

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING

December 16, 2025

(*via 'MS Teams')

I. Meeting called to order at 10:03 a.m.

Director's Present:

Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone, *Chair*

Jennifer Grossman, *Secretary*

Karl Gockel, *Treasurer*

Fred Huneke

Steve Reed

Marilyn Wyman

Michael Vander Werff, *NYC DEP*

Jason Helmbold

Dwight Bruno

Tom Hutson, *Vice Chair*

Paul Gallay

Kyle Clark

James Darling

Others Present:

Amy Faulkner, *Director of Operations*

Carol Bishop, *Director of Finance*

Tom Pavlesich, *Forestry Program Manager*

Connor Young, *WOH Agricultural Program Manager*

Serena Orleski, *Easement Program Manager*

Kayla Henderson, *Head of Administration*

Heather Magnan, *Communications Manager*

Kristan Morley, *Economic Viability Program Manager*

Sara Storrer, *NYC DEP*

Bruce Dolph, *DC SWCD Board*

Lillian Browne, *The Reporter*

Director's Absent:

Barbara Hanselman

John Verhoeven

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the November 25, 2025, meeting as presented.

Motion: Jim Darling

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

III. Executive Director's Report – Amy Faulkner (*on behalf of Ryan Naatz)

Amy Faulkner directed Council members to refer to a 2025 recap e-mail from Ryan Naatz sent this morning on items/updates he wished to highlight on.

IV. Governance Committee – Jason Helmbold

During the November committee meeting, discussion included review of board self-assessments, 2026 slate of directors up for renewal, and the importance of homing in on needs of the board, succession planning, etc.

A. 2026 Slate of Directors

The following motions relating to the 2026 slate of directors for renewal are as follows:

Motion to approve Fred Huneke to continue as an active member of the board effective January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2027.

Recused: Fred Huneke

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Jennifer Grossman

Approved

Motion to approve Jason Helmbold to continue as an active member of the board effective January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2027.

Recused: Jason Helmbold

Motion: Marilyn Wyman

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

Motion to approve Wayland “Bud” Gladstone to continue as an active member of the board effective January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2027.

Recused: Bud Gladstone

Motion: Jim Darling

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

Motion to approve Dwight Bruno to continue as an active member of the board effective January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2027.

Motion: Paul Gallay

Second: Marilyn Wyman

Dwight Bruno was not in attendance during the meeting at this time.

Approved

Motion to approve Paul Gallay to continue as an active member of the board effective January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2027.

Recused: Paul Gallay

Motion: Marilyn Wyman

Second: Jim Darling

Approved

***Motion to approve proposal of Nancy Wyncoop as a new, active member of the board effective January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2027.**

Motion: Karl Gockel

Second: Marilyn Wyman

Approved

Kayla Henderson will schedule orientation for Nancy, to include board members who will be presenting, before the January WAC meeting is held.

B. 'Directors Only' Meeting – Save the Date

The meeting will be held Thursday, February 12, 2026. Kayla Henderson is currently working on obtaining venue quotes; calendar invites will be sent following today's meeting. Ideas on topics for discussion for the meeting can be sent to Jason Helmbold, Amy Faulkner, and Kayla Henderson.

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

Bud Gladstone wished to thank those who donated towards 'Giving Tuesday', where supporters who share in WAC's commitment in protecting farms and forest lands in our region can give towards our 'Stewardship Endowment Fund', helping to ensure working landscapes remain protected in perpetuity. This includes helping strengthen local agriculture, safeguard clean water, and keep our communities thriving. Bud also reported on the status of the water withdrawal permit, noting the contract has been signed and that it is nice to see everyone come together and work to finding common ground on the matter.

VI. Building Committee – Karl Gockel

Presently, activity is underway regarding the new site borings. Further updates/details will become available at next month's meeting.

VII. Finance Committee – Karl Gockel

A. 403C Final Reconciliation/Closeout

Final approval from DEP was granted for the CAT403 capital closeout; DEP is reviewing the closeout documents for CAT487 expense and capital. Thank you to Carol, the finance team, and everyone involved in getting the contract closed out.

