

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING

September 24, 2024

I. Meeting called to order at 10:06 a.m.

Directors Present:

Paul Gallay
Karl Gockel, *Treasurer*
Jennifer Grossman, *Secretary*
Barb Hanselman
Jason Helmbold
Fred Huneke
Tom Hutson, *Vice Chair*
Steve Reed
Marilyn Wyman
Shilo Williams, *NYC DEP*

Directors Absent:

Dwight Bruno
James Darling
Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone, *Chair*
John Verhoeven
Jeff Wilson

Others Present:

Ryan Naatz, *Executive Director*
Amy Faulkner, *Director of Operations*
Carol Bishop, *Finance Director*
Connor Young, *WOH Agricultural Program Manager*
Cindy McCarthy, *NM & PFM Coordinator*
Kari Sheridan, *Nutrient Management 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*
Lee Harris, *NYC DOI*
Patrick Palmer, *NYS DOH*
Paul Kacmarczyk, *NYS DOH*
Morgan Tarbell, *NYS DOH*
Pauline Wanjugi, *NYS DOH*
Bruce Dolph, *DC SWCD Board*
Elizabeth DeFalco, *The Reporter*
Mary Crisafulli, *The Mountain Eagle*

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the August 27, 2024 minutes, as presented.

Motion: Steve Reed

Second: Jennifer Grossman

Approved

III. Executive Director's Report – Ryan Naatz

A. Operational and Programmatic Updates

Ryan had a few updates to report:

First, he explained that the CAT487 and CAT403 contracts are set to expire on March 30, 2025 and will be replaced with successor contracts SWP118, SWP117 and SWP106. SWP118 is finalized and in the process of signing. SWP117 and SWP106 will be finalized in the coming months.

Second, he explained that the Building Committee has reconvened for two meetings recently. The remaining funds from the CAT487 contract were used to fund the demolition of condemned buildings on WAC-owned property in Walton. The Executive Committee and the NYC DEP have put together a Request for Proposal for architectural design and site scoping for a new building that will be released next week. The Building Committee will plan on meeting monthly moving forward, as plans continue to develop.

Lastly, he explained that the NYS DEC Office of Hearings and Mediation Services is named as an arbitrator within the WAC Transparency Policy, as well as several WAC Deeds of Conservation Easement. Following recent transparency policy requests, it is now unclear whether the DEC will be able to facilitate arbitration. WAC leadership is continuing to engage with the Office of Hearings and Mediation Services, while also seeking alternative means of arbitration. There will be additional legal challenges involved in amendments to WAC Deeds if the DEC is not able to provide mediation.

B. Spotlight: Agricultural Program – Nutrient Management Credit: A New Structure for 2024 starring Connor Young, Cindy McCarthy and Kari Sheridan.

Connor, Cindy and Kari gave a presentation on changes made to the Nutrient Management Credit Program to address potential sources of disparity and better reflect the costs associated with manure management. The new rate structure will be implemented during the October 2024 Nutrient Management Credit Peer Review.

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

None

V. Executive Committee - Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone

None

VI. Finance Committee – Karl Gockel & Carol Bishop

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

VII. Economic Viability Committee – Jennifer Grossman & Kristan Morley

The Economic Viability Committee did not meet in September. Jennifer did, however, report that staff are currently working on the creation of a program handbook. She also mentioned that this year marks the 20th anniversary of Pure Catskills and highlighted upcoming events in September and October.

VIII. Easement Committee – Tom Hutson & Serena Orleski

Tom reported that staff are currently working through revisions to program guidelines, some of which would allow for more staff-level approvals for “Reserved Rights Requests.” He gave a quick update on recent acquisition projects.

IX. Agricultural Committee – Steve Reed & Connor Young

Steve reported that the Agricultural Committee met on September 12th. He presented some program highlights and discussion items

X. Forestry Committee – Marilyn Wyman & Tom Pavlesich

Marilyn reported that the Forestry Committee met on September 19th - the minutes will be included in the October packet materials. As a side note, she reported that she recently attended the Cauliflower Festival and was impressed by the turnout.

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

Fred reported that the East of Hudson Committee met on September 18th to review and discuss programmatic goals and accomplishments for the 2024 calendar year. He noted that lack of staffing has been the largest hurdle, but the program is still working towards the goals set. He explained that there is a noticeable disconnect between East of Hudson and West of Hudson programming due, in part, to the distance and different types of agriculture in these regions. He concluded by encouraging fellow Directors to attend more East of Hudson Committee meetings, either in-person or virtually, if their schedules allow.

XII. NYC DEP Report – Shilo Williams

Shilo had nothing to report at this time.

XIII. NYS DOH, US EPA Reports – Patrick Palmer & Katie Lynch

Patrick reported that the Stakeholder Meeting that was scheduled for the beginning of September was postponed and rescheduled for Monday, October 7th.

XIV. Other

Before the conclusion of the meeting, Amy reminded the Directors that a mandatory Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest training is scheduled for Tuesday, October 22nd at 11:00 a.m. in Walton, immediately following the October Council meeting.

XV. Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session at 11:04 a.m.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 11:18 a.m.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Paul Gallay

Approved

XVI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:18 a.m. by common consent.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 22, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.