



A clean lake reflects well
on all of us.

(final)
ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP (OLP)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Special Meeting
April 12, 2010

ATTENDEES

Committee Members Present:

Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Daniel B. Snead, District Commander, USACE, Buffalo District (vtc)
Mr. Mario DelVicario, Chief, Community and Ecosystem Protection Branch, USEPA Region 2 (vtc)
Mr. Kenneth Lynch, Regional Director, NYSDEC, Region 7
Mr. Charles Silver, Environmental Scientist, NYS Office of the Attorney General (tc)
Mr. David Coburn, Director, Onondaga County Office of the Environment
Mr. Andrew Maxwell, Director of Planning and Sustainability, City of Syracuse

Others In Attendance:

Mr. Bj Adigun, Outreach Committee Chair, Onondaga County
Mr. Seth Ausubel, USEPA, Region 2 (vtc)
Ms. Traci Clever, DPM, USACE, Buffalo District (vtc)
Mr. Chris Dere, USEPA, Region 2 (vtc)
Ms. Lynn Greer, USACE, Buffalo District (vtc)
Dr. Ed Michalenko, OEI
Mr. Robert Nyman, USEPA, Region 2 (vtc)
Ms. Mary Jane Peachey, Project Committee Chair, NYSDEC
Mr. Steven Vriesen, USACE, Buffalo District (vtc)
Ms. Julie Zielinski, USACE, Buffalo District (vtc)

Committee Members Absent:

None

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS: The meeting was held on Monday, April 12, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) office in Syracuse, New York.

1. OPENING REMARKS: LTC Snead welcomed everyone to the meeting. This special meeting was convened to focus solely on the allocation of remaining USEPA grant funds through September 30, 2012.

2. MEETING DOCUMENTS: The following documents were provided for discussion at the meeting:

- Draft OLP Resolution 2009-6 (revised)
- USEPA proposed Outreach Committee budget,
- Draft OLP 2010 and 2011 Outreach Plan, and
- OEI Administrative Budget.

3. DISCUSSION: Mr. Vriesen opened the discussion by summarizing draft OLP Resolution 2009-6. This resolution, initially brought forth in December 2009, was tabled at the March 30, 2010 meeting. The original resolution proposed the re-allocation of unexpended USEPA funds as follows: \$165,000 for the final year (Federal fiscal year [FFY] 2012) of Tully Valley mudboil monitoring and control, and \$905,400 for OEI Project Management and Program Summary. In the revised resolution, four additional OLP projects were identified as having excess funds. The four additional OLP projects included: OLP Public Website (FY04-8), Outreach Committee Operations (FY04-24), Onondaga Lake Mechanistic Water Quality Model - Scientific Peer Review and Technical Coordinator (FY04-3), and Onondaga Lake Scientific and Technical Program Integration Board (FY04-34). The revised resolution recommends re-allocating a total of \$1,151,887 to OEI Project Management and Program Summary. However, there would still be a shortfall of \$13,123 from the total OEI requested that must still be addressed.

A lengthy discussion followed about identifying funding needs to complete current work and expend all remaining USEPA funds by September 30, 2012. Mr. Coburn questioned the newly added RESOLVED statements re-allocating unexpended funds from the OLP website and the lake model. He wanted to ensure that reducing \$8,500 from the OLP public website budget included sufficient funds to continue current operations and maintenance and any improvements if needed. Dr. Michalenko assured the OLP that there would be sufficient funds to continue the contract with WEBPROS. Mr. Coburn also expressed concern that the amount proposed for re-allocation from the lake model peer review panel would leave sufficient funding for the panel to review and comment on the three process studies that were recently added to the lake model. He asked to what degree of certainty OEI had that those figures were accurate because short-changing the peer review in any way could jeopardize the model's credibility. Dr. Michalenko recognized the added workload and included an additional \$10,000 in the peer review panel budget for any uncertainties that may arise.

USEPA proposed a \$28,000 reduction to the outreach committee's approved budget from \$83,000 to \$55,000 for 2010. Mr. Dere explained that the reduced amount was based on past Outreach Committee spending. The \$28,000 was removed from the public outreach events budget line item. It was noted that the OLP did not hold the Annual Progress meeting and Onondaga Lake Day in 2009, and even with a \$28,000 reduction, the proposed budget provides more funding than has been spent in the past several years.

In response to that proposal, Mr. Adigun reminded the Partners that since he was appointed as the Outreach Committee Chair, the committee members have been re-energized and re-engaged. A budget of \$83,000 is not a lot of money to accomplish the committee's goals and if their budget is reduced further, the committee members will perceive their role as being non-essential. He understands that everyone is being asked to do more with less but in this case, jeopardizing getting the word out would significantly hurt the OLP's strategic vision. He recommended that the Outreach Committee members should have a role in the methodology of assessing any cutbacks.

Mr. Coburn questioned the logic behind cutting off the tools to reach out to the rest of the world by making cuts to the public education/events line item. Mr. Adigun added that what was done or not done in the past is the past and it is unfair to use that as a benchmark. The committee has a new focus in moving forward and with a budget of \$55,000 it will be difficult to accomplish much.

