

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 February 23, 2016

I. Meeting called to order at 1:10 p.m.

Directors Present:

Larry Burgin	John Verhoeven
Dave Cammer	Tom Hutson
Jennifer Grossman	Chris DiBenedetto
Richard Giles	John Riedl
Jason Coleman	Karl Gockel
Steve Reed	Ken Smith
Sally Fairbairn	Bud Gladstone
John Schwartz, NYC DEP	

Directors Absent:

Fred Huneke	Patrick Rider
-------------	---------------

Others Present:

Craig Cashman	Thomas Artale
Amy Faulkner	Dave Tobias
Ed Blouin	Michael Chamberlain

Sally Fairbairn asked for modifications to the Agenda, none were requested.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2016 meeting as presented.

Motion: Bud Gladstone

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

III. Executive Director Report - Craig Cashman

A. Operational Report

Craig distributed a DEP/WAC Contract timeline illustration to the group. The purpose of the chart is to demonstrate the timeline of the current contracts as well as those being negotiated. He provided an update on the status of the negotiations: the 18 month letter amendment to the WAC 10 contract will be reviewed in detail during Executive Session; and the Endowment Contract has gone through DEP legal review and the proposed

modifications were shared with the group in the monthly packets. That will be discussed in Executive Session as well.

IV. Chair's Report – Sally Fairbairn

Sally's monthly Chair's Report was distributed to the group.

A. Directors Only Meeting

The Directors Only meeting was held Monday, February 1st at SUNY Delhi, Farrell Hall. Sally asked for feedback regarding the location, date, meeting space, etc. Everyone seemed to think the set-up worked well. The meeting was facilitated by Michael Chamberlain and focused on strategic planning.

B. Policy – Director Attendance (At-large Directors) and Data Release

The Governance Committee defined the attendance requirements for At-large Directors in the proposed modifications to the Directors Attendance policy distributed. The proposed policy was distributed this month for review and will be voted on at the March meeting. Sally will be forming a working group to develop a policy addressing data sharing of organizational information.

C. Committee Assignments

Sally reported that Shannon Mason of Cowbella will be joining the Economic Viability Committee as a non-Director Committee Member.

D. Easement Program Acquisition

Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, motion to instruct the Easement Committee to cease making additional acquisition commitments effective 3/03/16 until the Easement contract payment requests for the terms of 10/01/15 through 3/31/16 have been received.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

Abstained: John Schwartz

Craig and Thomas updated the Committee on the status of the Easement Contract payment requests submitted to DEP. Craig, along with Thomas and Leslie, are in constant contact with DEP attempting to get the necessary paperwork submitted so the payment requests can be processed. Currently Leslie is working with Easement Program subcontractors to gather insurance documentation that the City of New York is now requiring to be submitted before the payment can be processed. This is becoming increasingly difficult as the forms and requirements of the City are quite onerous, change frequently and take time for subcontractors to return in an acceptable format. Dave Tobias assured WAC that DEP is doing its best to get the payments made as quickly as possible and that they too are frustrated with the process.

This issue of insurance is not an issue exclusive to WAC; other organizations that work with DEP are experiencing the same problems. Staff at DEP have been working with

the City contracting office in an attempt to get a waiver of these requirements for subcontracts such as WAC, CWC and the Soil and Water Stream Program, but it is unclear as to when or if that waiver will be issued.

The payment requests for the Agriculture and Forestry Contract with DEP have yet to be affected by these requirements, and the most recent payment request for that contract has been accepted and forwarded for processing without issue. It is a concern that in the near future that contract will also be scrutinized to the detail currently being experienced. Craig stated that he is confident that WAC and DEP will find a solution moving forward but in the meantime with the funding not coming in it is likely that WAC will have to activate its line of credit within the next four to six weeks to cover operating costs. Therefore it is important that for the immediate future the Council and staff are aware of the issue when making any financial commitments or purchases.

E. Regional Conservation Partnership Program Funding Proposal

Sally reported that WAC has been awarded funding in response to the proposal for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant through NRCS. The program is hoping to be able to implement between four and ten projects utilizing the funding over the next couple of years. Sally recognized Ed Blouin for his work on the funding proposal and thanked him for completing the majority of that work allowing WAC to be awarded the funding.

V. Human Resources Committee – John Riedl

A. Pure Catskills Specialist Position Creation

Upon the recommendation of the Human Resources Committee, motion to approve the creation of the position of Pure Catskills Specialist as detailed in the Position Creation Request and attached position description with a salary range of mid \$40,000s to be funded through the CAT 433 Agricultural and Forestry Program Contract.

Motion: Human Resources Committee

Second: Bud Gladstone

Approved

VI. Finance Committee - John Riedl

A. December Financials

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

Motion: John Riedl

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

B. Endowment Fund Quarterly Update

Thomas stated that the quarterly report for the Endowment Fund was included in the monthly packet. If anyone has any questions they should contact him. There will be an Endowment Committee Meeting in March prior to the Finance Committee meeting to discuss the performance of the fund; as well a representative from NBT will join the

meeting in April to answer any questions and to review the performance of the fund and any suggested changes in the investment of the fund. Members are encouraged to forward questions to Thomas prior to that meeting.

C. Easement Program Purchase and Sales Contracts

Thomas reported that the Easement Program entered into two Purchase and Sales Contracts totaling approximately 465 acres for an approximate total purchase price of \$710,175.00.

XII. NYC DEP Report – John Schwartz

Nothing to report at this time.

XIII. Strategic Planning/Agricultural Program Evaluation

Michael Chamberlain spoke briefly to the group. Distributed in the monthly packet was the Directors Only meeting output and next steps report from Development Services Associates. Michael reported that today he went through a very similar set of exercises with the Senior Leadership at WAC. A considerable amount of time during the March Council meeting will be dedicated to strategic planning facilitated by Michael. During that time Michael will provide the group with the information gathered up to that point. The May and July Council meetings will also be dedicated to strategic planning. Michael updated the group on the meetings he has held so far with regards to both strategic planning and the evaluation of the Agricultural Program, as well as meetings he has upcoming in the next couple of weeks.

IX. Executive Session

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations.

Motion: Bud Gladstone

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

John Schwartz, Ed Blouin and Dave Tobias left at this time.

Motion to come out of Executive Session.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

Motion to approve moving forward with the 18 month Letter Amendment to the WAC 10/CAT 433 Agricultural and Forestry Program Contract as presented.

Motion: Bud Gladstone

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.