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**Commissioners Present:** Chairman Peter Hegarty (Mecklenburg County)  
Vice Chairman Dan Hartley (Gaston County)  
Secretary Treasurer Dan Mullane (Mecklenburg County)  
Commissioner Debi Chacharon (York County)  
Commissioner Smitty Hanks (Gaston County)  
Commissioner Ray Webber (York County)  
Commissioner Brad Thomas (Gaston County)

**Commissioners Absent:** Commissioner Blanche Bryant (York County)  
Commissioner Hunter Wilson (Mecklenburg County)

**Staff Present:** Chris Clark, Legal Counsel; Emily Parker, Administrator

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***Mission Statement***

*To promote public policies and support regulations for the preservation of Lake Wylie and its wildlife and for the education and safety of the citizens who use this beautiful natural resource.*

**Meeting Minutes**

**Item 1 – Welcome**

Chairman Hegarty called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and welcomed everyone present.

**Item 2 – Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Hegarty asked if any changes need to be made to the November 25, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Webber noted a correction saying that he commented that the Coast Guard Auxiliary would have people trained in life saving. That training is a suggestion, not a must or requirement. Ultimately, everyone was trained. Chairman Hegarty noted that under the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation stakeholder report, there is reference to that organization receiving donated orange life jackets and that clarity is needed that the LWMC committed to taking some of them off their hands. For Item 6, instead of the next sedimentation symposium being geared to the public, it should say public education. Commissioner Hanks moved to approve the November 25, 2019 minutes as amended. Commissioner Chacharon seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

**Item 3 – Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Hegarty asked if any changes need to be made to the January 27, 2020 agenda. He noted that two items on the agenda would need to be postponed – the no wake zone request for Gaston County (Item 6) and the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation’s Swim Guide presentation (Item 8).

Commissioner Webber moved to adopt the January 27, 2020 agenda as amended. Secretary Treasurer Mullane seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Item 4 – Public Comment**

Mr. Mark Cloer is President of Waterline Marine Consultants, LLC. His company repairs and builds artificial reefs, mainly in Florida. He commented that one oyster can clean 50 gallons of water per day. He followed with additional facts about the cleaning power of oysters. Mr. Cloer asked if anyone has considered this natural option in fresh water. Chairman Hegarty asked if Duke Energy staff has comments. Mr. Lawson said that would be something to ask the FERC license manager. Commissioner Hanks asked if oysters live in the lake. Oysters do not live in the lake, but mussels do, and they also cleanse water. Secretary Treasurer Mullane noted that there are clams in Lake Wylie. Commissioner Chacharon asked about how mussels clean water, in the context of sedimentation being a major issue for Lake Wylie. Mr. Cloer said that mussels ingest sediment. Mr. Cloer will find out more on this topic and report back to the LWMC.

#### **Item 5 – Stakeholder Reports**

Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) – Officer Joye reported that they are currently operating with two officers. A new third officer is on board but will need training. He said CMPD responded to a drowning three weeks ago near the I-85 bridge. This incident was ruled a suicide.

Gaston County Police Department (GCPD) – Officer Hord reported that GCPD lake enforcement will expand their patrol unit, moving from four to six officers.

York County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) – Sgt. Mabry reported that he is out on light duty because of knee surgery. During this time, he has relied on CMPD and NCWRC to get supplies ready for and transported to the Boat Show. Commissioner Thomas asked Officer Joye how much room is in CMPD's trailer, which is stored at McDowell Park. He asked if the LWMC's Boat Show supplies could be loaded in CMPD's trailer along with YCSO supplies. Commissioner Thomas and Officer Joye will coordinate details after the meeting.

Tega Cay Police Department (TCPD) – No report was given.

Mecklenburg County ABC Board Law Enforcement – Officer Bruce Mullis was present from the ABC Board and said that things are quiet on the lake at the present time.

NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) – Sgt. Laton reported that they are preparing for the Boat Show. Commissioner Webber inquired about the link to Spanish language boater safety training materials. Sgt. Laton said it is in progress, but not yet on the NCWRC website. Commissioner Thomas noted that houses are being pelleted by hunters around Paradise Point. He asked Sgt. Laton to look into it, and Sgt. Laton said he would.

SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) – Officer Vissage reported that it has been quiet on their end of the lake. He noted that they are in waterfowl hunting season and so far, they have had few complaints from homeowners.

US Coast Guard (USCG) – No report was given.

US Coast Guard Auxiliary (USCGA) – Mr. David Wascher stated that he is the flotilla operations officer. The USCGA wants to be out on the lake to support law enforcement. He mentioned upcoming trainings they will conduct. The USCGA will have a presence at the Boat Show.

Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) – Mr. Matt Phillips reported that they will take water samples this week. He said that LUESA staff conducted bathymetry in Boyd's Cove pre- and post-construction. LUESA is partnering with City of Charlotte to monitor this area. The main concern is about the upper end of cove filling in with sedimentation. Mr. Phillips also said that early today, an 18-wheeler wrecked and leaked gasoline near I-485 and Highway 27. He noted that all 8,000 gallons of gasoline went into a nearby tributary to Long Creek north of the US National Whitewater Center. As of now, the spill has not impacted Lake Wylie. LUESA staff is sampling and will watch this situation closely for the rest of the week. Commissioner Chacharon asked his opinion about oysters or mussels cleaning the water. He commented that mussels do have incredible cleaning and filtration abilities and it would be good to know more about them and if it would be a sustainable solution for Lake Wylie.

Duke Energy – Mr. Ronnie Lawson reported that:

- Lake level: 98.8'(target level: 97.0')
- Low inflow protocol: Normal
- No dredge permits have been issued.

Gaston County Cove Keeper – No report was given.

Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation (CRF) – No report was given.

#### **Item 6 – No Wake Zone Request – Gaston County**

This presentation will happen at a future LWMC meeting.

#### **Item 7 – No Wake Zone Request – Mecklenburg County**

Mr. Joe Brancatto is a resident of Brown's Cove and has lived there for 15 years. He said you must go through a no wake zone to get into the cove. Once you come through, you are in a large area that then narrows down with docks on both sides. He thinks a no wake zone needs to be in that narrow, shallow area. That cove has been dredged with fingers to each dock. He continued saying that boats coming into this shallow water and have limited area to navigate. Mr. Brancatto said he has had a ski boat 3-4 feet off his dock. The wake knocked his dog off the dock. Some boaters being asked to slow down are responding in a hostile way. Mr. Brancatto said this is a safety issue in this area. Visibility is very limited. It is dangerous and sedimentation conditions have made the situation worse. Chairman Hegarty asked Officer Joye if he has had issues in that area. Officer Joye agreed that it is narrow and that skiers go back there to turn around. Officer Joye offered to take Marine Commissioners to look at the area. Chairman Hegarty said we will look and then make a recommendation. Commissioner Hanks suggested having this area be designated as a swimming area. Legal Counsel Clark commented that that would not be necessary. He asked if there are any docks in the area and the answer is yes. The rule is no wake 50 yards from any dock, so there is no need to designate it as a swimming area. The LWMC has been deemed by NCWRC as designated agency to place no wake buoys. No new rules need to be passed, the LWMC just needs to consider whether it wants to place one or more no wake buoys there, in accordance with the rule. Members of the LWMC will look at the site and come back with a recommendation.

**Item 8 – Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation Swim Guide 2020**

This presentation will happen at the February 24 LWMC meeting.

**Item 9 – 2020 Mid-Atlantic Boat Show Check-in**

Chairman Hegarty said that the LWMC will have a presence at the Boat Show, the booth will be in its usual location, and all materials are in hand. He will be there on Saturday and Sunday. Commissioner Thomas noted that he will be out of town but will help with set up.

**Item 10 – Northern Law Center Boat House Status**

Chairman Hegarty stated that the situation remains the same. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has not been received.

**Item 11 – Treasurer’s Report**

Secretary Treasurer Mullane reported that:

- For the current fiscal year, \$25,000 has been requested from the three contributing counties(Gaston, Mecklenburg, and York)
- For Q1 (July-September), Q2 (October-December), Q3 (January-March 2020) funds have been requested from all three counties.
- The LWMC invoices Gaston County twice a year (Q1&Q2/Q3&Q4). At this time, Gaston has been invoiced for their full \$25,000.
- Q3 fund have been received from York County.
- The next round of invoices will be sent to York and Mecklenburg in early April 2020.

**Item 12 – Chairman’s Report**

Chairman Hegarty said he and Commissioner Wilson met with the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation to talk about public relations to make sure communication efforts are coordinated and not overlapping or duplicative. There do not appear to be any conflicts even though the two organizations have common email distribution lists. Chairman Hegarty had a conversation with TowBoat US and with Mr. Terry Everhart. LWMC buoys and materials were delivered by Mr. Everhart to Commissioner Hanks. TowBoat US is ready to proceed. Mr. Everhart would like to continue operating SPLASH and plans to be at the Boat Show with SPLASH. Chairman Hegarty reported that the LWMC held a planning meeting in mid-January. Ms. Parker will prepare notes from that meeting. Commissioners Webber and Thomas are gathering Riversweep items, including t-shirts, to giveaway at the Boat Show. The first 2020 Riversweep planning meeting will be held in April.

**Item 13– Clerk’s Report**

Ms. Parker did not have a report.

