



Town of Casco

Water Quality Committee Minutes

January 21 2026 at 6:00 PM

Casco Community Center

Attendees

- Tom McCarthy
- Pam Edwards
- Levi Thornton
- Eileen Tidd
- Jim Arsham (Remote)
- Maggie Daigle
- Scott Avery

Regular Meeting

1. Review and approval of the meeting agenda

Moved by: Jim, Seconded: Levi, Approved: 6/6 as amended

2. Approval of minutes from December 17, 2025

Moved by: Levi, Seconded: Eileen, Approved: 6/6

3. Public participation for non-agenda items

No public participation

Continuing Business

1. Maggie to apply formatting pass to first plan revision Tom to add a leading section framing the plan as volunteerism as opposed to government intervention

Completed

2. Send plan to stakeholders for feedback as appropriate Pam to reformat Funding section for consistency with the greater plan.

Completed. New folder within shared drive for collecting feedback

3. Tom to prepare slides for Selectboard meeting on 1/13, and send to committee for review

Completed, with request to Selectboard to provide feedback by end of January

4. Committee members to brainstorm budget line items worthy of town funding

Moved to new business

New Business

~~1. Review the draft plan and discuss any feedback received from the select board or other stakeholders.~~

Postponed via amended agenda

2. Memorandum from Pam Edwards re: concerns on specific elements of the plan

Pam moved to include her memorandum dated January 21, 2026 into the minutes of this meeting as an attachment.

Seconded by Levi

Discussion:

- Levi notes Similar feedback was received from Selectboard. Extent of CWQC power should be giving recommendations
- Tom strongly disagrees with the memo, noting he does not believe it is inappropriate for the plan to have been shared in its state
- Scott sees no issue with the committee offering recommendations. Voices concerns that the town needs to update how it approaches the Donation category of the town budget

Approved 5/6, Opposed: Tom

3. Workshopping of budget framework

Tom moving for the CWQC to provide a recommended line item budget to the finance committee for the 2026 town budget

Seconded: Levi

Discussion:

- Pam moves to amend the motion to make a recommendation to the selectboard rather than the finance committee
- Tom withdraws motion as unnecessary

- Tom recommends Sebago is omitted from consideration, given that it is well-supported by other lake associations

- Courtesy Boat Inspections

- From PLPPA (unofficial, from memory): roughly \$18/hr, 10 hrs/day per boat launch
- Proposal: Casco covers a certain number of days of CBI for each public boat launch. Must be weighted by other variables, not all boat launches receive same levels of traffic
- Other variables:
 - How many towns have responsibility for the lake?
 - How many boat launches?
- **Testing equipment and lab fees incurred by lake associations**
 - Cover up to a max amount per year: \$300
- **Testing performed by the town**
 - Find out from the town where the money is coming from now, and how much is spent historically
 - Placeholder \$300
- **Education materials and outreach events from the town**
 - Proposed \$500-1000
- **Acquiring and maintaining a shared set of test equipment owned by the town**
 - Need to build a budget
- **Lake associations conducting watershed surveys**
 - Percentage of watershed survey fees
 - Must consider amount coming from grants
 - Follow lead of grant-givers for how often these surveys should be recommended

Action Items

1. Jim to create a budget for a complete set of water quality test equipment
2. Levi to request a breakdown of CBI funds from PLPPA to better understand staffing
3. Tom to coordinate an extra meeting in early February before the budget cycle begins, to finalize budget recommendation

Reminders to the Attending Public: Water Quality Committee meetings are open to the public, but the public may not speak unless recognized by the Committee Chair or Vice Chair in their absence. Except during a public hearing, comment time is limited to 2 minutes per speaker during public participation or on agenda items.

Future meeting dates (subject to change)

February 18, 2025, at 6:00 PM Water Quality Committee Meeting

March 18, 2026 at 6:00 PM Water Quality Committee Meeting

Memorandum

January 21, 2026

To: Casco Water Quality ad hoc Committee From:
Pam Edwards, member
Subject: Casco Water Quality Plan

This memo records my concerns regarding specific elements of the draft Water Quality Plan ("Plan") that is currently being circulated for feedback. The committee has not formally voted to adopt the Plan or to forward it as a committee recommendation. While many aspects of the Plan are commendable, certain recommendations exceed the authority of an advisory committee to the Select Board and should be revised or removed.

As an appointed advisory committee, our role is limited to making recommendations to the Select Board. We do not have authority to insert ourselves into statutory permitting or review processes, nor to manage or allocate municipal budget funds.

I am limiting my comments to two items in the **Major Recommendations** section of the Plan (page 2), Items 2 and 4.

Item 2:

"Notify the Commission of any permits within shoreland zones, to solicit input back to the decision makers on the Select Board, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC), Planning Board, and the CEO by reviewing and providing recommendations for all plans, projects, and permits that have the potential to impact Casco water quality."

Discussion:

An advisory committee does not have authority to insert itself into the established legal framework for permit review or decision-making. While the committee may request notification of shoreland zone permits and may offer public comment during hearings or other public processes, it cannot require review of permits or provide recommendations directly to decision-making bodies outside the Select Board.

Item 4:

"Task the Water Quality Commission with managing the water quality budget line item to be allocated to lake associations."

Discussion:

Managing or allocating municipal funds exceeds the authority of an advisory committee. Budget review and allocation are roles of the Select Board and Finance Committee. An appropriate role for this committee would be to make recommendations to the Select Board regarding overall funding priorities for water quality initiatives, encourage lake associations to submit funding requests through established town processes, and request funding for its own advisory and educational activities as appropriate.

This memo is not intended to identify all instances in which the Plan may exceed the authority of an advisory committee. It is intended to ensure that these concerns are formally noted in the record.