Meeting Agenda

Ottawa County Groundwater Board
Fillmore Complex – Conference Room E
April 16, 2025 - 9:00 AM

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Old Business
    A. Approval of the February 19, 2025 Meeting Minutes
    B. Shallow Wells Work Group
    C. Composition of Board Membership
        i. **Motion:** to amend the Bylaws and Rules of the Groundwater Board as proposed
4. Pertinent Project Updates
    A. State Appropriation
    B. Education/Outreach
        i. Allendale Christian School
        ii. Water Quality Forum
        iii. Brochure
        iv. Kiosk
    C. Native Landscaping
        i. Sign Project
        ii. Other Sites
    D. Groundwater Monitoring
    E. Surface Water Monitoring
    F. Modeling
    G. Master Plan/Zoning Composite Mapping & Analysis
    H. Pertinent updates from Board members (2 minutes per member)
5. Public Comment
6. Adjournment

OTTAWA COUNTY GROUNDWATER BOARD

DATE: February 19, 2025

PLACE: Ottawa County Fillmore Complex, Conference Room E

PRESENT: Adam Elenbaas, Dean Smith, Sarah Bowman, Scott Meullerleile, Jerry Geertman, Carrie Rivette, Ted Malefyt, Curtis Carini, Patrick Staskiewicz (Joe Wallace), Henry Werksma, Jennifer Jermalowicz-Jones, Dave Kraker, Joe Bush

ABSENT: Jordan Jorritsma, Phil Kuyers, Mark Baker, Sara Pearson, Lee Machiela

STAFF: Matthew Chappuies, Paul Sachs, Andrew Roszkowki, Jason Shamblin, Drew Shaw

PUBLIC: None

CALL TO ORDER

Elenbaas called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

GWB 25 - 01 Rivette moved to approve the February 19, 2025 agenda. The motion passed. UNANIMOUS

INTRODUCTIONS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Adam Elenbaas led the discussion for the following election of officers:

Chair: Bowman nominates Adam Elenbaas as Chair.

Vice Chair: Jermalowicz-Jones nominates Curtis Carini as Vice Chair.

Secretary: Elenbaas nominates Matthew Chappuies as Secretary.

GWB 25 - 02 Rivette moved, and Sarah Bowman supports the motion to nominate the persons above to their respective positions. The motion passed. UNANIMOUS

OLD BUSINESS

A. Approval of the October 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes

GWB 25 - 03 Rivette moved to approve the October 17, 2024 Minutes. The motion passed. UNANIMOUS

B. Shallow Wells Work Group Update

Paul Sachs, Director of the Department of Strategic Impact, provided an update on the subcommittee's progress since the last meeting. He shared that a summary of ideas from previous discussions had been compiled into a cohesive document outlining potential actions. However,

Sachs noted that the subcommittee will need to reconvene to refine certain items further. One topic of focus involves the well code variance in Lansing, particularly regarding the 15-foot minimum depth requirement. The proposed adjustments aim to expand the use of potable shallow wells. Efforts are also underway to collaborate with representatives to address legislative changes.

The discussion has been framed around two primary paths: promoting non-potable water use through policy, and working with Lansing representatives to evaluate the well code in its entirety.

The board also explored how the Health Department could play a more integral role within the group. Dave Kraker proposed that the Health Department be included as a voting member on the Groundwater Board.

C. Composition of Board Membership

Sachs emphasized the value of flexibility in ensuring that the advisory board includes a diverse range of experts across various fields. This approach benefits the community by enriching discussions and decisions with specialized knowledge. He mentioned that as an advisory-only board, there is the flexibility to reassess its composition and incorporate members with technical expertise. Proposed updates to the bylaws were briefly discussed, with questions invited from attendees.

Among the changes proposed, Joe Bush, the Water Resources Commissioner, and Jason Shamblin, the Parks and Recreation Director, were suggested as new voting members. Bush's expertise in water resources and Shamblin's experience in natural resource management were highlighted as key reasons for their inclusion. Sachs noted that the Board of Commissioners and its committee are already aware of these upcoming adjustments.

