

Minutes of the Watershed Agricultural Council Meeting
April 27, 2010

I. Meeting called to order at 1:05 p.m.

Directors Present:

David Cammer	Fred Huneke
Joe Eisele	William Coleman
Tom Donnelly	Richard Giles
Sally Fairbairn	Ken Smith
Dave Post	John Verhoeven
Tom Hutson	Ed Blouin, NYC DEP
John Riedl	Steve Reed
Barbara Howard – via Polycom	

Directors Absent:

Darby Hartwell

Others Present:

Craig Cashman	Thomas Artale
Cheryl Marion	Challey Comer
Tara Collins	Dan Flaherty
John Thurgood	Jeff Graff
Larry Hulle	Elaine Poulin
Brian LaTourette	Carrie Davis
Tom Pavlesich	John Thurgood
Katie Palm	

Craig introduced the two new employees present: Larry Hulle, Ag Program Manager and Katie Palm, Executive Assistant to the Ag Program. They both began employment with WAC on April 12th and have been in orientation since.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2010 with attendance corrections.

Motion: Sally Fairbairn

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

III. Executive Director Report – Craig Cashman

Operational Report

- Easement Contract Negotiations: the current plan is to extend the current contract through 2011. We will begin negotiating long-term contract with resolution on governance issue/unanimous consent and unfunded liability related to stewardship with completion in December of this year. We are also developing and finalizing WAC's position with a White Paper on Unfunded Liability related to Stewardship of Easements which we will discuss later in Executive Session.
- DEP/Coalition/DC: To ensure movement with the water supply permit linking coalition concerns with WAC Easements DEP with WAC input have been meeting with coalition attorneys on a multitude of issues concerning WAC easements. Currently some of the issues discussed are improving the local consultation process, transparency commitments, disclosing of documents, enforcement and transfer of easements.
- NYSERDA Grant: Received check for \$39,000 two months ago. Contacted NYSERDA supervisor for second payment of \$102,000. Currently awaiting a timeline.
- DSA Report – Organizational Development RFP has been formulated (and will be sent to NYC DEP for approval) to include the Strategic Plan development as well as training for the board and staff.

Program Reports/Approvals

- Work Plans: Staff/program area work plans are being drafted and completed in May. After review with the Executive Director they will be brought to committees for oversight review.
- Whole Farm Plan Definition: With solicited input from partners the review committee submitted a draft definition to the Ag Committee. Based on additional input over the next two weeks the review committee will submit their final definition to the Ag Committee for its next meeting and then to the Board for approval at the May meeting.
- **Human Resources –**

Motion based on the recommendation of the Executive Committee to create an additional position of Stewardship Specialist contingent upon available funding through non-endowment dollars.

Motion: Sally Fairbairn

Second: Tom Donnelly

Abstained: Ed Blouin

No: Dave Post and Dave Cammer

Approved

Cheryl – interviews for the open engineer specialist position will be conducted by Larry Hulle and Brian LaTourette on Thursday and Friday. Brendan Murphy has begun as the EoH forester and after completing a week of orientation in the Hamden office has now started in Yorktown. The three NM interns and one small farms intern have been hired and will begin work in May. Advertising has begun today for an Easement intern.

- **Easements – Jeff**

The Easement Program has 17 contracts in process with 3,000 acres under contract. Over 17,000 acres have been closed on which will then bring the WAC portfolio to 20,000 acres. Notices will go out in Sept/Oct of the beginning of the

next round of applications. Presently we are monitoring 95 original grantor easements on 108 properties. 55 stewardship projects are presently underway hence the need for additional staff as there is only one employee handling the work presently.

➤ **Outreach – Tara**

Examples of various materials geared for children that will be distributed at upcoming events were shared. The annual report is at the printer and will also be online. Hilltop Hanover has given an exhibit space in their workshop area for WAC's use EoH. May is Clean Drinking Water Month. Tara encouraged Directors to write letters to newspaper editors. She will be participating in Schoharie Watershed Week with an overview of our program and also NYS Waterfest for Children.

