

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING

June 25, 2024

I. Meeting called to order at 10:08 a.m.

Directors Present, via Teams:

James Darling
Paul Gallay
Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone, *Chair*
Karl Gockel, *Treasurer*
Jennifer Grossman, *Secretary*
Jason Helmbold
Fred Huneke
Tom Hutson, *Vice Chair*
Steve Reed
Marilyn Wyman
Dwight Bruno
John Verhoeven
Jeff Wilson
John Vickers, *DEP Representative*

Directors Absent:

Barb Hanselman

Others Present, via Teams:

Ryan Naatz, *Executive Director*
Amy Faulkner, *Director of Operations*
Carol Bishop, *Finance Director*
Connor Young, *WOH Agricultural Program Manager*
Tom Pavlesich, *Forestry Program Manager*
Serena Orleski, *Easement Program Manager*
Kristan Morley, *Economic Viability Program Manager*
Michael Vander Werff, *NYC DEP*
Sara Storrer, *NYC DEP*
Lee Harris, *NYC DOI*
Anastasia Plakas, *NYC DOI*
Patrick Palmer, *NYS DOH*
Paul Kaczmarczyk, *NYS DOH*
Morgan Tarbell, *NYS DOH*
Joshua Serpe, *NYC DEP*
Mary Crisafulli, *The Mountain Eagle*

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the May 28, 2024 minutes, as presented.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

III. Executive Director's Report

A. *Operational and Programmatic Updates:*

1. Program/Department Work Plans:

Paul Gallay requested additional detail on the increased programmatic anticipated spending for the upcoming year on the Agricultural Workplan, Connor explained that there are a couple of reasons why it appears to be higher than previous years; the past few years have been characteristically low due to a number of reasons, the

new budget attempts to capture inflation and the budgeting/payment request process results in budgeting higher in certain lines in the event expenses cross fiscal years.

B. *Successor Contract Acceptance*

Ryan reported that as soon as successor contracts are returned to WAC from DEP for signature, he would like to be able to have Bud execute immediately. It is also important that the motion be considered as this is John Vickers' last WAC meeting and Ryan wanted to take the opportunity to recognize the great accomplishment of these successor contracts with John present.

As per Section 3.1 of WAC's By-Laws: The Chair, or any other person authorized by the Council of Directors may sign any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts or other instruments that the Council of Directors has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Council of Directors or by these by-laws, and by recommendation of Ryan Naatz, the Council hereby authorizes Wayland Gladstone to execute the SWP-106, SWP-117 and SWP-118 contracts with The New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

Motion: Steve

Second: Jim

Approved

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

A. *Committee Restructuring Update*

Motion to approve the Executive, Finance, Economic Viability, Easement, Forestry, East of Hudson, Agriculture and Nutrient Management Committee Charges as presented.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

Amy reported that she has worked with the management team to develop an overview of the monthly meetings as the schedule for meetings will change effective July with the newly approved Committee charges. She will forward that to the Board once it is finalized.

B. *Data Sharing Policy*

Ryan reported that the Data Sharing Policy as presented is one that is being recommended by Executive Committee and approved at the meeting earlier this month. Ryan encouraged all to share any comments and questions. John Vickers stated that the Executive Committee reviewed this two times and what is presented is the result of those multiple reviews. No additional comments were shared from Board members.

Motion to approve the Data Sharing Policy, as presented.

Motion: John Vickers

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

C. NYC DEP Representative:

Bud reported that today will be John Vickers' last board meeting with WAC, as he is retiring. Bud read a message in appreciation of John's service on the WAC Board. John thanked the Council for welcoming him and his team, he stated that the work was hard at the beginning but once he learned the good work that is done by all, it made his job easy to get behind and support WAC and its programs 100%. He added that it has been a great learning experience for himself, and he gave tremendous credit to Michael, Sara and Tom for all the work they have done along the way.

D. Executive Director Evaluation Update:

Bud reported that the Executive Director evaluation has been completed and Ryan is doing a great job. Fred added that the Council is very fortunate to have Ryan as an Executive Director. Ryan expressed his appreciation.

V. Finance Committee

A. April Financials

Motion to accept the April Financials as presented.

