

**Dutchess County Planning Board
MINUTES – June 10, 2026**

Present

Joseph Amendola
Gary Baright
David Barr
Dale Culver
Norma Drummond
Edie Greenwood
Hans Klingzahn
J. Patrick Lambert
James Nelson
Molly Rhodes
Jill Way

Amanda Bergen, *Staff*
Jennifer Coccozza, *Staff*
Tara Dillon, *Staff*
Devin Rigolino, *Staff*
Ian Wickstead, *Staff*
Eoin Wrafter, *Staff*

Jonathan Churins-Presenter

Absent

Linda Fakhoury
Ken Migliorelli
J. Randall Williams

The meeting was called to order by Hans Klingzahn.

Approval of March 10, 2026, meeting minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from March 10, 2026, was made by J. Patrick Lambert and second by Jill Way.

Commissioner's Update:

- An update was shared about former planning board member **Jim Fedorchak**, who recently passed away.
 - As of May 30th, the department has responded to 96 different referrals. This is 24% of expected annual reviews for the department. We expect about 400 annually and are on pace. Referrals usually pick up the 3rd and 4th quarter.
 - Partnership for Manageable Growth (PMG) updates
 - We closed on the Domin Farms project. 6,000 acres preserved.
 - Two outstanding projects, Hahn Farm and Heritage Acres. Both of which we hope will close in 2026.
 - We do not anticipate going out for another round at this moment.

Water & Sewer Planning Presentation

Jonathan Churins, Executive Director Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority, delivered a detailed presentation on long-term infrastructure needs across Dutchess County. Topics included:

• **Overview of the Authority:**

- A public benefit corporation operating water and sewer systems countywide.
- Major systems span from Red Hook to Hyde Park, Poughkeepsie, and southern Dutchess.

• **Purpose of the Presentation:**

- To begin discussion on long-term sustainability of water and sewer systems.
- To highlight how today's planning decisions affect future affordability, reliability, and resiliency.

• **Key Issues Raised:**

- Many small systems (20–200 homes) struggle due to lack of economies of scale.
- Dutchess County has the highest number of small, regulated water systems in NY State.
- Small system failures are common and pose long-term planning and financial challenges.

• **Models of Water/Wastewater Service:**

1. Private wells and septic systems (rural, low-density).
2. Small independent utility systems (economically stressed).
3. Regional water and/or sewer system. It's going to hit your existing growth corridors, centers and the typical things we talk about (preferred for dense areas and long-term viability).

• **Dutchess County in comparison and scale:**

- New York State has approximately 10,000 regulated water systems including community, non-transient, transient systems. Dutchess County has 700 of those systems which is 7% across New York State.
- We are #1 in New York State for the number of small water systems. When we look at the nation there are approximately 145,000 public water systems in the US distributed across approximately 3143 counties. Resulting in a national average of about 46 water systems per county. By comparison Dutchess County stands out with around 700 public water systems significantly exceeding the kind of typical county average. Dutchess County, depending on how you count, is fourth in the nation and we're likely moving to 3rd for the number of individual water systems. We see this as a problem.
- Case studies are available for those interested.

• **Public Water System definition:**

- With the three different categories that are there when we speak of public water system versus transient, non-transient. It could be as small as a gas station or a summer camp, or multiple parcels that are linked together with transportation corporation water and sewer. I'm mentioning numbers that refer to water because it's easy to access those numbers. Big public water systems like Suffolk and Nassau County, they together have 500 public water systems (250 each). We are leaders in small systems, we have 31 systems across the county, 21 – water and 10 – sewer that is your scale.

• **Current Development model:**

- Is driven by public policy and so we have systems that are developed with good intentions.
- Health regulations require safe drinking water, wastewater treatment, municipalities and housing developers want projects to move forward.
- The challenges that many of these projects solve the immediate need without fully considering the long-term ownership and replacement costs.
- Fixed costs exist regardless of size. As we get into smaller systems, we see that if you have 500 customers versus 100, that 100 customer water system is going to have to pay the same cost for their laboratory testing and chemicals.
- They may use less because they produce less water but some of the costs are fixed. We have operators. lab testing which is required on schedule. They likely have some sort of computer system cost data that's able to control the equipment.
- They must respond to emergencies, water main breaks, manage their assets through time and ever-changing regulatory compliance.
- When you look at the 1970s there were less than 20-25 analytes that have contaminants that we had to test for. Now we're into a considerable list as we get into more complicated systems that may be under the influence of surface water.
- Generally, as a key observation we see that about 500 to 600 is where it starts to become affordable. We're able to build fund balances and systems.
- Here we have some of the things that you must pay for a water system, over the last four to five years costs significantly increased. According to news articles chlorine is a component that most water systems use and the cost has gone up from around \$1.80 for a gallon to somewhere around \$8. A lot of that has to do with the plant shutting down, changes in technology, new regulations and transportation issues across the board.
- The cost of electricity is increasing over time which contributes to rate increases of water and sewers. We do not produce electricity so we're likely to buy it from an entity and prices are increasing.
- Laboratory testing of Perfluorooctanesulfonic Acid (PFOS) is a very expensive test. You're required to take that test multiple times per year. The sample cost range is between \$700 - \$1500.

• **Small System Challenges:**

- Quality issues, these are typically considered violations. For example, having radionuclides or other analytes will cause a lot of issues with the source water. For a small customer base, it is going to be high in cost to test and treat.
- In the 60's and 70's, wastewater treatment plants were built to meet the community's needs. 20 – 60 years later when it is time to rebuild the facility, it is undersized and there is no room for future replacement without taking it out of service.

- A very expensive treatment plan is needed to replace the facility. A truck run facility is setup to meet daily needs, not impact the stream, fish and not causing your neighbors to have an odor issue.

• **Focus Highlight:** Hyde Park Regional Water System

- Offered as an example of a “flagship” long-range planning model.
- Case studies are available for those interested.

The Water Authority works closely with the counties through shared services agreement, allowing the ability to use the county’s taxing authority to re-levy to collect unpaid water/sewer charges. It's a good relationship that we have had for over 30 years.

Conclusion

Jonathan encouraged continued collaboration and planning for the next 50 years to ensure sustainable water and sewer service across Dutchess County.

Correspondence

The Planning Board received no correspondence

Announcements

Next Planning Board meeting:
September 9, 2026

Adjournment

Hans Klingzahn made a motion to adjourn; xxx seconded, the motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia B.-Lloyd