The Health Department's role within the board was also a point of discussion. While the department has historically been involved in a non-voting capacity, staff emphasized the importance of their input. Kraker further advocated for the Health Department to be granted voting rights, underscoring its relevance and impact in addressing groundwater challenges.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. EGLE Meeting Recap

Sachs began the meeting by reflecting on the previous session, where the director of EGLE was in attendance. His participation was appreciated, as it fostered engagement and facilitated

productive discussions, even though some of the topics proved to be challenging. Following that meeting, staff traveled to Lansing to connect with EGLE leadership and their hydrogeologic modeler. The visit aimed to gather deeper insights into EGLE's modeling work, particularly in the context of enhancing the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool. Improvements to this tool are critical, as they are linked to legislative updates, requiring a greater volume of robust data to support impactful changes.

During the meeting, Sachs highlighted the significance of Ottawa County's groundwater monitoring initiatives, which have garnered attention from the state and other community stakeholders. The innovative system being developed for data collection and monitoring is at the forefront of these efforts. While the county is planning to establish its own system for managing this data, there have been preliminary discussions about sharing information with the State of Michigan. However, the specifics of this collaboration are yet to be determined.

Additionally, EGLE has recognized the importance of Ottawa County's work and expressed its support for the ongoing efforts. The board continues to underscore the need for strong data to drive improvements, while reinforcing the county's leadership role in this domain.

B. Extension of State Appropriation Funds

Chappuies reported that in 2021, a grant totaling $1.14 million was issued for this project with a 48-month term set to expire this August. In response to the upcoming deadline, the team is requesting a 24-month extension allowing flexibility and time needed to thoughtfully execute the projects objectives. The core of the funding expenditure focuses on well drilling, with the aim of gathering data from as many wells as possible.

As the revised deadline approaches, the team is prioritizing the installation of monitoring drills, the development of a comprehensive database to house the collected data, and the advancement of a modeling tool. This includes ongoing refinements to the tool as additional data becomes available. Efforts are also being directed toward compiling summary reports that encapsulate the findings and outcomes of this initiative.

Recognizing the pioneering nature of this work, Chappuies acknowledged that these specific challenges require innovative approaches. As such, the team is paving its own way, which necessitates additional time to ensure the success of their efforts

C. Blendon Township Updates

Sachs highlighted that Blendon Township is at the epicenter of the groundwater drawdown issues, facing some of the largest challenges in the area. Residents frequently reach out, questioning why local officials aren't taking more action to address the situation. Sachs noted that the core of the issue lies in leadership and experience. Township leaders recently reached out to discuss these concerns, prompting a meeting where it was revealed that even the chair of the planning commission had experienced his well running dry.

During the discussions, it was emphasized that strengthening zoning and infrastructure is critical to addressing these challenges. To support their efforts, opportunities for state funding were outlined, which could enable updates to their master plan and zoning ordinances. Given the close relationship between housing development and groundwater challenges, these updates are seen as essential steps forward.

Sachs concluded by stressing the importance of following up with Blendon Township leaders. While it is encouraging that they are starting to think about these challenges, continued collaboration will be crucial to ensuring meaningful progress.

PERTINENT PROJECT UPDATES

A. Groundwater Monitoring Status

Drilling efforts have been ongoing for several years as part of the county's commitment to understanding geology and hydrology at various locations. Collaborations with the Michigan Geologic Survey (MGS) and contractors have been instrumental in gathering critical data to support these efforts. In total, 16 wells have been successfully established, with 11 additional targets identified for the near future.

Since the last meeting, the Blendon Township Hall monitoring well had to be closed due to a building expansion project. Plans are already underway to drill a new well at the site to replace the closed one.

In addition, a local farmer has generously offered the use of an extra well for monitoring purposes, representing a valuable partnership with the community. This collaboration not only advances the county's monitoring efforts but also fosters a spirit of cooperation and mutual support among residents.

B. Exploring Modeling Options

The County previously utilized static modeling conducted by Michigan State University, but the report produced was impacted by flawed well records, resulting in less-than-optimal findings. To address these issues, the Michigan Geologic Survey initiated a project aimed at correcting the data within the State's well database. In parallel, Ottawa County has been actively collecting its own data to further enhance the accuracy of this effort.

