



Town of Middleton

182 Kings Highway, Middleton, New Hampshire 03887

CONSERVATION COMMISSION Sunrise Lake Watershed Advisory Committee

Sunrise Lake Watershed Advisory Committee
Meeting of December 18th 2025

*Meeting note: The venue was changed to the Municipal Building to accommodate the Planning Board. Venue change was posted as required.

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM. Present were Chair John Mullen, Vice Chair David Miller (remote), Kate Buzard, Judy Larivee, Gail Jones and Cindy DeCristofaro.

Guests present were Jon Balanoff, AWWA, and resident Calvin Dexter, Pine Ridge Rd, Middleton.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, the Chair introduced Jon Balanoff and described the request he attend this meeting as an informational gathering session, from the perspective of “how can the SLWAC partner with AWWA, and what are the benefits, resources and costs to participate.

Mr. Balanoff described his role as the Director of AWWA as well as an overview of the program. AWWA provides resources to 9 lakes, covering Wakefield and Acton Maine. They also provide a similar service to Strafford Regional Planning from the perspective of grant writing and administration. Their programs cover both within and independent of 319 grants. They provide assistance to watershed planning, support Lake Residents (similar to NH Lakes) and offer a Middle School Science Program, which is of interest and will be held as a separate conversation. Mr. Balanoff’s current priority is to update their strategic plan so our inquiry is not only of interest, but timely. Individual Lake Associations donate as a “buy in” and AWWA also receives some funding from the towns it supports with the dollar value based on the amount of shoreline.

Vice Chair Miller offered a number of questions, which are noted below, with each answer underlined:

- Are you a 501:3C? Yes
- Do you collaborate with NH Lakes? No direct collaboration but AWWA are members
- The Middleton Budget is pretty tight; do you have any estimates for Middleton? All 3 Lake associations are under financial stress due to insurance costs. As an estimate AWWA would not expect dues more than a few hundred dollars. The dues amount reflects more of a community buy in than an actual financial investment
- If AWWA came to my house and suggested some improvement, and your Youth Core did that work does that create a dollar amount “rate?” The homeowners buy all the materials and the Youth Core donates the labor

- How are your Board of Directors selected? Once someone's name is proposed there is an application and interview process
- Do you have any insight into what the next "white whale" would be? Too preliminary to estimate
- Do you provide advocacy or public education on policy? Only from an environmental perspective. AWWA does not get into political policy advocacy

Questions for Kate Buzard with responses underlined:

- How often does AWWA meet? The board meets monthly. Mr. Balanoff also acts as the treasurer and prepares the financial statements
- What is your current "hot topic?" Updating the strategic plan. AWWA has 2 new board members beginning in 2026 which will bring the board to 10. Acton Maine has its eye on a program to fund road projects within the various associations. (Mr. Balanoff also mentioned that new 319 grants were postponed indefinitely)
- Do you have challenges in your programs spanning 2 states? AWWA is able to make it work, the larger challenge is that water quality standards are different between the two states?

Questions from Clerk van Gelder with responses underlined:

- Is the role AWWA plays in grants similar to SRP in that if you write a grant and it is awarded do you then administrate it? Yes
- If the Youth Core comes to a homeowner's site to provide and provides labor who is responsible for liability insurance? AWWA has its own insurance including workmen's compensation

SLWAC expressed appreciation for Mr. Balanoff's time and expertise and will take the information under advisement for further discussion. The Clerk mentioned that given the Youth Core has its own insurance, one benefit for Middleton (if they joined) would be in kind labor such as the rain garden.

Housekeeping: The clerk noted that the current "in kind" match is at 61%. She reminded members that she will continue to do the in-kind report but it will be up to the individual members to get her their information. Following a question from Dave Miller it was confirmed that the current email account will remain open and all reports should be sent there. She expressed appreciation for the work of the committee, as this is her last meeting as clerk/member.

The Chair noted that they will continue the Microsoft 365 subscription under the SLWAC email. The clerk will work out the details as to how to get the invoice paid once it is available.

Financial Report: Member Kate Buzard had to leave due to a conflict with another meeting. She did provide the financial report. The Chair noted that the amount in the Expendable Trust differs from the current balance.

Minutes: The minutes of the November meeting were approved as submitted (DeCristofaro/Larivee)

Old Business: The Chair reminded that after the Christmas holidays the members should start thinking about what activities and outreach should take place in 2026. He further noted that septic “quality and maintenance” will be a key factor in the work of the committee in the new year. Vice Chair Miller reviewed how the Lake George Park Commission created programs for septic inspection requirements and suggested this committee review that to get ideas on what worked. (<https://lgpc.ny.gov/>)

A brief discussion regarding the July update meeting took place with the Chair asking if road signage was something the committee should look at. Clerk van Gelder noted that she would be able to provide printable synthetic material to create roadside signs that would not be affected by weather.

Cindy DeCristofaro recommended tabling the discussion of a membership letter until January. The clerk will pull the initial sign in sheet for the first meeting.

New Business:

- The RFQ for the watershed management plan will be sent out early in 2026
- Strafford Regional Planning may be able to help support our current 319 grant through funding from PREP (Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership)
- There was a brief discussion regarding the scope of the septic focus (no action taken)

With no further business before the committee a motion to adjourn was made (Miller/DeCristofaro) and the final meeting of 2025 was adjourned at 6:40 PM

Respectfully submitted

Joni van Gelder