Mr. Lynch pointed out that the Partners agreed the Outreach Committee to stop holding Onondaga Lake Day and the Annual Progress meeting, and it is not fair to hold the committee responsible. He asked if other programs were given the same scrutiny. Mr. Lynch asked Dr. Michalenko if there was any flexibility in the AEM program's contract. Dr. Michalenko said that their contract is for a set amount. From a legal standpoint, it would not be wise to modify their contract.

Mr. Coburn stated he wanted to support OEI but would it be possible to reallocate funds for a shorter period of time rather than through 2012, perhaps 12-18 months. He added that he is uncomfortable committing all the contingency funds before the OLP gets their arms around the whole picture. Mr. Lynch also asked for additional time to scrutinize all the OLP projects before recommending cuts.

Mr. DelVicario stated he does not want to penalize the Outreach Committee without having their input during the process. USEPA took a first look at ways to fund the shortage. The Outreach Committee still has the opportunity to look at their program to get the most bang for the buck. Mr. DelVicario reiterated that USEPA needs to expend all the OLP funds.

Mr. Ausubel added that USEPA is not looking for certainty, but rather just trying to put priorities in place to spend all the EPA funds by September 30, 2012. He hopes to come to agreement recognizing that everything cannot be funded and some things will have to fall off the table. Mr. Adigun replied that he has seen the adverse consequences in past programs and understands how cuts will affect the moral of the Outreach Committee. Mr. DelVicario said he does understand that it is important to keep committee members enthused enough to come to the table.

Ms. Peachey asked if there would be a need for the Scientific and Technical Program Integration Board (STPIB) to be involved in the integration of the Hydrological Simulation Program-Fortran (HSPF) and lake models before funds are reallocated. Mr. Coburn replied that the role of the (STPIB) has been generally used for new studies and would likely not integrate the two models unless additional resources are allocated. The peer review panel is coordinating the integration of the three process studies.

The last RESOLVED statement included an increase of \$165,000 for the operations and maintenance of the Tully valley mudboils. Mr. Coburn recalled that the Project Committee discussed handing the maintenance work off to Onondaga County Soil Water Conservation District (OCSWCD) at a cost of approximately \$50-60k. The Project Committee will discuss this option further with Mr. Burger at their next meeting. Mr. Coburn asked if the OLP has received results from the sink hole studies which may provide insight on a resolution to the mudboil issues. The Project Committee will request an update from USGS before a decision is made to cease monitoring.

The discussion moved onto the OEI administrative budget. The Partners reviewed OEI's budget proposal that requests \$1,165,000 in Federal funds, with a total project cost of \$2,118,200, through 2012. Dr. Michalenko explained that OEI is faced with a shortfall to administer EPA grants through 2012.

LTC Snead stated that this was a great exercise and opened his eyes to the rigor in which EPA funds have to be spent. The outreach plan is very detailed and it will be made clear to the Outreach Committee to keep their commitments. The OLP should consider keeping the budget intact to get a large impact for a small amount of money. The OLP needs to reassess that original resolution to keep OEI funded. The previous resolution fills the gap for OEI for a shorter period of time. In looking at the risk and consequences the OLP is aware they need to look at other areas with greater scrutiny.

At this time, the Partners had not reached consensus to approve either version of the resolution. LTC Snead suggested asking the Project Committee to review the OLP projects for FY2010 to make sure the funding needs will be met. Dr. Michalenko added that coming back to the table in FY2011 will incur additional OEI administrative costs.

Mr. Lynch suggested that the Executive Committee approve the Outreach plan and budget for FY2010 and at the same time re-assess the ongoing OLP projects throughout the year.

Mr. Ausubel urged the Partners to continue to resolve the funding shortfall, understand the big picture and not wait another year to address it. Mr. Lynch recommended keeping the issue as a standing Agenda item for each Executive Committee meeting to keep on track.

LTC Snead suggested voting on the original resolution allocating \$905,400 for OEI which will allow them to move forward with low risk. Mr. Lynch and Mr. Coburn said they were inclined to give the Outreach Committee one year at their proposed level with guidance that the budget may be reduced next year.

Mr. Adigun asked the Partners to set an amount today so that the committee can move forward. If the OLP decides the outreach program is not an important piece then make cuts, but if it is an important piece then keep the budget in place. Mr. DelVicario stated that outreach is an important component because it changes behavior. Mr. Ausubel agreed that the OLP should keep the \$83k in place for FY2010 with the expectation that it will decrease in the out years. He added that the USEPA budget be kept on future Agendas to keep focused.

LTC Snead recommended approving the Outreach Committee's plan and budget for 2010 and determine future funding for 2011 and beyond. Mr. Maxwell stated that he had concerns over

separating the outreach program from the OEI budget and was not in a position to vote on the motion at this time.

Dr. Michalenko expressed his concern over spending funds on other projects which may not leave sufficient funds for OEI's administration of the EPA grants.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 p.m. without resolution to the discussions. The Partners agreed to meet in a special session the following day on April 13, 2010 at 12:00 to try to resolve the matters.