The overarching goal for the project is to develop a new model that will be significantly more precise and potentially incorporate live or near-live data capabilities. Exploring the integration of AI-driven models is seen as a promising path forward, offering the potential for an accurate and dynamic representation of the aquifer's status. These innovative approaches are actively being pursued, and ongoing research continues to drive progress toward achieving this vision.

C. Surface Water Partnership with OAISD/CTC

There are areas within the county where surface water is notably impacting groundwater, underscoring the interconnected nature of these systems. Recognizing this, the team is exploring additional opportunities to install surface water monitoring sensors, primarily on streams and potentially on select lakes within the region. These efforts aim to enhance the understanding of how surface and groundwater systems interact.

To support this initiative, collaboration with local educational institutions is being pursued. A promising proposal has been received from the Careerline Tech Center's Environmental Research Program, suggesting a partnership involving 11th and 12th grade students. These students would take part in the installation and ongoing maintenance of the surface water monitoring components. This partnership represents an exciting chance to involve the community, provide a valuable hands-on learning experience for local youth, and advance the project's objectives with on-the-ground support.

D. Outreach Activities

Staff recently visited Allendale's Oakwood Intermediate School, where the entire fifth-grade class participated in creating short PSA videos in small groups. This annual initiative, now in its third year, provides an excellent opportunity to foster community engagement and educational growth. The staff at Oakwood seamlessly integrate local groundwater challenges into the water cycle curriculum, making these topics both relatable and impactful for students. Staff are

enthusiastic about continuing this collaboration next year, and examples of past projects can be viewed on the groundwater website.

Looking ahead, staff will visit Allendale Christian School, where student groups have designed groundwater-themed board games. This marks the first year of such an event at this location, and it is expected to serve as a foundation for future opportunities and continued partnership.

On March 21st, Water Resources Commissioner Joe Bush will host the Annual Water Quality Forum at the Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville. The event is open to all, and attendees are encouraged to participate.

E. Pertinent Updates from Board Members

Sarah Bowman provided updates on the Conservation District's upcoming Native Plant and Tree Sale, which serves as an important initiative in promoting native vegetation and sustainable practices within the community. She also shared brief updates on the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and other projects that have both direct and indirect impacts on Ottawa County's groundwater challenges.

Additionally, Jason Shamblin, Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Director, gave an overview of the department's five-year Parks and Recreation plan, which is set to be renewed in 2026. A significant part of the plan focuses on replacing turfgrass with more sustainable alternatives and incorporating interpretive signage to enhance the educational value of park spaces.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was given.

OTHER BUSINESS

GWB 25 – 04 Rivette moves to adopt the 2025 board meeting schedule. The motion passes, and the schedule is adopted. UNANIMOUS

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 16 at 9:00 AM

ADJOURNMENT

GWB 25 - 05 Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:02 am. UNANIMOUS

BYLAWS AND RULES
OF THE
OTTAWA COUNTY GROUNDWATER BOARD

SECTION I

PURPOSE

The Ottawa County Groundwater Board was created by the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners. The provisions of the "Resolution Establishing the Ottawa County Groundwater Board" and any amendments thereto are incorporated herein by reference. That resolution authorizes the Groundwater Board to establish rules and bylaws to govern its operations. These Bylaws and Rules are to be read in a manner consistent with that resolution, as well as state law, and any provision herein deemed inconsistent with the resolution or state law shall be struck and the remainder of the Bylaws and Rules shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION II

ORGANIZATION

2.1 MEMBERSHIP. The Groundwater Board shall total no more than ~~seventeen (17)~~nineteen (19) members~~, including two (2) members from the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners,~~ all of whom shall be voting members. ~~The Groundwater Board shall also include the County's Water Resources Commissioner as a non-voting member, who shall be in addition to the seventeen (17) or fewer voting members.~~ Two members shall be from the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners, one member shall be the County's Water Resources Commissioner, and one member shall be the County's Parks Director. At least two Board members shall be from municipalities with groundwater challenges specific to the Bedrock Aquifer. ~~-~~Additionally, the County shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that the membership of the County Groundwater Board includes representation from the following sectors: scientific community; well drilling; agricultural; conservation; local business; environmental education; K-12 education; real estate/development; public utilities/engineering. Members at-large will also be permitted. The Groundwater Board shall also include the County's ~~Manager of~~ Environmental Public Health Manager and/or designee as a non-voting member in addition to the nineteen or fewer voting members.

