

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING

March 25, 2025

I. Meeting called to order at 10:04 a.m.

Directors Present, via Teams:

Dwight Bruno
James Darling
Paul Gallay
Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone, *Chair*
Karl Gockel, *Treasurer*
Jennifer Grossman, *Secretary*
Barb Hanselman
Jason Helmbold
Fred Huneke
Tom Hutson, *Vice Chair*
Steve Reed
John Verhoeven
Marilyn Wyman
Shilo Williams, *NYC DEP*

Directors Absent:

None

Others Present, via Teams:

Amy Faulkner, *Director of Operations*
Carol Bishop, *Finance Director*
Wendy Hanselman, *Contracts and Grants Specialist*
Tom Pavlesich, *Forestry Program Manager*
Serena Orleski, *Easement Program Manager*
Kayla Atanasoff, *Easement Program Executive Assistant*
Kristan Morley, *Economic Viability Program Manager*
Heather Magnan, *Communications Manager*
Michael Vander Werff, *NYC DEP*
Sara Storrer, *NYC DEP*
Lee Harris, *NYC DOI*
Patrick Palmer, *NYS DOH*
Paul Kacmarczyk, *NYS DOH*
Morgan Tarbell, *NYS DOH*
Bruce Dolph, *DC SWCD Board*
Jessica Batiennon, *The Reporter*
Mary Crisafulli, *The Mountain Eagle*

II. Additions/Deletions to Agenda

A. Transparency Policy Appeal – *added to the Chair's Report*

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the February 25, 2025 minutes, as presented.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

IV. Executive Director's Report – Carol Bishop & Amy Faulkner

A. Operational and Programmatic Updates

Ryan was not able to attend the meeting, so Carol and Amy presented a couple of updates in his place.

First, Carol gave an update on a larger subcontract and its funding status. The Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) subcontract was approved yesterday afternoon. She explained that Wendy sent the approved contract to CCE to review, sign and return. Regarding the new successor contracts, new accounts for monies have been created with the bank. She received funding for the SWP117 Operational Contract. The SWP118 Easement Contract has been reviewed and advanced by the DEP, and the advanced payment request is in progress.

Second, Amy gave an update on the research collaboration with Columbia University's AgMIP team – *Addressing Climate Challenges to Agriculture and Water Quality in the NYC Watershed*. The university was notified that the funding for this project has been frozen and, therefore, the project is currently on pause. The research team is searching for other funding opportunities in the meantime.

B. Spotlight: *Finance – WAC Procurement Procedures presented by Carol Bishop and Wendy Hanselman*

Carol and Wendy discussed the guiding documents for the WAC purchase and procurement procedures, the types of purchasing and procurement methods, and the various levels of approval required.

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

A. Transparency Policy Appeal

Amy explained that WAC received a Transparency Policy Request from Colm Ryan on February 5, 2025. Ryan responded with an approval of the request on February 24, 2025. Payment of \$9.51 was required per WAC's Transparency Policy to compensate for staff time. On February 25, 2025, Colm sent an appeal letter which stated that the requirement for payment was, in effect, a denial of the request. He requested the documents be produced without cost. Amy turned the floor over to the Board to discuss how to proceed; either to affirm WAC's original

response or choose a new course of action. Discussions briefly ensued and Council members agreed that the original response was appropriate.

Motion to affirm WAC's original offer to produce the documents requested by Colm Ryan on February 5, 2025, with redactions, within ten (10) days of receipt of payment of \$9.51.

Motion: Karl Gockel

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

VI. Executive Committee – Wayland ‘Bud’ Gladstone

Bud reported that the Committee met on February 18th to discuss proposed modifications to the WAC Transparency and Conflict of Interest Policies. Members discussed several proposed changes to the Transparency Policy that legal counsel is currently working to finalize. When a satisfactory version is approved by the Committee, it will be posted publicly to the WAC website. The changes to the Conflict of Interest Policy was forwarded and approved at the February Council meeting.

VII. Finance Committee – Karl Gockel & Carol Bishop

The Finance Committee did not meet in March, so there was nothing to report at this time.

VIII. Agricultural Committee – Steve Reed & Connor Young

Steve reported that the Committee met on March 11th. Discussion items included four (4) Whole Farm Plan (WFP) Revisions, Manure Management Credits (and how they will work with Nutrient Management Credits), and biosecurity measures for preventing the spread of Avian Flu. In addition, farm issues were discussed during the Executive Session.

IX. Economic Viability Committee – Jennifer Grossman & Kristan Morley

Jennifer explained that the Committee last met in February. There was nothing new to report at this time.

X. Easement Committee – Tom Hutson & Serena Orleski

Tom reported that the Committee had a light agenda in March. Members discussed and approved a subdivision and right-of-way request for a single landowner.

XI. Forestry Committee – Marilyn Wyman & Tom Pavlesich

Marilyn reported that the Committee met on March 20th. Tyler Van Fleet hosted the meeting in Tom's place. Members were introduced to a new Forest Service Grant representative. Discussions included modifications to the Forestry Handbook, the FY26 Program Workplan, and an evaluation of the MyWoodlot website/education initiative.

XII. East of Hudson Committee – Fred Huneke & Amy Faulkner

Fred reported that Committee met on March 19th. Members reviewed Whole Farms Plans (WFPs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) on five (5) farms. Staff are currently catching up on Annual Status Reviews (ASRs). Also discussed was the Committee Charge and working with the Westchester County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD).

The next meeting is on Wednesday, May 21st at the new office in Patterson, NY. Fred encouraged fellow Council members to attend in-person, if schedules allow.

XIII. Building Committee – Karl Gockel

Karl explained that the Committee has not met since the last Council meeting. Finance is currently waiting for the approval of the selected contractor in the PASSPort system before site-scoping can begin.

XIV. Governance Committee – Jason Helmbold

Jason had a few items to report. First, he explained that Amy would be following up soon with Council members or DEP staff who have yet to submit a completed Conflict of Interest Form. Second, Committee members would like to carve out some time during or after the April Council meeting to discuss biosecurity protocols and the Economic Viability Capacity Study. Third, the Committee is currently in the process of reviewing feedback received at the Directors Only meeting as well as board training opportunities. Finally, he reported that Governance will be meeting with WAC legal counsel soon to begin reviewing and updating organizational by-laws (last updated in 2021).

He asked for any questions or comments. He will give an update on Council member recruitment efforts during the Executive Session.

XV. NYC DEP Report – Shilo Williams

Shilo reported that the DEP Agricultural Licensing Meeting is coming up on Friday, March 28th. She also reported that the DEP is planning to participate in the upcoming event season.

XVI. NYS DOH, US EPA Reports

There was nothing to report at this time.

XVII. Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session at 10:51 a.m.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Jason Helmbold

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 11:26 a.m.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

XVIII. Other

XIX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m. by common consent.

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.**