

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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Executive Committee Meeting April 15, 2025

I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Wayland “Bud” Gladstone.

Members Present:	Wayland “Bud” Gladstone, Chair Tom Hutson Karl Gockel	Fred Huneke Marilyn Wyman, via Teams
Members Absent:	Jennifer Grossman	Shilo Williams, NYC DEP
Others Present:	Ryan Naatz Steve Reed, via Teams Heather Magnan Carol Bishop Kevin Karl, Columbia University	Amy Faulkner Dudley Harris, NYC DOI via Teams Connor Young Michael Vander Werff, NYC DEP, via Teams

Bud asked if there were any changes to the agenda, Ryan asked to move the Columbia/AgMIP Scope of Work proposal to the start of the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2025 meeting, as presented.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

III. Executive Director’s Report

A. Columbia/AgMIP Project SOW Proposal

Kevin Karl joined the meeting to provide additional detail regarding the proposed scope of work for continuing with the Addressing Climate Changes in Agriculture project between WAC, DEP and Columbia/AgMIP. The scope of work proposal was shared with the committee prior to the meeting. With the federally implemented freeze on Columbia’s funding, as reported at the Council meeting, the project with Columbia has been placed on pause. Kevin presented a powerpoint to the group that included the original core objectives of the project, he reported that the project was nearly half complete when paused. He stated that leveraging the work done to date provides the opportunity to modify the scope of work to ensure the deliverables meet the interests of WAC and DEP. That this is an opportunity to make a slight pivot and hone the work, so that it is more applicable and useful for all. The presentation included a timeline and proposed costs. This was discussed at length, with Committee members presenting Kevin with a number of questions and Kevin responding as he was able to. This discussion focused on the proposed budget, expanding the outline of the scope of work and deliverables, alternative funding sought by Columbia, timelines, increase workload on WAC staff, availability of funding in WAC/DEP contract and logistics of invoicing/reimbursement etc.

In closing, Kevin stated that Columbia would need a strong commitment from WAC with a letter of intent by May

14th outlining willingness to commit the funds. Carol added that there would not be funding until mid-July, otherwise money until October. Columbia has bridge funding to make that work. The Committee consensus is that this needs to be discussed with the full Council.

Kevin Karl left the meeting at this time.

Ryan stated that this presentation is the first time he has seen the budget and deliverable list so he needs some more time to consider it. The group continued to discuss at length. In conclusion, Ryan clarified that the Executive Committee has the authority to make the decision, but it doesn't appear the Committee is comfortable deciding at this time. In order to further consider, more information is needed. The committee would like Ryan, Michael and Connor to obtain the details they need to make this a more informed decision to present to Council.

B. DCSWCD Sublease Status

Ryan reported that discussions have continued on the status of the long-term lease. A month-to-month lease agreement was executed between WAC and DCSWCD utilizing the prior agreed upon rate through June 30, 2025 with the expectation that the issues regarding the reimbursement rate between DCSWCD and DEP will be resolved prior to June 30, 2025.

C. Investment Policy Update

The proposed policy update was approved at the Finance Committee and now needs the Executive Committee approval to recommend to Council. The modified policy was distributed in the meeting packets.

Motion to recommend to full Council the approval of the modified Investment Policy, as presented.

Motion: Marilyn Wyman

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

D. DEC-141 NMC Funds Restriction

In accordance with the Agricultural Program Guideline, the Executive Committee must confirm the restriction of availability of nutrient management credits. The Agricultural Program Staff, Manager and Committee has recommended to limit portions of the nutrient management credit award on farm DEC-141 to only be utilized to address the current manure issues on the farm. Karl asked for an update on the current manure issue, Connor provided an update on the situation and stated that the manure still remains a valid concern. The Agricultural program voted to restrict credit usage to address this current concern.

Motion to approve the restriction of the NMC funds in the amount of \$7,121,08 on the DEC-141 farm, as presented.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

Not specific to this request, the Committee discussed this practice requirement which is that the Executive Committee validates the recommendation of staff, Program Manager and Agricultural Committee. The group felt the guideline should be reviewed to determine if it is necessary, as it seems inefficient. The Committee requested Connor proposed modification to the guideline to provide the program manager with the authority to restrict the funding.

E. OAG MOU Update

Ryan reported that the proposed scope of work for the grant being offered to WAC from the Watershed Inspector General is currently being reviewed. Once a funding agreement is received, staff will request motion from Council to confirm execution.

IV. Chair's Report

A. Transparency Policy

Following March meeting of the Committee, the Transparency Policy was updated, and reviewed between legal counsel of WAC and DEP. DEP legal has confirmed that the version being presented fulfills WACs requirements per the contract and the side agreement.

Motion to accept the updated version of the transparency policy and post on the website for 30 days for public review and comment.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

B. Executive Session

Motion to enter into Executive Session

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Marilyn Wyman

Approved

Motion to approve the position modification for Senior Stewardship Specialist as presented.

Motion: Karl Gockel

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

Motion to limit staff Telecommuting to one-day a week in order to ensure 80% in office/field presence effective July 1, 2025.

Motion: Karl Gockel

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

C. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned by common consent at 12:50pm. Next meeting will be held April 15, 2025.