Groundwater Board members will serve three (3) year terms, with the exception of select inaugural members identified in the adopting resolution, who will serve a two (2) year term. There will be no limit on the number of terms a person may serve as a Groundwater Board member, either successively or in total. The County's Water Resources Commissioner, County's Parks Director, and County's Environmental Public Health Manager are exempt from terms. The two County Commissioner seats will serve one year terms.

In the event that a Groundwater Board member is no longer able or willing to serve on the Board, the Ottawa Board of Commissioners will fill any vacancy.

2.2 FIDUCIARY DUTIES. While the Groundwater Board Members are representative of different constituencies within the County, they shall endeavor to promote the general public good rather than special interests. All members should respect the confidentiality of materials presented.

2.3 ATTENDANCE. If a member is unable to attend a Groundwater Board or committee meeting, he or she should contact the Ottawa County Department of Strategic Impact or Chairperson by 5 p.m. of the day preceding the meeting and advise them of the reason for the absence. As stated in the Board of Commissioners' Administrative Policy regarding appointments to boards and commissions, all appointees are expected to maintain at least a seventy-five (75)% attendance record at meetings, and to not miss more than three (3) consecutive meetings without acceptable reasons. An appointee may be removed by the Board of Commissioners for failure to meet this expectation.

SECTION III

OPERATIONS

3.1 SESSION. The Groundwater Board shall operate on an annual session coterminous with the calendar year.

3.2 MEETINGS. The Groundwater Board will attempt to hold at least four (4) meetings per session, which includes an organizational meeting. The organizational meeting shall be the first meeting that occurs after January 1 of each year. At the organizational meeting, the Groundwater Board shall select a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson.

At the organizational meeting, a schedule of regular meetings for the year shall be established, including the organizational meeting for the following year. This schedule shall include the date, time and meeting location. Notwithstanding the above regular meetings may be adjourned and rescheduled by the Chairperson for cause.

Special meetings to discuss particular topics may be called by the Chairperson or by a written request signed by three (3) Groundwater Board members and filed with the Secretary. Special meetings of the Board will require seven (7) calendar days written notice to all Board members and include the meeting date, time, location and topic.

Each Groundwater Board member shall be responsible for keeping the Secretary (defined in Section 3.~~3~~5 below) apprised of his or her current address, email address, and telephone number and if such information is utilized, no defect in notice will be recognized.

3.3 TELECONFERENCING.

1. Any Board member wishing to attend physically shall be permitted to participate physically.
2. Any Board member wishing to attend remotely must call into the Board Secretary with significant time in advance of the meeting to participate in a joint telephonic or videoconferencing hookup into the meeting room.
3. The joint telephonic or videoconferencing hookup should include two-way communications so that all Board members can hear and record the discussion.
4. The Chairperson of the meeting and the Board Secretary recording the minutes, if possible, should be located in the physical location, although if no Board member who is physically present is appointed Chair *pro tem* of the meeting by the Board, the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson respectively, shall chair the meeting.
5. Any Board member attending remotely is allowed to vote.

6. All votes will be by roll call vote.
7. All other Board rules will apply.

3.4 VOTE OF THE BOARD. No Groundwater Board action shall be official unless it is done through a proper vote (as defined below) at a properly convened meeting (as defined below) or unless it is ratified by a proper vote at a subsequent, properly convened meeting.

"Properly convened meeting" refers to a Groundwater Board meeting where a majority of the appointed members are present, and which was the subject of seven (7) calendar days prior written notice to each member.

"Proper vote" refers to a polling of the members of the Groundwater Board at a properly convened meeting which results, unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, in a majority of those members who are present, physically or remotely, voting in support of a motion or resolution.

