

Catskill Watershed Corporation
Septic Committee Meeting
February 3, 2026
Minutes

Attendance:

Committee Members: Arthur Merrill (Director), Tina Molé (Director), Richard Parete (Director), Alicia Terry (Director), George Haynes, Jr. (Director), Allen Hinkley (Director), Jason Merwin (CWC), Shilo Williams (NYCDEP)

Others: Zach Baldwin-Way (CWC), Lindsay Ballard (CWC), Aaron Bennett (NYCDEP), Donald Brown (CWC), Nick Carbone (Delaware County Watershed Affairs by Zoom), Joseph Cetta (Director), Samantha Costa (CWC), Timothy Cox (CWC), Heidi Emrich (Ulster County Environmental Planner by Zoom), Kyle Faraci (CWC), Jessica Fiedler (CWC), Matthew Gianetta (NYCDEP), Mitchell Hull (CWC), John Jacobson (CWC), Innes Kasanof (Director), Lynn Kavanagh (CWC), John Kosier (Director), David Lane (CWC), Joan Lawrence-Bauer (The Walton Reporter), Michael Maloney (NYSDOH), James Martin (CWC), Michael Meyers (NYCDEP by Zoom), Dymitry Ostapyshyn (NYCDEP by Zoom), Pat Palmer (NYSDOH), Barbara Puglisi (CWC), Nicholas Sadler (NYCDEP), John Schwartz (NYCDEP), Jeff Senterman (Director), James Sofranko (Director), Karen Stainbrook (NYSDEC), Thomas Stalter (NYCDEP by Zoom), Morgan Tarbell (NYSDOH by Zoom), Gerson Tavaréz (NYCDEP), Pauline Wanjugi (NYSDOH by Zoom), John Wimbush (NYSDOH by Zoom), Gemma Young (CWC)

- I. Arthur Merrill called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM.
- II. Minutes from the January 2026 Committee Meeting were reviewed and approved as written.
- III. Septic Program:
 - A. **Hossam Banaja Over \$30,000.00:** Mr. Banaja's residence is located at 2046 Windfall Road, Walton, New York 13856 in the Town of Tompkins. CWC staff determined that his septic system is failing. The engineer is Steele Brook Engineering PLLC. The contractor is Ben Reynolds Construction Company, Inc. Mr. Banaja signed into the program on October 11, 2024. His Design Application was received by NYCDEP on February 7, 2025, and deemed complete on February 14, 2025. His septic system design was recommended for NYCDEP Design Approval on July 19, 2025. Mr. Banaja's two-year deadline is October 31, 2026. His proposed septic system will serve a five-bedroom house. Major components of this system include a 1,500-gallon septic tank, a siphon chamber, 286 linear feet of gravity pipe, an effluent filter, one distribution box, 515 cubic yards of absorption fill material, 360 linear feet of absorption trench, 115 linear feet of curtain drain, 105 linear feet of curtain drain outlet pipe, 115 linear feet of swale, two cleanouts, three risers, 80 linear feet of access road, remove one tree, remove a rock wall, 15 linear feet of six-inch sleeve and site restoration. Three quotes were submitted to the homeowner for this project. They were \$69,610.00, \$71,050.00, and \$71,105.00. The lowest quote, submitted by Ben Reynolds Construction Company, Inc., is within 10% of the staff estimated cost of construction based on the Schedule of Values. The Committee recommended

that a resolution be brought before the Board of Directors to reimburse Hossam Banaja in the amount not to exceed \$69,610.00 to build his septic system.

- B. Frank Messineo Additional Costs:** Mr. Messineo's residence is located at 90 Harvest Lane, Bovina Center, New York 13740 in the Town of Bovina. The engineer is Steele Brook Engineering PLLC. The contractor is LaFever Excavating, Inc. This project was previously approved for \$31,476.00. Shallow ledge rock was encountered while installing the septic tank and siphon chamber. The contractor hammered for 17 hours to attain necessary depths. The contractor has requested \$7,586.25 for the added work. This amount appears to be reasonable and justified. This is a secondary residence eligible for 60% reimbursement. $\$7,586.25 \times 60\% = \$4,551.75$. The total project cost will be \$36,027.75. The Committee recommended that a resolution be brought before the Board of Directors to reimburse Frank Messineo in the amount not to exceed \$4,551.75 for additional costs to build his septic system.
- C. Christina Mitchell Second Time Repair:** Ms. Mitchell's residence is in the Town of Walton, Section, Block and Lot number 232-2-12.3. This project was paid for in 2014 under the Priority 7 Program. A Second Time Repair was approved by the Septic Committee and Board of Directors for pump replacement. The pump has been replaced and paid for. The pump alarm continues to ring. The level in the pump chamber is too high. There may be electrical issues and possibly infiltration. Exploratory work will need to be done to diagnose the problem. The homeowner had the septic tank pumped in 2023. The Committee recommended approving additional Second Time Repair costs, including exploratory work to diagnose the problem and to correct infiltration if necessary to Christina Mitchell.
- D. Septic Maintenance:** Mitch reported that pump out costs were reimbursed to 30 property owners last month. A total of 30 pump out costs have been reimbursed this year. This is a good start for the year.
- E. Septic Cluster:** No report.
- F. Septic Update:** Mitch Hull reported that eight septic system repair costs were reimbursed to property owners last month. Four were Second Time Repairs. The other four were left over from last year. Eight septic system repair costs have been reimbursed in 2026.
- G. Other:** Jason gave a Power Point presentation of Septic Program data for 2025. The Bovina Montessori School is our largest project to date. It is complete except for restoration. Two-hundred-fifty-four septic systems were replaced last year. He showed a map of project locations. Program efficiency has continued to improve. In 2019, the average number of days from sign-up to completion was 819 days. In 2025 the average number of days was 459, a decrease of 44%. Twenty-two engineers and 94 contractors received payments.

Projects included 41 conventional designs, 41 modified conventional designs and 114 alternate designs. Alternate designs are much more expensive to build.
Numbers:

The top two contractors, LaFever Excavating, Inc., completed 13 projects. Jim Peters Excavating LLC completed 12 projects.

Additional cost resolutions decreased.

The Maintenance Program continued to grow. A number of efficiencies were put in place. Management of the program was transferred to the Septic Team.

Sixty-percent reimbursements for secondary residences remained about the same over the past four years.

- IV. The next Septic Committee Meeting was scheduled for March 3, 2026.
- VI. The meeting adjourned at 9:52 AM.