

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

33195 State Highway 10, Walton, New York 13856

phone: 607-865-7790

fax: 607-865-4932

nycwatershed.org



MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING

October 28, 2025

(*via 'MS Teams')

I. Meeting called to order at 10:04 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

Barbara Hanselman

John Verhoeven

Kyle Clark

Others Present:

Ryan Naatz, *Executive Director*

Amy Faulkner, *Director of Operations*

Carol Bishop, *Director of Finance*

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*

Patrick Palmer, *NYS DOH*

Morgan Zyzik-Tarbell, *NYC DOH*

Sara Storrer, *NYC DEP*

Bruce Dolph, *DC SWCD Board*

Tom Pavlesich, *Forestry Manager*

Lillian Browne, *The Reporter*

Director's Absent:

James Darling

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2025, meeting as presented.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Dwight Bruno

Approved

III. Executive Director's Report – Ryan Naatz

A. Operational & Programmatic Updates

1. WAC E-mail / MS 'Teams' Migration Check-In

Ryan Naatz requested feedback from the Council on how they are acclimating to the new platforms.

The initiative has been incorporated to improve how the organization shares/distributes business-related and/or confidential information to better meet security requirements and IT standards. Committee members are expected to be reviewing packet materials during meeting discussion. As some are

continuing to learn the new processes, Ryan has offered to have paper packet copies distributed to those who would prefer it. Council members are asked to notify Kayla Henderson if they wish to have paper packets provided for meetings during the interim. Kayla was recognized by members of the Executive Committee for the work that she has completed to make this migration successful. It has been a lot of work and was a daunting project for Kayla to take on right at the start of her employment; however, many Council members were very complimentary with how patient and helpful she has been throughout the learning process and feel she's become a good addition to the team. Overall, most of the Council has found this new initiative very useful. Anyone who is interested in additional training on the platforms, please contact Kayla directly.

B. Agricultural Environmental Innovation Demonstration Program Grant

Connor Young reported on details relating to this grant that the NYS Office of Attorney General (OAG) and WAC both have signed an agreement for. Highlights covered included background information on NYS Office of Attorney General's settlement opportunity, the scope of the grant, the three categories of WAC's equipment concept, the drone modification funding cap, the structure of the WAC-OAG contract, budget summary, and 'next steps', which include the development of a sub-agreement with Cornell's Farmers DataLab, refining of the grant structure (RFP, application, O&M's), confirming internal processes (procurement and reporting), finalization of an Independent Review Committee, and education and outreach efforts (press releases, materials, and support systems). Ryan Naatz acknowledged Connor for all his efforts as this opportunity will be a tremendous gain for the organization's participating farmers.

C. 44 West Street Office Lease

The current lease agreement between the building owner and Delaware County Soil & Water Conservation District (DCSWCD), of whom we sub-lease with, is still in effect through March 1, 2026. DCSWCD Interim Executive Director Graydon Dutcher recently informed WAC that, upon expiration of their current lease with the owner, they no longer wish to sub-lease to WAC. WAC will need to negotiate a lease directly with the building owner. Details were discussed regarding determining proper utilization of the building spaces and how utility costs will be apportioned by the building owner. As an immediate next step, Amy will be working with staff to confirm square footage allotments per occupant/agency, once that is complete, WAC will plan to engage with the building owner directly on next steps.

D. Other

Additionally, Ryan Naatz informed the Council that WAC has completed paying back the \$1m 'Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan forgiveness offered by the government during the COVID-19 pandemic, which helped to secure jobs during WACs financial crisis.

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

After attending a recent meeting regarding the water withdrawal permit, addressing concerns regarding a lack of funding for specific areas, Bud Gladstone reported that WAC funding is definitively in place, assuring efforts in moving forward with the permit agreement will occur. Details were discussed with hopes that the agreement will be put into place by year-end. Bud confirmed he will share the draft with the Council for review purposes once it becomes available.

V. Building Committee – Karl Gockel

During the October 21 meeting, new preliminaries regarding the site plans were provided, with suggestive feedback provided by DEP Forester, Collin Miller, in relation to the consideration of utilizing wood resource materials within the new build.

VI. Finance/Audit Committees

A. August Financial Reports – Karl Gockel

Review of the August 31, 2025, financial report was conducted during the October 14 committee meeting, including additional review of subcontractors, grants, etc.

Motion to approve the August financial reports as presented.

Motion: Paul Gallay

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

B. Audit Committee – Paul Gallay

RBT auditors will present on results regarding review of WAC's financial statements during the quarterly full Council meeting November 25. A draft is currently unavailable.

VII. Governance Committee – Jason Helmbold

The Board assessment process is ongoing and review of our slate of directors is coming due for renewal. The committee is looking at our overall Board and composition, and will discuss potential Board candidate, during executive session. Additionally, several deliverables are being worked on presently. Board training opportunities will be reviewed and encouraged, as well as recommendation for non-committee members to attend other program committee meetings for educational purposes.

VIII. Agricultural Committee – Steve Reed

Topics reviewed during the October 14 meeting covered introducing Erin Cornell as a new conservation planner to our team and updates for Nutrient Management submissions (72 records total). There were no WFP's or guideline revisions to review for the month. Kristan Morley presented information on the EV Micro Grant Program.

IX. Economic Viability Committee – Jennifer Grossman

Discussion from the last committee meeting held August 26 included review of dashboards, metrics, details on the NYC Watershed Working Lands Capacity Study RFP, and alternate grants. Clarification on the connection between EV and Easements was highlighted on additionally.

X. Easements Committee –Tom Hutson

The October 1 meeting discussion included the introduction of our new Land Protection Coordinator, Rebecca Morgan, and review of stewardship updates.

XI. Forestry Committee – Marilyn Wyman

September 18 meeting highlights included a progress report on accomplishments made within recent months, a presentation by Kristan Morley on WAC EV Program Micro Grants and Farms/Forests in Transition Programs, BMP gravel cost-share rates and Workers Comp concerns distributed to landowners vs. loggers, and progress updates on 2025 Forestry deliverables projections.

IX. East of Hudson Committee – Fred Huneke

The committee is slated to meet in November to discuss workloads and prioritizations. Amy Faulkner reported that we are doing well on deliverable goals and have made headway on outreach efforts to potential farmers.

X. NYC DEP Report – Michael Vander Werff

Although there are no updates to report, Michael expressed his excitement towards Connor Young’s initiative in obtaining a WAC-OAG contract in relation to the Agricultural Environmental Innovation Demonstration Program Grant.

XI. NYS DOH, US EPA Reports – Patrick Palmer

Patrick expressed his gratitude in having been invited to the most recent farm tour and how beneficial it is to get a hands-on understanding of how our programs work. There are no updates to report at this time; however, if anyone has any questions relating to the information supplied with regards to the water withdrawal permit, they may reach out to him directly.

XII. Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session at 11:27 a.m.

Motion: Jason Helmbold

Second: Marilyn Wyman

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 12:04 p.m.

Motion: John Verhoeven

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m. by common consent.

Our next meeting of the Council is scheduled for **November 25, 2025**, at 10:00 a.m.

Jennifer Grossman

Jennifer Grossman

WAC Board Secretary

12 / 01 / 2025

Date