

LAKE WYOLA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Approved Minutes

February 21, 2026, at 9:00 AM
Via Zoom and at the Town Hall

Members present: John Gorey, Howard Kinder, Walter Tibbetts, Leonard Czerwonka, Tom Siefert, and Mark Rivers

Members remote: Eric Stocker, Catherine Hilton, Art Keene, and Bob Douglas

Members absent: Terry Smith,

Guests: John Kinder, Frank McGinn, and Mary David

1. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of November 15, 2025 meetings were reviewed. Walter moved to approve. Howard seconded the motion. The motion passed via roll call vote noted below.

LWAC vote to approve the November Minutes			
	Yes	No	Absent
Leonard Czerwonka	x		
Bob Douglas	x		
John Gorey	x		
Catherine Hilton	x		
Art Keene	x		
Howard Kinder	x		
Mark Rivers	x		
Tom Siefert	x		
Terry Smith			x
Eric Stocker	x		
Walter Tibbetts	x		

2. Update on Dam Repair and Maintenance Activities

On 11/28/25 Howard noted that the dam had developed a new and significant leak which was eroding sand within the dam's core and being deposited in the downstream channel. Later that day, Nat Arai (GZA engineer), Howard Kinder, Chief Czerwonka, and Walter Tibbetts met at the dam and observed holes that had formed on the upstream face of the dam. Walter also noted that the trash rack was again clogged. Since 2017 there has been leakage around the drainpipe when the gate valve is opened; however there was no accompanying sediment erosion and plans were being made to repair it. However, the new leaks are much more serious and need to be addressed as soon as possible.

Nat contacted the Mass Department of Dam Safety who recommended that the lake be immediately lowered by an additional 3 feet below the normal winter lake level, which is 2 feet below the spillway, for a total lowering of 5 feet below the spillway level. ConCom approved an emergency certification for the drawdown. The lowering was completed by mid-December. Walter scuba dove to clean the trash rack. It is believed that the clogged trash rack was a significant contributor to developing the new leak.

Current status:

- The town is working closely with GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc., to repurpose existing EEA grant funding specifically to respond to this emergency.

- GZA developed an emergency repair plan which involves placing filter fabric on the face of the dam, which is then backfilled with pervious crushed stone, then armoring the crushed stone with 8-inch riprap.
- The Town Administrator is working on getting the required permits.
- GZA has completed the Preliminary Design and Construction Sequence, and we are waiting for final construction proposals and mobilization schedules. Once the contractor has been selected, the Office of Dam Safety will be notified

Once the temporary repairs are complete and the water level is raised to the normal winter 2-foot drawdown level, planning for permanent repair will begin. It is expected that the state will require a Phase II Engineering Evaluation and Alternatives Analysis which includes:

- Boring, sampling, and analysis of the internal dam structure
- Stability and seepage analyses
- Hydrologic/Hydraulic Analysis and spillway inadequacy evaluation

At the completion of the Phase II study, we will have the information needed to perform a permanent repair which is expected to take a few years.

3. Request for a New Water Level Staff Gauge to be Located on the Dam

Howard requested that we purchase a new water level staff gauge and install it at the dam. Catherine made a motion to buy a new one. Walter seconded the motion. The motion passed via voice vote noted below:

LWAC vote to buy a new staff gauge			
	Yes	No	Absent
Leonard Czerwotka	x		
Bob Douglas	x		
John Gorey	x		
Catherine Hilton	x		
Art Keene	x		
Howard Kinder	x		
Mark Rivers	x		
Tom Siefert	x		
Terry Smith			x
Eric Stocker	x		
Walter Tibbetts	x		

4. Update on Lake Wyola Stormwater Erosion Task Force site visit

Members of the Lake Wyola Stormwater Erosion Task Force, along with consulting engineers from GZA, were scheduled to perform a site visit in preparation for the design phase for storm water erosion prevention. Due to the excessive snowpack, the visit was postponed until the weather improves.

5. Beaver Dam Management at Lakeview Road culvert

The beaver dam at the culvert has been removed and Tom noted that 8 beavers were removed. Len questioned if there is a plan to prevent future dams from being built. Howard recommend that the highway department check it weekly and remove any accumulation of sticks. Bob noted that beaver dam removal requires an Emergency Certification issued by the Conservation Commission which is good for 30 days. Catherine noted that trapping outside of the normal trapping season requires a permit from the Board of Health.

Mark asked if the ConCom could issue an opened-ended permit. Bob didn't believe that a standing permit could be issued; however, he agreed to check with ConCom. Len will check with the highway department to understand their plans for the future.

6. Committee Membership

Mark incorporated recommendations from committee members into the latest draft which was reviewed at this meeting. Additional requested modifications included:

- Catherine recommend that the LWA membership be fixed at a set number to facilitate defining a quorum. Mark suggested that it be set to 5 LWA members, one of which should be a member of the LWA board.
- Tom noted that an Associate Member should be a voting position.
- Tom also suggested that we change the membership from 5 members from LWA, to one member from LWA and 4 members from the Shutesbury community at large. Tom also questioned if it is legal to specify that 5 members come from the LWA.
- Mary, Mark, and Art expressed strong opinions about having the 5 LWA members, noting that LWA members have a vested interest in making decisions about the lake region.
- Eric thought that few people outside the lake area have any interest in lake activities
- Catherine noted that LWAC members are appointed by the Select Board and the SB would most likely give preference to people who have a connection to the lake; therefore we don't need to be so strict in defining the membership.
- Walter and Catherine suggested that the committee membership include 3 members of LWA and 2 members from the community at large.
- Tom also suggested a membership of nine, with one LWA member and two from the community at large.

Walter made a motion to table the discussion until we obtain guidance from town council regarding the legality of having five members from the LWA on the committee. Mark seconded the motion. The motion passed based on the vote below.

LWAC vote to table membership discussion until we get guidance from town counsel			
	Yes	No	Absent
Leonard Czerwonka	x		
Bob Douglas	x		
John Gorey	x		
Catherine Hilton	x		
Art Keene	x		
Howard Kinder	x		
Mark Rivers	x		
Tom Siefert	x		
Terry Smith			x
Eric Stocker	x		
Walter Tibbetts	x		

7. Adjournment

Tom motioned to end the meeting at 10:33 and was seconded by Len. The motion passed via roll call vote noted below.

Close the November LWAC meeting			
	Yes	No	Absent
Leonard Czerwonka	x		
Bob Douglas	x		
John Gorey	x		
Catherine Hilton	x		
Art Keene	x		
Howard Kinder	x		
Mark Rivers	x		
Tom Siefert	x		
Terry Smith			x
Eric Stocker	x		
Walter Tibbetts	x		

Next meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2026