3.5 OFFICERS. The officers of the Groundwater Board shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and shall be elected for a one-year term by a proper vote at the organizational meeting. The Groundwater Board will also appoint an auxiliary non-member to serve the role of Secretary on an annual basis.

Officers shall exercise functions including but not limited to those described below:

Chairperson – shall preside at the meetings of the Groundwater Board, serve as its spokesperson and signatory and coordinate its activities.

Vice Chairperson – shall exercise the powers of the Chairperson when the Chairperson is unavailable.

Secretary – shall be responsible for arranging meetings and recording and distribution of the minutes of each meeting, and for carrying on the normal administrative duties necessary to the Groundwater Board's functions.

The role of the Secretary of the Board will be carried out by the Director of the County Department of Strategic Impact, or, upon a vote of the Groundwater Board, a Departmental staff person. The Secretary will not be considered a member of the Groundwater Board.

3.6 COMMITTEES. The Groundwater Board may establish such standing committees, special committees and task forces as it deems necessary.

Standing committee members must be members of the Groundwater Board. Members of special committees or task forces need not be members of the Groundwater Board. Any special committee or task force established may be asked to file a written report of its activities upon the completion of its assigned task. Special committees or task forces shall be dissolved upon presentation of a final report at the discretion of the Board.. The Groundwater Board may dissolve any special committee or task force it establishes, at any time. The Chairperson shall make committee and task force appointments subject to the approval of the Groundwater Board upon a proper vote. Each committee or task force shall elect a chairperson from its membership.

3.7 RULES OF ORDER. Except as otherwise provided herein, Roberts Rules of Order shall be used in all Groundwater Board meetings, including those of its committees and task forces. Members shall have the following rights and duties:

A. When a Board member wishes to speak, he or she shall be recognized and address themselves to the Chairperson.

B. When two (2) or more Board members wish to speak at the same time, then the Chairperson shall decide who is to speak first.

C. When a Board member is speaking on any question before the Groundwater Board, he or she shall not be interrupted except to be called to order.

D. When a Board member is called to order, he or she shall immediately suspend his or her address except to register an appeal. The entire Groundwater Board in attendance, if appealed to, shall decide the question upon a proper vote. If there is no appeal, the ruling of the Chairperson shall be final.

E. The Chairperson shall vote on all questions decided by yea and nay except on an appeal from his or her own decision. When a yea and nay vote is taken, every Board member present, physically or remotely, shall vote or note their abstention.

3.8 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. Groundwater Board meetings are not subject to the Open Meetings Act; however, it is fully within the discretion of the Chairperson of the Groundwater Board to allow the public to attend and to address the Board at meetings, both of which are subject to reversal by a proper vote of the Groundwater Board. Each person giving public comment must state his or her name, and city/township of residence, and speak to the Chairperson in an orderly fashion. The Chairperson may set reasonable limits upon public participation, but any such limits are subject to reversal by a proper vote of the Groundwater Board. Public comment is limited to agenda items only.

3.9 MINUTES. The Secretary shall record, prepare in writing, and maintain minutes of each Groundwater Board regular meeting and special meeting, noting attendance and all Groundwater Board actions.

SECTION IV

DUTIES

4.1 ADVISORY FUNCTION. The Groundwater Board's function will be to make policy recommendations and develop recommended regulatory standards for various groundwater initiatives.

The Board will also support efforts for the creation of new state enabling legislation as necessary to allow for greater ability to manage groundwater resources at the local/regional level.

SECTION V

ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws and Rules shall be adopted and become operative when approved by two-thirds of the Groundwater Board members appointed and serving. These Bylaws and Rules may be amended at any time provided the Groundwater Board members have been provided with a copy of the proposed amendments at least seven (7) days prior to a meeting at which the amendment will be considered. Adoption of any amendment will require approval of two-thirds of the Groundwater Board members appointed and serving.

ATTESTATION

We, the Chairperson and Secretary of the Ottawa County Groundwater Board hereby certify that on ~~November 8~~~~February 19~~April 16, 202~~3~~5, the Groundwater Board duly approved these Bylaws and Rules.

_____
Chairperson

_____
Secretary