

**WINCHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S AD HOC
HIGHLAND LAKE WATER LEVEL COMMITTEE**

Town Hall, 338 Main Street
2nd Floor – Lee Ann LaClaire Room (aka Blue Room)

MEETING MINUTES

March 31, 2022

Introductions of Members

Attendance: Willie Platt (Chair), Jen Perga, Don Crossman, Candy Perez (Liaison)
Ellen Babcock, Nominated Member

Absent: Jim Welton

Review of Process by Candy, Board of Selectmen Liaison

The water level committee analyzes reports regarding water level then makes a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen (BOS). They take into their consideration their recommendation for a water level schedule. The BOS applies for an Inland Wetlands and Watercourses permit as required. She explained she has checked with the town attorney and that the BOS makes the decision and IWWC approves the permit or rejects it. They cannot make changes themselves.

Once the schedule is approved by IWWC, it is posted for the public.

Review of Historical Information

Willie presented documents showing historical information and the limnologist report on drawdowns and reviewed refill data levels over the past ten years.

The Town keeps track of water levels at Highland Lake every day. In winter they try to keep it at 36" down for a three-foot draw.

March 23 depth was 34"

March 31 depth (today) was 27"

Discussed:

- Drawdown levels and coves due to historical issues. If water is not brought up in a timely manner, floating bogs may form if water level is too low and water freezes with the bottom.
- Levels needed for wall work around the perimeter and how deep the draw in each area needs to be around the entire shoreline of the lake.
- Concerns of drawdowns along with ways to mitigate some of them.
- Perhaps a hybrid model could be developed that included if work was finished during a needed draw, could the lake be refilled early, especially now that permitting software may make it easier to track which permits are in existence for each year.
- BOS has the authority not to draw in case of drought according to policy. It would go just below spillway
- Some data from rainbow reservoir regarding cyanobacteria.
- Observations from Willie's location and George Knocklein's observations.
- It's important to keep water over spillways in summer for many reasons, including but not limited to the fact that moving water helps keep the surface cleaner and higher water keeps

sunlight from reaching deeper into weeds. Both are thought to help reduce the chance for algae formation.

- Green algae bloom last year in coves as well as cyanobacteria two years ago.
- The NEAR 2020 report and water level impacts.
- CT Federation of Lakes' recommendation of copper sulfate treatments due to cyanobacteria blooms (blue green toxic algae)
- What new permits should ask - state how deep a draw people need.

We authorized Willie to go ask the planning department to put a question about what depth of drawdown is needed on a permit for 3-4-7. Committee will create map.

Jen made motion to adjourn, Don seconded. Unanimously approved

Next meeting: 4/14, 4 p.m.