

Minutes of the Watershed Agricultural Council Meeting
May 24, 2010

I. Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Directors Present:

David Cammer	Fred Huneke
John Verhoeven	Tom Donnelly
Sally Fairbairn	Darby Hartwell
William Coleman	Tom Hutson
Ken Smith	Richard Giles
Steve Reed	Joe Eisele
John Schwartz, NYC DEP	

Directors Absent:

Barbara Howard	Dave Post
John Riedl	

Others Present:

Craig Cashman
Thomas Artale
Amy Hawk

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the April, 2010 WAC meeting.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Bill Coleman

Approved

III. Executive Director Reports – Craig Cashman

A. Operational Report

- Craig shared a story from Tara Collin's presentation at the Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District event that highlighted the fact that the Board and the Staff need to be constantly working on getting WAC's message out to the public and to make sure that all of WCA's programs are represented and known throughout the community.

- NYSERDA Grant: Thomas reported that he received an email late this afternoon from Tom Feisinger of NYSERDA stating that the check for the remainder of the funds owed to the WAC would be mailed out next week.

- See Executive Director's Report dated May 25, 2010.

B. Program Reports

- NRCS/Additional Funding: Additional funding has been made available to WAC for conservation in the watershed. WAC, through NRCS, will be able to utilize/leverage both stimulus and legislative earmark funding for approximately 1 million dollars. The stimulus dollars will free up additional dollars over the next three years to support Technical Assistance and the Legislative Earmark will need to be spent within a year and will focus on leveraging assistance and planning dollars.
- WAP/ARRA Tour – June 3rd WAC will host the tour with NRCS.

C. Update on Definition of Whole Farm Plan

- The final committee review of the Whole Farm Plan definition will take place on May 27th. The review committee will finalize the content, address the issue of CAFO, and take into consideration additional comments by partners through the process. The final draft will go to the Agricultural Committee on June 8th and the WAC Board on June 22nd. Craig invited interested Board members to further discuss the definition of the Whole Farm Plan on May 27th at the WAC Hamden Office.

IV. Human Resources – Craig Cashman

- Four interns and a Forestry position have started employment.

V. Chair's Report –

A. Endowment Committee

- Fred reported that a Request for Proposals will be distributed next week regarding an Investment Manager/Trustee. The goal is to have a trustee on board by September or October. The Committee will be working in the meantime on the Investment Policies.

B. Discussion of F.O.I.L. (Freedom of Information Law)

- Fred stated that Craig will be acting as the official FOIL Officer as he has the most experience. He will be drafting policies and procedures to handle information requests. All responses will clearly state that even though the WAC is not subject to FOIL, we will provide certain information. Craig stated he would have a policy for the Board's review in July.

C. Protocol for Landowner/Contractor Contact with Board Members

- The memo is provided as a reminder that the Board recognizes the importance of being attentive to the participants in the program and ensuring that the Executive Director is made aware of any inquiries or issues that the Board members may be made aware of. The document was discussed in detail. There was also lengthy discussion regarding the importance of the landowners and contractors knowing that they have someone to contact if they feel they are not being properly represented by their planners or the other staff in the Agricultural Program. It was also suggested that the Executive Director become involved throughout the process or as a follow-up

and make contact with the landowners to ensure they were satisfied with the program. The Board requested that Craig work on a questionnaire or survey and a procedure for ensuring that the participants had the opportunity to share their experiences with the program, positive or negative. Craig stated that he would work with Larry and come up with something and they would discuss it at the Agricultural Committee meeting.

Motion to approve the Protocol for Landowner/Contractor Contact with Board Members as presented and to place in the Orientation Book.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

D. Update on Stewardship Endowment White Paper

- See Chair's Report dated May 2010.

E. Advisory Committee Meeting

- Fred stated that the Advisory Committee meeting will be scheduled for September or October and he will keep the Board informed of the plans.

VI. Finance Committee – Bill Coleman and Thomas Artale

- The March financials were distributed in the monthly packets.

Motion to accept the March Financial Statement.

Motion: Bill Coleman

Second: Darby Hartwell

Approved

- The Proposed FY11 Budget was distributed in the monthly packets. Thomas stated that the one big change that may occur before the June meeting will be as a result of the NRCS funding, if an agreement is signed before then. Otherwise any funding received will be detailed in the first budget revision of FY11.
- Bill complimented Thomas and the Finance Department for the work they have been doing pulling the budget together with the unknowns. The Board thanked DEP for continuing to support the programs. There was a brief discussion regarding doing a study on the economic impact the organization has on the region.
- Thomas shared the details of a recent conference call meeting between himself, Amy Hawk and Dave Tobias regarding the WAC 04 contract payment requests that he felt was a good meeting.

VII. NYC DEP Report – John Schwartz

- John reported that the revamped DEP website has been launched and the portion regarding watershed protection looks great. He encouraged the Board to visit the site.
- John stated that he was pleased to see the Farm Bill mentioned in Fred's report as he feels it is very important for the WAC to be involved.
- He also stated the as soon as the next WAC 04 contract is finalized it will be time to start working on the next Agricultural and Forestry Program Contract.
- John reported that he and Ed have been putting a lot of time into summarizing the trends and the work of the Agricultural program in the watershed and they

intend to have a preliminary report to the Agricultural Committee next month. He stated that with this report it will be a great time to implement some sort of evaluation from the participants' point of view of the program as discussed earlier.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.