

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Initiatives

33195 State Highway 10, Walton, New York 13856-2500

phone: 607-865-7790

fax: 607-865-4932

www.nycwatershed.org



Minutes of the Watershed Agricultural Council Meeting

August 25, 2009

I. Meeting called to order at 6:36 p.m.

Directors Present:

David Cammer	Fred Huneke
Linda DeWitt	Tom Donnelly
Sally Fairbairn	Darby Hartwell
William Coleman	Tom Hutson
Ken Smith	Richard Giles
Barbara Howard	Joe Eisele
Dave Post	John Schwartz, NYC DEP

Directors Absent:

John Verhoeven

Others Present:

Dan Palm
Thomas Artale
Amy Hawk
Challey Comer
Elaine Poulin
Daniel Flaherty
Carrie Davis
Brian LaTourette
Seth Hersh
Tara Collins

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the July, 2009 WAC meeting.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Linda DeWitt

Approved

* At this time Dan Palm introduced Seth Hersh as WAC's new Database Administrator. The Board welcomed Seth.

**III. Assistance with Direction of WAC Board –
Nadia Prescott, Emerging Executive, Inc.**

Dan introduced Nadia Prescott of Emerging Executive, Inc. who gave a presentation on the Governance & Oversight Responsibilities of a Nonprofit Board. This presentation was set up as a result of the DSA report accepted by the Council. A copy of the presentation was distributed to the group. Discussion followed. Dan Palm stated that he would circulate Nadia's email address to the Board and Staff.

IV. Executive Director Reports – Dan Palm

A. Program Approvals or Resolutions

Dan reported that he contacted Watson & West to discuss the request of DEP to be granted reversionary interest in the deed for the WAC office building located in Hamden. The attorneys provided Dan with the two possible options, 1 – to modify the deed, or 2 – to modify the WAC By-laws and Certificate of Incorporation. Dan presented both of these options to DEP via email to Dave Tobias and will await and answer with DEP's preferred option.

It was requested that a memo defining all acronyms used in the Easement Program minutes, i.e. ADA, FADA, etc. be distributed with the next packets to all Council members.

Dan reported that the work with regards to the AWEP grant has begun with the staff soliciting, receiving and ranking applications for the first round. Actual executed agreements need to be completed by Friday the 28th. Currently the BMPs that were selected to be AWEP projects are in the new and unfunded column, the Council is requested to approve availability of funding for these projects.

Motion to approve the movement from the new and unfunded column to the funded column and direct the staff to complete any administrative action required for the following projects:

- 1. Burn Ayr Farm – Kevin & Kathleen Sullivan, DEC-273 BMP#12 Covered Feeding Area;**
- 2. Swantak Farm – Allan and Dave Swantak, DEC-128, BMP#29 Waste Storage Facility, BMP#24 Heavy Use Area Protection, and BMP #26 Animal Trail and Walkway; and**
- 3. Lamport Farm – Frank and John Lamport, DEC-132 BMP#39 Waste**
- 4. Storage Structure and BMP#38 Closure of Waste Impoundments.**

Motion: Sally Fairbairn

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

Brian gave a quick overview of the projects and costs, he stated that these projects were originally scheduled to be completed in 2011 and will remain on that schedule. Per the AWEP Grant, construction has to be completed within five years. Funds in the DEP contract, BMP Implementation line, that are going to be

freed up as a result of this grant will be used for other projects and possibly additional staffing. Brian and Dan Palm are drafting a request to DEP to allow for additional staff members.

Dan Palm stated that he is meeting with Leon Brooks Thursday to discuss a cooperative agreement between WAC and NRCS. Any resulting agreement will be presented to the Council for approval.

B. PAR Update – The new Database Administrator Seth Hersh updated the Board on the status of the PAR Contract and the POTOK Database Project. The beta release of POTOK is scheduled for tomorrow. Seth is concerned that the project remains off schedule and stated that he spoke to a representative of PAR and shared his concerns with the schedule and the fact that the project must be completed by June 30, 2010. The PAR representative he spoke to stated that if necessary he would devote more resources and staff to this project. Directors are advised to stay tuned.

C. Program Managers recommendations re: implementation of the DSA Report – Tom Pavlesich spoke on behalf of the Program Managers with regards to their recommendations on how to facilitate the successful implementation of the DSA Recommendation #1, Empower the Staff to Make Program Decisions. A memo from Tom Pavlesich to Dan Palm was distributed to the Board in the packets. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the memo and the program managers' ideas. Fred requested that everyone be cautious regarding the development of guidelines so as not to lose flexibility.

