

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING

June 24, 2025

I. Meeting called to order at 10:05 a.m.

Directors Present, via Teams:

Dwight Bruno
James Darling
Paul Gallay
Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone, *Chair*
Karl Gockel, *Treasurer*
Barb Hanselman
Jason Helmbold
Fred Huneke
Tom Hutson, *Vice Chair*
Steve Reed
Marilyn Wyman
Michael Vander Werff, *NYC DEP*

Directors Absent:

John Verhoeven
Jennifer Grossman, *Secretary*

Others Present, via Teams:

Ryan Naatz, *Executive Director*
Amy Faulkner, *Director of Operations*
Carol Bishop, *Finance Director*
Connor Young, *WOH Agricultural Program Manager*
Serena Orleski, *Easement Program Manager*
Kayla Henderson, *Head of Administration*
Kristan Morley, *Economic Viability Program Manager*
Heather Magnan, *Communications Manager*
Kayla Atanasoff, *Easement Program Executive Assistant*
Lee Harris, *NYC DOI*
Patrick Palmer, *NYS DOH*
Morgan Zyzik-Tarbell, *NYC DOH*
Paul Kaczmarczyk, *NYS DOH*
Elizabeth DeFalco, *The Reporter*
Lillian Browne, *The Reporter*

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 27, 2025 meeting, as presented.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

TDD 1-800-662-1220

Watershed protection through partnership.

III. Executive Director's Report – Ryan Naatz

A. IT/Security Update

Ryan reported that WAC is aiming for a target go-live date of mid-August for the migration to WAC based email addresses and software for Council and Committee members. Platforms are Internet-based, and legwork is being conducted presently behind the scenes by Brian Caruso, IT, Amy Faulkner and Kayla Henderson.

B. Transparency Policy Update – Review of Public Comments

The Draft Transparency Policy was posted on the WAC website for the required 30 days. One letter with suggested comments and feedback was received from the public the day of the deadline. Confirmation from both WAC and DEP's legal teams respectively was received that the final proposed policy is considered acceptable as drafted. The final version will be included in the July's meeting packets for review and approval.

C. Section 125 Cafeteria Plan Reinstatement

A resolution has been drafted by our legal team which includes buyout language and is being maintained within our 'Paychex' platform. Section 125's code reference outlines which benefits are available for employees to take pre-tax. Questions/comments from Council members were discussed.

Motion to approve modifications to the Section 125 Cafeteria Plan reinstatement as presented.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Marilyn Wyman

Approved

IV. Chair's Report – Wayland "Bud" Gladstone

Bud welcomed Kyle Clark as a new Council member and commented that it is nice to have younger generations come on board. Bud apologized for not being able to participate in the recent Council orientation/refresher meeting; however, has received very positive feedback from those who attended. A big thank you to the department managers who presented.

V. Finance Committee – Karl Gockel

A. Investment Policy Update

Minor revisions have been incorporated; details discussed.

Motion to approve modifications to the Investment Policy as presented.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Steve Reed

Abstained: Jason Helmbold

Approved

B. Motion to approve the WAC FY26 Organizational Budget as presented.

Motion: James Darling

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

C. Motion to approve the March 2025 Financial Reports as presented.

Motion: Michael Vander Werff

Second: Marilyn Wyman

Approved

D. Contract Closeout Efforts (*Additional Agenda Item) – Ryan Naatz

An extension was requested by Carol Bishop as she finalizes the closeout. Carol has worked hard organizing actual expenses up through March 2025 (\$28.5m budgeted); process details discussed. This has been a big task for Carol and her team to work on, and all efforts are greatly appreciated. Looking to submit to Michael Vander Werff and his team within the next week.

VI. Agricultural Committee – Steve Reed

The following highlights were provided:

- Kaitlyn Haynes was welcomed as the new department Executive Administrative Assistant
- WAP Long-Term Management Plan Scope of Work draft reviewed
- Cover crop season finished out at 2,200, including 33 farms; seasonal updates details reviewed.

VII. Economic Viability Committee – (*Kristan Morley on behalf of Jennifer Grossman)

Kristan Morely is requesting approval to be granted for an Executive Assistant position to support the EV and Communications programs.

A. Economic Viability Committee Charge

Motion to approve the creation of the EV/Communications Executive Assistant position as presented.

Motion: Karl Gockel

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

VIII. Easement Committee – Tom Hutson

Tom provided an updated on the activities of the Easement Program over the past month.

IX. Forestry Committee – Marilyn Wyman

Marilyn provided an update on the activities of the Forestry Program over the past two months and encouraged the Council to read the minutes of the recent meeting.

X. East of Hudson Committee – Fred Huneke

Committee meetings are held bi-monthly. There was no meeting in June; therefore, there are no new items for discussion at present.

XI. Building Committee – Karl Gockel

Karl reported that Kenneth Gay from Keystone and Associates attended the recent Building Committee to provide updates on the new build project. Site work and evaluations are being conducted ; good discussion was had during the meeting. Michael Vander Werff reminded the group of all of DEP restrictions that need to be taken into consideration during the planning process.

XII. Governance Committee – Jason Helmbold

Jason Helmbold thanked those who were in attendance during the recent new Council orientation/refreshers meeting, and to the program managers who presented great content. ‘Roberts Rules of Orders’ books are slated to be submitted at the next meeting. At the July Governance meeting, there will be an evaluation of board engagement through attendance review. A board assessment analysis will be conducted to determine where committee members would be most impactful. Bylaw review is still ongoing.

XIII. NYC DEP Report – Michael Vander Werff

Michael reported that DEP released an updated vision and strategic plan; details discussed. It was noted that it is great that the NYS Commissioner values watershed farms. Council comments/questions were discussed.

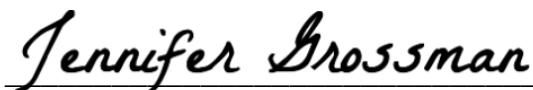
XIV. Executive Session

It was determined there is no need to hold an executive committee meeting at this time.

XV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m. by common consent.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 22, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.**



WAC Board Secretary

Jennifer Grossman

7/23/2025

07 / 23 / 2025