

# Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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## Executive Committee Meeting June 18, 2024

### I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Wayland “Bud” Gladstone.

Members Present:      Wayland “Bud” Gladstone, Chair, via Teams      Fred Huneke  
                                 Jennifer Grossman, via Teams                              Tom Hutson, via Teams  
                                 Marilyn Wyman, via Teams    Karl Gockel  
                                 John Vickers, NYC DEP

Others Present:        Ryan Naatz    Amy Faulkner  
                                 Carol Bishop    John Jackson, via Teams  
                                 Michael VanderWerff, NYC DEP, via Teams  
                                 Dudley Harris, NYC DOI, via Teams

### II. Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2024 meeting, as presented.**

**Motion: Tom Hutson**

**Second: John Vickers**

**Approved**

### III. Executive Director’s Report

#### A. Operational and Programmatic Updates

Ryan reported that the successor contracts have all been completed to the point that they have been submitted into the NYC DEP procurement process. At the June WAC meeting, the Board will consider a motion to approve Bud executing the contracts when appropriate.

#### B. EOH Office Status

Ryan provided an update regarding the EOH office, the fact that Westchester County is no longer willing to pursue remediation of the recognized issues, coupled with their inference that they may not be able to continue to uphold the terms of the lease after 2025, makes it difficult to continue to invest WAC funds into the building. As a result of employee concerns, WAC conducted testing at the for the potential presence of lead paint and lead dust, that was confirmed. Amy obtained quotes for addressing the lead by certified contractors, the costs of which seem exorbitant given the unknown future of the lease. We continue to work to determine whether it is a long-term viable option for WAC to invest in the building. Fred asked if Westchester would consider discounting the rent to offset the funding required to address the lead. Amy and Ryan have been in contact with a realtor, have done mapping, have reached out to like missioned agencies and organizations to determine availability of alternate space. John Vickers stated that DEP does not have any vacant space in that area that could be offered.

#### C. Cash Status

As previous conversations have explained, there is potential for a gap in cash before the payments

from DEP for the period of July 1 – September 30 are received. Carol submitted a formal request to DEP asking for confirmation that any interest incurred from utilizing the line of credit due to payment delays would be considered a reimbursable expense. Ryan reported that DEP confirmed that they will reimburse for interest that is recognized for any use of the line of credit after July 1, 2024. John reported that the fact that WAC and DEP staff, especially Michael and his team have been able to rebuild the trust of the City so that reasonable requests such as this are considered. As of now it is expected that there is enough cash on hand to get through June 30<sup>th</sup> due to pausing administrative OTPS expenses to the best of our abilities. We will need to utilize the line of credit to cover significant first of the month expenses, again the interest for any use after July 1 will be reimbursed by DEP in future payment requests.

#### **D. Information Technology Work Plan**

John Jackson presented the proposed FY25 Information Technology work plan, the work plan was provided to the Committee in advance of the meeting. John provided additional narrative to highlight the tasks. One current initiative being addressed is the reconciliation and truing of Ag Program historical data. This was conducted for the EOH Agricultural Program data at the beginning of the calendar year. As with the past few years, the large push this year will be to bring WIT online. The IT department has developed a help desk system that helps to manage user issues, needs, status, and services. It is an online portal where users can submit work tickets and allows for the ability to track concerns and responses as well as catalog responses/issues and fixes so that can be referenced in the future as needed. With a push from Ryan and Amy, WIT will go live October 1<sup>st</sup>. It is critical that our data and reporting is concise, consistent, correct and replicable. Fred said that the IT departments in many companies are the largest departments, given the tremendous amount of work and data, is the staffing structure in WAC's IT department adequate? Ryan explained that we will consider assessing, with the upcoming launch of WIT it leaves a lot of questions as to what the department workload will look like at that time. John explained that the main reason the IT department currently feels short staffed is due to the team being in software development mode. But he is optimistic that when WIT is live the staffing structure may be adequate, but there is no way to know until we are out of development mode and into maintenance mode.

**Motion to recommend that WAC approve the FY25 Information Technology Work Plan as presented.**

**Motion: Fred Huneke**

**Second: Tom Hutson**

**Approved**

John Jackson left the meeting at this time.

#### **IV. Chair's Report**

##### **A. Executive Director Evaluation**

Tom and Bud met with Ryan earlier this month to review his evaluation. Bud reported it was an excellent evaluation and the Board is honored to have Ryan and expressed that he is doing an outstanding job leading WAC. The committee agreed.

##### **B. Data Sharing Policy**

This policy was presented last month, a few modifications were made, and the policy is being presented, again, to the Committee for consideration. Ryan reiterated this is separate from the Transparency Policy. Data Sharing is a way to complement our efforts and this policy is simply a way to document how these requests are tracked and approved. Ryan explained that this avenue is something WAC mutually wants to ensue, a collaboration that we want to explore. A denied data sharing request may lead to a Transparency Policy request, but this is for items that are beneficial and/or neutral to WAC to share.

**Motion to recommend the Council approve the Data Sharing Policy**

**Motion: John Vickers**

**Second: Karl Gockel**

**Approved**

Today will be John Vicker's last Executive Committee meeting. The Committee thanked John for serving as such an outstanding part of the WAC team. John responded that it has been a pleasure to work with the staff and in particular the leadership at WAC. He is glad that we are at a point in time with the WAC/DEP partnership is better than ever. The Committee agrees that is the case and that is certainly in part to John and his team's work. Karl expressed his appreciation for John' tenure. Ryan expressed that at John's level the fact that he puts the time in is much appreciated, we have not experienced that investment in the past.

**V. Executive Session**

**Motion to go into Executive Session.**

**Motion: Tom Hutson**

**Second: John Vickers**

**Approved**

**Motion to come out of Executive Session.**

**Motion: John Vickers**

**Second: Fred Huneke**

**Approved**

**VI. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned by common consent at 11:35pm.