**Item 14 – Old/New Business and Commission Project Reports**

a. Water Quality:

- Shoreline Plantings/Invasive Species: Commissioner Chacharon acknowledged that a lot of work was done last year, and this goal has been accomplished. She noted that the LWMC’s role is to educate and put information on the website. Chairman Hegarty said information on shoreline plantings would be available at the Boat Show.
- PCBs and Heavy Metals in Fish: Commissioner Hanks reported that he attended the NC Lake Management Society Conference on December 6 and met with several people that have conducted research in lakes on heavy metals-related issues. Commissioner Hanks spoke with researcher Reid Garrett about PCBs and mercury in fish and asked if there is a way to

determine how metals get into fish in order to break the chain. Mr. Garrett would not have time to do the research, but he knows people that may need research projects. Commissioner Hanks will follow up with Mr. Garrett next month to see if he has reached out to anyone on this topic.

- b. Buoys & Buoy Maintenance: Commissioner Hanks said he needs to determine how much stainless steel wire rope the LWMC has left. We may need to purchase more, and the cost may be higher this time around. Chairman Hegarty asked if we have a handle on where buoys are supposed to be placed. Commissioner Hanks said not yet. It was stated that the LWMC needs a way of tracking buoys. Legal Counsel Clark addressed the latest version of the NC Administrative Code section included in the Marine Commissioner's agenda packets. The buoys listed in that document are all the buoys as of May 1, 2019 that have been approved by NCWRC. Any buoys not on this list would be buoys approved by the LWMC or buoys placed pursuant to some other authority. Mr. Clark's viewpoint is that a nearly complete list of buoys should be included on the updated NC Administrative Code document dated May 1, 2019. However, the type of buoys like in Mr. Brancatto's case would not show up on the NC Administrative Code list. Mr. Clark's recommendation is to start with NCWRC list and see if those buoys are in place. Chairman Hegarty determined that the next step is to coordinate with Captain Adam Huth at TowBoat US and ask him to see if all the NC Administrative Code buoys are in place. The exact GPS coordinates for each buoy are included in the updated NC Administrative Code document. Commissioner Thomas suggested that law enforcement agencies in the different areas of the lake check the buoys and then report to TowBoat US. The report from each agency could serve as the baseline assessment to share with TowBoat US. Chairman Hegarty said that when Ms. Parker receives invoices from TowBoat US, she should forward them to the LWMC officers and Commissioners Thomas and Hanks for review and approval.
- c. Safety Programs: Commissioner Webber reported that he is working on this piece and a next step is to connect with GCPD Officer Doug Hord.
- For Boat Rental Companies: No report was given.
  - For Paddle Boats (kayaks/paddle boards): No report was given.

On the topic of the NC Lake Management Society Conference, Commissioner Hanks said that Bill Frasier from High Point presented on fish attractors in their lake and described their set up like a golf course of fish attractors – some are in deep water, some medium, and some in shallow water. He said Mr. Frasier could make a presentation to the LWMC. Chairman Hegarty asked Sgt. Laton about NCWRC's thoughts on fish attractors. Sgt. Laton said the NCWRC is in favor of fish attractors. Commissioner Hanks commented that Lake Wylie used to be great for fishing, but as development has happened the shoreline has been sanitized. It was noted that Duke Energy promotes fish attractors. Secretary Treasurer Mullane commented that most fish attractors are in deeper water. Commissioner Hanks will contact Mr. Frasier about coming to present to the LWMC.

- d. Public Relations: Commissioner Wilson reported was not present but sent a report via email before the meeting and was reported by Chairman Hegarty:
- Newsletter
- An email newsletter went out to our 3,023 subscribers on Friday announcing the January meeting and the 2020 schedule.
  - That email was opened and viewed by 594 people which represents an open rate of 20.4% which is good.
  - Over 100 people clicked through to our website directly from the email campaign.

- After the email was sent, multiple incoming emails from citizens were received and passed on to Chairman Hegarty.

#### Public Relations

Commissioner Wilson met with a local Instagram influencer in the Lake Wylie area and got their agreement to help push emergency announcements when needed. Their account is called @FortMillNow and has almost 10,000 followers. We now have agreements with York County Tourist Department and Fort Mill Now to blast emergency messages through their Instagram and Facebook reach. Commissioner Wilson will continue to meet with large social media influencers in the area to build a network of people and agencies willing to help the LWMC spread the word.

#### Social Media

Commissioner Wilson made a post on his Lake Wylie Facebook Page linking people to the LWMC's meetings and schedule page. That post was seen by 1,295 people. Of which, 96 people clicked through to the LWMC website. The post was also shared within many Lake Wylie related Groups on Facebook but analytical data on those posts are not available.

Starting at the February meeting, Commissioner Wilson plans to start Live Broadcasting the LWMC meetings on Facebook. They will then be automatically saved and can be looked at by anyone on their own time. After the meetings have been recorded, on-going analytics will be available for each recording and will be reported on at each subsequent meeting.

Commissioner Hanks mentioned that [Water Watcher trainings](#) are conducted by the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation.

#### **Item 15 – Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 pm.