

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 December 15, 2015

I. Meeting called to order at 1:00 p.m.

Directors Present:

Larry Burgin
Dave Cammer
Fred Huneke
Richard Giles
Jason Coleman
Steve Reed

John Verhoeven
Tom Hutson
Chris DiBenedetto
John Riedl
Karl Gockel
Ed Blouin, NYC DEP


Richard Giles, Secretary Date

Directors Absent:

Jennifer Grossman
Ken Smith

Sally Fairbairn
Patrick Rider

Others Present:

Craig Cashman
Amy Faulkner

Thomas Artale

Dave Cammer asked for modifications to the Agenda, it was requested to add Executive Session to discuss legal matters.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the November 24, 2015 meeting as written.

Motion: John Riedl

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

III. Executive Director Report - Craig Cashman

A. Operational Report

Contract negotiations continue with DEP regarding the next Agriculture and Forestry Contract. Craig stated that currently DEP is recommending an amendment to the current Ag and Forestry contract to extend it for one year, to June 30, 2018. Once the negotiation for that amendment is complete, work would begin on negotiations of the next five year contract. The amendment would modify some deliverables, add new funding and extend the timeframe. This would allow for future contracts to align better with the FAD (which could also make things easier for getting funds released from the

City of New York, as it should be easier to get funds from OMB if it aligns with the FAD), and allows for more time to negotiate the five year contract. Although with this schedule, the new FAD won't be out before negotiation of the next five year contract, the draft FAD would hopefully be released so everyone would have a strong idea of what the FAD would look like.

Amy gave a brief staffing update that included: the Stewardship Coordinator position for the Easement Program has been advertised internally; two new Small Farm Interns have been hired, these are intern positions that are funded through an agreement with NRCS and the positions focus on CREP. Those individuals are Ben Hendee and Brent McKeon.; and the Small Farms Engineering Technician position is currently being advertised, with resume review to begin next week.

B. Programmatic Report

Craig reported that the new website has been launched; he encouraged everyone to visit the website at nycwatershed.org to check it out. Contact Heather Magnan with input or questions. Along those same lines, Craig reiterated that the Pure Catskills Marketplace is live and he encouraged everyone to check it out and shop. The Pure Catskills Wholesale guide has also been completed and distributed.

The Annual Report is scheduled to be mailed out next week. Craig explained that the timeline for distribution of the annual report has been changed so that it will better coincide with future fundraising campaigns. The report itself has been modified a bit to focus more on attracting potential donors in addition to highlighting our program accomplishments. The report will be bulk mailed to approximately 800 individuals and mailed with an appeal letter and specific donation request to a targeted group of approximately 300 people.

The draft RFP Craig mentioned last month for a contractor to assist WAC in developing a Strategic Plan update and a business process analysis of the Agricultural Program is complete. He will be forwarding it to DEP in the next week or so for conceptual approval.

The Property/Building Task Force continues to meet to move the siting and building of a new WAC facility forward. Thomas reported that he has calculated some initial cost estimates of acquiring a site. With regards to current office space, Craig will be discussing the lease for the Walton office during the contract meeting with Rick Weidenbach in the beginning of January. WAC is prohibited from entering into a lease agreement that runs longer than the current contract with DEP, so a short term lease will be discussed, with the same timeline of the amendment currently being negotiated with DEP.

IV. Chair's Report – Dave Cammer

A. Directors Only Meeting

Dave reported that the tentative date for the Directors Only meeting is Monday, February 1st. More information will follow.

B. Committee Assignments

Dave stated that Sally will be working on Committee assignments over the next month or two; directors should contact her with any committee requests.

V. Governance Committee – Chris DiBenedetto

A. Slate of Directors

Upon the recommendation of the Governance Committee, motion to approve the following slate of Directors for the term of January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2017: David Cammer, Jason Coleman, Wayland Gladstone, Jennifer Grossman, Tom Hutson, Steve Reed, and John Riedl.

Motion: Chris DiBenedetto

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

B. By-law modifications

As a result of the FY14 Audit, Hinman, Howard & Kattell conducted a review of the Council's by-laws and other organizational documents to ensure compliance with the Non-profit Revitalization Act. The attorney returned a draft of the WAC by-laws with suggested modifications highlighted. The by-laws, with proposed modifications highlighted, were distributed to the Council. The Governance Committee is reviewing the modifications and asks that Directors review the modifications as well and submit any questions to Chris and Amy. The Committee does not expect to vote on the modifications in January but would like to be able to determine by that point what questions and/or concerns the Council has in order to follow-up with the attorney.

V. Finance Committee - John Riedl

A. September Financials

John reported that an Easement Contract payment has been received from DEP; therefore it was not necessary for WAC to access the line of credit as was discussed last month. However, there is still one outstanding easement program payment.

Motion to accept the October Financial Statements on the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

Motion: John Riedl

Second: Bud Gladstone

Approved

B. Mid-Year Budget Revision

The proposed Mid-Year Budget Revision was distributed to the group, the Finance Committee will recommend action on the revision at the January meeting. Thomas briefly discussed the revisions.

VI. Easement Committee - Tom Hutson

Tom reported that the program is just shy of 25,000 acres conserved. The staff and Committee continue to work on moving the forest easement pilot program forward.

VIII. Agricultural Committee – Bud Gladstone

Bud reported that Brian LaTourette and Nate Nero (NM Planner) met with the Bevins last week. They reviewed the details of their current suspension status. Brian stated that they have a plan in place to satisfy the safety issue and that BMP #17 (Manure Handling Equipment) will no longer be needed thus will be deleted from the WFP in a revision when appropriate. Mr. Bevins has requested that his status be reinstated to "active".

Bud gave an update on program accomplishments to date; reported that the staff have the PFM farms signed up and are hoping to have them ranked by the end of December; stated that the staff and Committee continue to work on the funding issue of CREP reenrollment with FSA. There will be a meeting on January 6th to further determine what exactly FSA will fund and what WAC will have to cover. DEP is currently drafting their CREP annual report and plan to include language pertaining to this issue of FSA not cost-sharing re-enrollment, with the hope of making more people aware of the issue and the need for a resolution.

Ed reported that he expects a response regarding the RCPP funding proposal in January.

IX. Forestry Committee – Dave Cammer

MyWoodLot.com is no longer password protected. Dave again encouraged people to check it out.

X. Economic Viability Committee – Richard Giles

There was no meeting this month; however Richard reported that the Committee is looking for new members with interest and expertise in the economic viability of producers in the region. He also reported that based on recent contract negotiations, it is likely that DEP will be further supporting the EV program by approving the addition of funding and staffing in the next contract. He reiterated that the Pure Catskills Marketplace is up and running, and the upcoming thrust of work will be to build participation on the site. The program continues work in the wholesale market as well, with the recent distribution of the wholesale guide and the continued support of the Lucky Dog Foodhub. Richard stated that the foodhub is quite popular and successful and that is due in large part to the support received from CADE, WAC and others.

XII. NYC DEP Report - John Schwartz

Nothing to report at this time.

XIII. Executive Session

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss legal matters.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Bud Gladstone

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session.

Motion: Fred Huneke

**Second: John Verhoeven
Approved**

Meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.