Motion: Paul Gallay

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

B. Fiscal Year 25 Budget

Carol briefly outlined the materials provided in the packet for the proposed Fiscal Year 25 Budget that has been approved by the Finance Committee. There were no questions.

Upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee, motion to approve the FY25 budget as presented.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Jason Helmbold

Approved

VI. Economic Viability Committee – Jennifer Grossman

Jennifer reported that the EV committee will be reviewing and updating the EV handbook which will guide all of the work of the program. She invited all Council members to attend a meeting if they are interested, all input is welcome. The July/August grant round will be opening soon, this past year has been record setting for the EV grant program.

VII. Human Resources Committee – Marilyn Wyman

Marilyn reported that the HR Committee did not meet in June, the minutes from the May meeting were included in the packet. The HR Committee will be combined with the Executive Committee moving forward.

VIII. Easement Committee – Tom Hutson

Tom reported the minutes were included in the packets and asked for any questions. He congratulated the program for the two recent easement closings. It is very exciting to have that program in full swing again.

IX. Agricultural Committee – Steve Reed

Steve Reed provided a brief update on the activities of the program over the past month and stated the minutes are in the meeting packet.

A. Program Approvals:

Upon the recommendation of the Agricultural Committee, motion to approve funding request for DEC-035 for BMP #BR100PR1, Waste Storage Facility priority repairs, in the amount of \$82,575.00.

Motion: John Verhoeven

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

Upon the recommendation of the Agricultural Committee, motion to approve the subsequent funding request for DEC-289, BMPs 1-5 as presented, in the amount of \$116,920.00.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

Upon the recommendation of the Agricultural Committee, motion to approve DES-171 WFP Revision #15.

Motion: Jim Darling

Second: John Vickers

Approved

X. Forestry Committee Meeting – Marilyn Wyman

Marilyn reported that the Forestry Committee last met in May, the minutes were included in the meeting packet. Marilyn briefly summarized the discussion from that meeting.

A. 2024 USDA Forest Service Grant – Motion

Motion to approve the draft grant narrative for 2024 as presented and direct staff to submit this narrative to the Forest Service for consideration. The Council also directs staff to submit to DEP a request to use contract funds as a match for this grant. If this grant narrative is approved by the Forest Service, and matching funds are approved by DEP per the CAT 487 contract, the Council directs the WAC Executive Director to authorize the necessary paperwork to receive the 2024 Forest Service Grant.

Motion: Jim Darling

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

XI. East of Hudson Committee – Fred Huenke

Fred reported that the minutes were in the packet from the May meeting. Amy provided a brief update on the current status of the building; staff continue to work remotely and in the field. Amy is working to obtain quotes for the remediation of the safety concerns at the EOH office. She is also reaching out to like organizations in the region to determine the availability of alternative office space.

XII. NYC DEP Report – John Vickers

John reported that he and his staff were able to obtain verbal concurrence from the Agency Chief Contract Officer (ACCO) and the Department of Investigation that all agree that WAC has satisfied all findings that were brought forward in the Padilla Audit report. Michael will continue to work to get that in writing from the Agency. The ACCO anticipates WAC being deemed a responsible vendor regarding the successor contracts. John added that Michael was able to secure agency approval from the ACCO to pay for any interest accrued as a result from having to utilize the line of credit to cover cash shortages from July 1st until the payment is dispersed.

John also reported that with his retirement, the agency took the opportunity to do some reorganization of the divisions within NYC DEP. John outlined a number of the changes, including that the new Assistant Commissioner for Source Water Protection will be Shilo Williams, the NYC DEP Watershed Agricultural Program will report to Shilo moving forward. John added that he would be happy to assist WAC in any way that he can in the future and encouraged members to stay in touch.

XIII. NYS DOH, US EPA Reports – Patrick Palmer & Katie Lynch

Patrick reported that the next meeting in the series of stakeholder meetings is scheduled for tomorrow, this meeting will continue to focus on the Streamside Acquisition Program and DEP's Core Land Acquisition Program. Paul congratulated John Vickers on his retirement.

XIV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by common consent at 11:10 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, July 23, 2024 at 10:00 a.m., in person.**