B. 'Giving Tuesday'

Funds received: Stewardship Endowment donations = \$250, WAC unrestricted donations = \$1,044. Total = \$1,294. Contributions are still welcome should you choose to donate.

No meeting was held in November; October financials will be included in next month's meeting for approval.

VIII. Audit Committee – Paul Gallay

A. Approval of FY25 Audit 990

The 990 returns included two separate filings, one for WAC and the other for the conservation easement endowment. The documents are uploaded within 'Teams' for Council review. A motion is requested for approval to submit the documents.

Motion to approve the FY25 Audit 990 for both the WAC and Stewardship Endowments as presented.

Motion: Karl Gockel

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

IX. Agricultural Committee – Steve Reed

A meeting was held on November 12. A presentation was conducted by representatives from CCEDC and SWCD, which included updates from CCEDC on their education program and how they're working on a needs assessment, looking for responses from active/eligible farmers on what aspects are valued, in order to gather information for executing a date/time/place, what type of speakers to invite, and food arrangements. Data trends/findings will become available later as it's too early to have enough information collected to report presently. Connor Young provided status updates on AEIDP (OAG). Steve Reed commended all of Connor's efforts towards this initiative throughout the year. An additional thank you is extended to Cindy McCarthy and Nate Townsend for their efforts working through various issues.

X. Economic Viability Committee – Jennifer Grossman

Morgan Hughes has recently been onboarded as our new EV/Communications Executive Assistant. Program committee meetings will start fresh with new dates/times to be incorporated beginning in January 2026. A presentation was provided on the Catskills Agrarian Alliance (CCA) initiative which is a comprehensive food sovereignty project founded by farmers in Delaware, Otsego, and Schoharie Counties. An additional presentation provided details on West Branch Commons, the inaugural land access project of the Catskills Agrarian Alliance (CAA). Grants and partnerships are planned to support training opportunities, covering topics such as business retention, budgeting, growth, and equity. Kristen Morley provided updates on deliverables. Two FITT grant proposals for a capacity study have been received; details discussed. The holiday gift guide was distributed last month promoting local shopping efforts.

XI. Easements Committee –Tom Hutson

Our new Acquisitions Coordinator, Rebecca Morgan, is making great efforts with outreach and promoting the Easements program in efforts to keep expansion on acquisitions and land protection. In the last Committee meeting, discussion ensued on ideas for maintaining the program in the future.

XII. Forestry Committee – Marilyn Wyman

The program committee has been very engaged, and Marilyn Wyman commented that she continues to enjoy working with Forestry Program Manager, Tom Pavlesich, and feels confident in moving the program forward into the new year.

XIII. East of Hudson Committee – Fred Huneke

There is an increased focus on outreach to non-participating farms and the challenges in receiving limited applications; staff will continue working to resolve this issue. Amy Faulkner, covering as EOH Ag Program Manager, reported details from a December 13 NSOLF County Ag conference held in Old Salem in Westchester County. Agenda items covered tax assessments and land valuation, landowner-farmer relationships for rented land, equine discussion, and a look at the future with agriculture in the forefront. Fred Huneke commended Amy for covering the managerial needs for the EOH program this year and noted further discussion will be needed to determine the appropriate staffing model for the EOH program in the future.

XIV. NYC DEP Report – Michael Vander Werff

Michael Vander Werff had no new business to report but welcomed any questions from the Council at this time.

XV. NYS DOH, US EPA Reports – Patrick Palmer

There was no report provided at this time.

XVI. Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session at 10:45 a.m.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Jennifer Grossman

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 11:40 a.m.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Michael Vander Werff

Approved

XVII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m. by common consent.

Our next meeting of the Council is scheduled for **January 27, 2026**, at 10:00 a.m.

Jennifer Grossman

01 / 27 / 2026

Jennifer Grossman, WAC Board Secretary

Date

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