Motion to accept the following as the Program Guideline Development Process, as presented by the Program Managers:

- 1. Program Managers will develop a list of guidelines that need to be developed to empower the staff to make program decisions.**
- 2. The Program Managers will work with their respective Committee Chairs and the ED to prioritize this list. Program Managers will develop a schedule for addressing these priorities and approving guidelines during Committee meetings. The various Program scheduled will be summarized and presented to the Council for the purpose of oversight.**
- 3. The Committee Chairs will ensure the schedule is met by allocating adequate time during each committee meeting for guideline development.**
- 4. Conflicts in the development of Committee Guidelines will be promptly identified in order to maintain an efficient process. A summary of the conflict will be presented to the Council for resolution.**
- 5. The Committees will develop guidelines that address at least the top three priorities within the first twelve months of this process.**

Motion: Sally Fairbairn

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

Fred stated that he planned to hold a meeting with all Committee Chairs and Program Managers regarding review of WAC policies.

V. Chair's Report – Fred Huneke

Fred recognized Ken Smith and Catskill Craftsmen for receiving the Alf Evers Award for Excellence.

Fred and Dan attended the coalition meeting on August 3rd to continue the discussions on hamlet designations. The discussion has been ongoing and another meeting will be held in September.

Dave Post discussed at length his trip to Washington D.C. to meet with Senators and members of The House of Representatives regarding the current pricing structure for milk and the difficulties that dairy farmers are facing. The trip consisted of 4 bus loads of farmers from Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York. He expressed the need for WAC, DEP and area producers to become more politically involved.

Fred hosted Andrew Lattanner at the Deysenroth farm to discuss the current dairy situation.

Fred will be submitting testimony by email for the hearing being held Thursday in Batavia by Senator Gillibrand on the current dairy situation.

August 17th was the opening day of the Delaware County Fair, the WAC held the usual ribbon cutting ceremony with DEP which Paul Rush, Deputy Commissioner, attended on behalf of Acting Commissioner Lawitts. Fred spent some time with Paul visiting the fairgrounds after the ceremony.

VI. Policy Committee –

A. Policies – Second Reading

1. Health & Safety Policy and Records Retention and Storage Policy

Motion to approve for a Second Reading of both the Health & Safety Policy and the Records Retention and Storage Policy.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Bill Coleman

Approved

B. Policies – First Reading

1. Dispute Resolution Policy

Motion to approve for a first reading the Dispute Resolution Policy

Motion: Barbara Howard

Second: Joe Eisele

Approved

VII. Governance Committee – Bill Coleman

Nothing to report at this time.

VIII. Finance Committee – Bill Coleman and Thomas Artale

The Preliminary June Financials were distributed in the packets. These will be

finalized and presented to the Council for acceptance upon the completion of the audit.

IX. NYC DEP Report – John Schwartz

John reported that the WAC 08 Contract Closeout went smoothly and he thanked the Finance staff for their work.

X. Human Resources

A. Executive Director Search Status

The process for the Executive Director selection was distributed in the packets. Dave Cammer, Sally Fairbairn, Dan Palm and Fred Huneke will be conducting the first round of interviews beginning August 31st.

B. Staff Position Updates

1. As previously introduced, Seth Hersh has joined the WAC as the Database Administrator.
2. The Conservation Planner has been hired; Troy Bookhout will start September 8th.
3. Dan and Brian LaTourette are currently working on a letter to DEP requesting permission to hire 2 or 3 additional staff members in the Agricultural Program, due to the influx of dollars in the Ag Program from sources other than DEP. Dan stated that he has discussed this possibility with CCE DC, DC SWCD and NRCS, at which there was a concern regarding where the additional staff would be employed. Dan stated that he felt strongly that any additional staff be WAC employees. DEP has tentatively agreed to consider funding additional positions with further information being provided by Dan and Brian. With the additional funding and the possibility of additional staff the expectation for meeting Substantially Implemented was expressed.

At this time Dave Post expressed that he felt the Board should take action to utilize the money that is freed up to get cash into the farmers' hands immediately, specifically through the Nutrient Management Program. Brian touched on one option that may do that, Dan stated that he and Brian will get together immediately to discuss that option.

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Easement Program matters.

Motion: Sally Fairbairn

Second: Bill Coleman

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session.

Motion: Ken Smith

Second: Tom Hutson

Meeting adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

DRAFT