oswegatchie River Advisory Council (RAC).
- HB, how can we stay in contact with Jim Regan, DC will investigate

Road Salt

- DC reminded members about next week’s speaker, Chris Navitsky, and he will speak about this topic.

Nuclear

- HB, submitted written comments and shared additional thoughts during the CRC meeting.
- RT
 - Submitted written comments.
 - Lived next to plant in Germany for years, not a problem,
 - [Calver Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant](#), small footprint, Chesapeake Bay as cooling water (no cooling towers), water is returned to Bay 12-13 degrees warmer, good fishing next to plant.
 - Siting on SLR, avoiding cooling towers, could be an eye-sore, foot print of a reactor 40-50 acres.
 - Where would power go from a future nuc plant?
 - Rich Rd Solar (Town of Canton, 1000 acres), where is the power going?
 - If SLC is not going to benefit, why should we support these energy developments.
 - Likes solar panels, however, doesn’t think that recycling (de-mill) is really robust, there are heavy metals, the US sends this type of recyclable material to India for processing. Is there a plan for heavy metals?
 - We need to think of the full life-cycle of these types of energy systems (solar, nuclear, etc..).
- HB, corporations buying up land for energy development, build those plants closer to those in need, don’t use and abuse and land in SLC.
 - RT agrees
- RT, would like to ask Leg. Acres, “what’s the context of your thoughts on nuclear,” build and ship the power out of SLC with no benefit, he has a problem with that, where is the compromise.
- RT, will ask Nicole of the context of this question, DC will send to JT and Nicole
- RT, again, what would be the benefit to SLC .

Adjourn @ 6:40



St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council Invasive Species Committee Meeting Tuesday, May 10, 2022

Mtg started at 5:05 pm. Present were Sue Rau, Chair. John Tenbusch attended as staff.

Rau reported that she had read an article by James Hansen in the Adirondack Explorer (<https://www.adirondackexplorer.org/stories/climate-scientist-to-state-wheres-the-nuclear-power>). Sue disputed several of the claims made by Hansen, including the status of several legislative bills. She looked into the topic of "fast nuclear reactors", and found that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has determined they could not compete economically with conventional light-water reactors.

Rau reported on several new types of reactors: molten-salt; sodium-cooled fast reactor; among others. They do not seem to be ready until sometime in the 2030s.

She also reported that, whatever type of nuclear reactor might be used, the source material (uranium) must be mined. Such mining creates significant health impacts on miners and mining communities.

Rau reported on an article by Mark Z. Jacobson (<https://eu.boell.org/en/2021/04/26/7-reasons-why-nuclear-energy-not-answer-solve-climate-change>), published in 2021. Jacobson stated that nuclear power plants take an average of 15 yrs to build, as compared for 1-3 years for solar or wind generating facilities. Jacobson estimated that the cost per MW/hr for solar or wind facilities is approx. ~\$5 MW/hr. Nuclear costs \$171/MW/hr.

Jacobson noted other issues to be concerned about include:

- There is a significant cost of storing waste for 100,000s of yrs;
- Small modular reactors are made to work off-grid. They can be stolen, or abandoned.
- Potential for meltdown;
- Carbon emissions. (Nuclear power has a larger carbon footprint than solar/wind.)
- Heat produced during operation
- Radioactive Emissions

John Tenbusch summarized Sue's comments: nuclear power is dangerous, expensive. That being said, 20% of NYS power is produced by nuclear. We should try to safely extend the life of currently-operating nuke plants in NYS while working to develop new sources of electricity generation, energy storage, conservation, etc.

The meeting ended at 5:25 PM.

Meeting report prepared by John Tenbusch



St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council Watershed Management Committee Meeting Tuesday, May 10, 2022

The meeting started at 4:01 PM.

Present: Brian Washburn, Chair; William Stephens. John Tenbusch attended as staff.

Review Previous Committee Meeting Report. No comments.

Review EMC Members' Comments on Nuclear Energy. There was general discussion about the request from the Board of Legislators for the EMC to express an opinion about nuclear energy and nuclear power. The following points were made:

- William Stephens noted that nuclear power is sustainable, compared to coal-oil-or natural gas-fired facilities. Once loaded with fuel rods, a nuclear plant can operate for 2-3 years before the rods need to be changed out.
 - Stephens also noted that there are no fossil fuels used to produce electricity.
- Brian Washburn reported that there has only been 1 nuclear accident in the U.S. in more than 70 years of nuclear energy production.
 - There are more than 90 reactors currently operating in the U.S.
- Washburn noted that there are three operating nuclear facilities in NYS. One, the Fitzpatrick facility near Oswego, has operated since 1974.
- Washburn reported that energy storage is an issue with electricity production. He mentioned that battery storage technology is advancing.
- Washburn stated that 2 new nuclear facilities are currently being constructed in Georgia, at an estimated cost of \$14 billion.
- There was general discussion about the problems involved with handling and storing nuclear waste for hundreds of thousands of years.

The meeting concluded at 4:55 PM. Meeting report drafted by John Tenbusch