➤ **Agriculture – Brian & Larry**

The WAP and WAC have submitted edits, comments and revisions on the current "WAP evaluation criteria process" to DEP as part of the FAD requirement. The WAP goal of meeting "substantially implemented" on 90% of all large farms is now down to 8 farms with the deadline still being September 30, 2010. An Ag Tour will be held June 3rd visiting three farms in the upper Delaware County watershed Region. NRCS has announced the AWEPP contract deadline of July 2nd for our 2nd round grant award process. WAP will make available applications and will be administering all phases of implementation of this grant on all farms in the NYC watershed Cat/Del region. Larry explained his background in Dairy Science from Cornell University and told the Directors a bit about his previous work and family.

➤ **Database – Seth**

There are still some updates due from PAR by the end of this week. The portion that Seth and James have worked in-house on has been well received and the performance benefits are remarkable. Seth hopes to have the Farm to Market portion live by mid May and Forestry up by mid June. The servers provided through this contract with PAR have not had any problems.

➤ **Farm to Market – Challey**

Challey is once again organizing the Terra Madre trip and has a plan for previous participants to choose those who should be given the opportunity to attend this year. The Farm to Market Conference held in Liberty was a huge success and was attended by a good balance of buyers and growers allowing all to make sales connections. Presently Challey is trying to gather statistics of the actual number of sales made at this event. 15 grants totaling \$50,000 will be distributed by this program to those applicants selected for program development, marketing and educational purposes. Open enrollment for Pure Catskills is underway and the guide will be out this summer.

➤ **Forestry – Tom**

The forestry program is meeting or exceeding all of their goals. Tom is working on the narrative with Rob Clark for the \$350,000 earmark from the USDA Forest

Service. The CCPI EQIP work has been challenging since NRCS is really an agency designed to work with farmers not foresters. Joshua Brackle has been hired as the Wood Products Utilization and Marketing Specialist and will begin working in the Hamden office in mid May. Brandon Murphy was hired as the EoH forester and was in Hamden last week for orientation and has begun working this week in the EoH office. He is a graduate of ESF and has been working for the DEC in Cortland.

➤ **East of Hudson - Carrie**

EoH engineering staff is working of EoH and WoH designs to get work out to bid. The EoH program will be represented at the Old Salem Horse Show in May with a display and table. This is an annual event that draws between 1,000-2000 spectators and exhibitors. EoH will include in their display the newly developed informational “rack” cards. The Hanover Hill Farm is in the process of acquiring an easement through NYS Ag and Markets. WAC has contracted to develop the baseline which is one of the last steps.

**IV. Chair’s Report – Fred Huneke
Endowment Committee –**

The Endowment Committee has approved an operating statement and committee guidelines. Their next meeting is scheduled for May 24th. At the May meeting they will work on developing an RFP for a trustee and then will be choosing a trustee. This committee hopes to be asking for approval at the June Directors meeting for approval of this trustee. In July and August they will meet with this person to set up the trust.

Motion to accept the new policy for Policy Formation.

Motion to waive the First Reading of this Policy.

Motion: Richard Giles

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

Motion to approve the original motion to accept the General Policy – Policy Formation dated April 27, 2010.

Motion: Sally Fairbairn

Second: Bill Coleman

Approved

See Chair’s Report dated April 2010.

V. Finance Committee – Bill Coleman and Thomas Artale

The February Summary was in this month’s packet. Next month will include March’s and the proposed Budget for 2010-2011.

Motion to accept the February Financial Statement.

Motion: Bill Coleman

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

VI. NYC DEP Report – Ed Blouin

Nothing to report at this time.

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss contract issues

Motion: Bill Coleman

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session

Motion: Bill Coleman

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

Each Director was asked individually if they were in agreement with moving forward with the plan described in the white paper on Long Term Unfunded Stewardship Liability. The Directors were unanimous in their support.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.