

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

nycwatershed.org



MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING

March 26, 2024

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

Directors Present, via Teams:

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

Directors Absent:

Jeff Wilson

Others Present, via Teams:

Ryan Naatz, *Executive Director*
Amy Faulkner, *Director of Operations*
Carol Bishop, *Finance Director*
Connor Young, *WOH Agricultural Program Manager*
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*
Tom Ganz, *NYC DEP*
Lee Harris, *NYC DOI*
Jessica Haaz, *NYC DOI*
Anastasia Plakas, *NYC DOI*
Paul Kaczmarczyk, *NYS DOH*
Morgan Tarbell, *NYS DOH*
Katie Lynch, *US EPA*
Kevin Karl, *Columbia University*
Jeffrey Potent, *Columbia University*
Malgosia Madajewicz, *Columbia University*
Mary Crisafulli, *The Mountain Eagle*

TDD 1-800-662-1220

Watershed protection through partnership.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2024 meeting as presented.

Motion: John Vickers

Second: James Darling

Approved

III. Additions/Deletions to Agenda

First, Ryan explained that discussions regarding Committee Restructure Updates under the Chair's Report would take place during the Executive Session.

Second, he indicated that there were additional materials distributed to Members ahead of the meeting in regard to WAC's Transparency Policy. Discussions of those materials would also take place during the Executive Session.

IV. Addressing Climate Challenges to Agriculture and Water Quality in the NYC Watershed Update – Columbia and AgMIP Team

Ryan started by giving a quick re-introduction of researchers from Columbia University's AgMIP team and explained that the purpose of the presentation was to give Council Directors an opportunity to reengage with the project since the last presentation at the October Council meeting and subsequent workshops. He turned the floor over to Kevin Karl, Jeffrey Potent and Malgosia Madajewicz.

Kevin presented a recap of the project purpose, a summary of project achievements to-date, feedback from stakeholder workshops and how it has informed the project, and the steps to be taken next. He opened the floor for questions or comments and subsequent discussions ensued.

Ryan thanked Karl, Jeffrey and Malgosia for their time, and let the Council know that there will be more updates to present soon.

V. Executive Director's Report – Ryan Naatz

A. Operational Updates

- (1) Ryan gave a quick update on the successor contracts. There is an upcoming meeting to finalize edits to the Easement Contract and administrative staff are currently waiting for a final review of the Operations Contract from legal counsel. Once the final versions are complete, they will be submitted for DEP approval.
- (2) Concurrently, WAC senior leadership is working on FY25 budgets with the consideration that contracts will change in the middle of the fiscal year.

- (3) Finally, he announced that he recently attended a DEP subcontractor meeting with Amy Faulkner in Kingston. The goal is to have DEP and subcontractors meet at least annually to vet any concerns and maintain communication as a means to create more effective business relationships.

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

A. Committee Restructure Update

1. Member Reimbursement
2. Additional Easement Committee Information

Note: Discussions for all Committee Restructure Update items took place in Executive Session.

Motion to preliminarily approve the Review of Committee Structure – Next Steps recommendations. Final adoption will be informed by further detail and proposed edits to Committee charges and By-laws, respectively. Information will be advanced as soon as May/June, with a goal of putting into practice July 1, 2024.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

VII. Finance Committee – Karl Gockel & Carol Bishop

Carol presented the highlights of the March Finance Committee meeting; namely that payment requests were submitted in mid-February and the Committee reviewed and approved the financial statements included in the packet materials.

A. January Financials – Motion

Motion to accept the January Financials as presented.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

VIII. Economic Viability Committee – Jennifer Grossman & Kristan Morley

Jennifer reported that the Economic Viability Committee met just prior to the Council meeting. Members and staff discussed the great turnout for the first application round of the Fruit and Vegetable Expansion Pilot Grant. The program has since received even more interest and applications for the next grant round. In addition, she reported that staff are currently organizing a celebration for the 20-year anniversary of the Pure Catskills campaign.

IX. Human Resources Committee – Marilyn Wyman

Marilyn reported that the Human Resources Committee met on March 21st to review and discuss salary modifications, travel & training reporting, and the employee benefits schedule. The meeting minutes will be included in materials for the April Council meeting.

X. Easement Committee – Tom Hutson & Serena Orleski

Tom presented stewardship updates, as outlined in the March Easement Committee meeting minutes that were included in the packet materials and indicated that the Committee approved the land plan of a forest conservation easement applicant.

XI. Agricultural Committee – Steve Reed & Connor Young

Steve reported that the Agricultural Committee met on March 12th. Among other updates and staff reporting, he highlighted that the program finalized updates to its CAFO and Cover Crop Guidelines and received DEP recognition for completion of the 50% backlog design metric goal.

XII. Forestry Committee – Marilyn Wyman & Tom Pavlesich

Marilyn reported that the Forestry Committee met on March 21st and thanked Tyler Van Fleet, *East of Hudson Forestry Program Coordinator*, for guiding the meeting in Tom's absence. Among topics discussed were modifications to the Forestry Handbook, the FY25 Workplan, and the MyWoodlot website following one year since a full re-design. The meeting minutes will be included in materials for the April Council meeting.

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

Fred reported that the East of Hudson Committee met on March 20th to review and discuss the program report, status reviews, nutrient management plans, and the FY25 Workplan and Budget.

Amy gave a quick update on the search for a new *EOH Agricultural Program Manager*. She reported that there are currently a handful of applicants that she is interested in interviewing. She anticipates scheduling for those interviews to begin on the week of April 15th, however, submissions will continue to be accepted at this time. Council members thanked Amy for all her work filling in as the Interim Program Manager for the time being.

XIV. NYC DEP Report – John Vickers

As Ryan had already reported on the status of the contracts, John had only a couple other things to report. First - that monies have been released following the February Payment Request. Second – that Michael has received notification that the NYC Office of Engineering Audits has accepted the accounting for the previous co-mingling of WAC funds and a formal acceptance letter regarding the

audit findings will be issued sometime soon. In other words, the due to/due from issue has officially been resolved.

XV. NYS DOH, US EPA Reports

XVI. Other

XVII. Executive Session

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

Motion: Steve Reed

Second: John Vickers

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 12:38 p.m.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

XVIII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:39 p.m.

Motion: Bud Gladstone

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 23, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.**