

# Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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## Executive Committee Meeting March 21, 2023

### I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Bud Gladstone

Members Present: Dave Cammer Karl Gockel  
Bud Gladstone Fred Huneke  
Jennifer Grossman John Vickers, NYC DEP

Members Absent: Tom Hutson

Others Present: Ryan Naatz Carol Bishop  
Amy Faulkner Connor Young  
Steve Reed Michael Vander Werff, NYC DEP  
Sarah Storrer, NYC DEP Alla Saint-Fleur, NYC DOI  
Lee Harris, NYC DOI

### II. Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2023 meeting, as presented.**

**Motion: Dave Cammer**

**Second: Fred Huneke**

**Approved**

### III. Executive Director's Report

#### A. Introductions

Ryan introduced Sarah Storrer from NYC DEP, as a new project manager joining the team with Michael Vander Werff and Tom Ganz, and Connor Young as the new Agricultural Program Manager.

#### B. Subcontracts with DC SWCD and CCEDC

Ryan shared the staff charts of Agricultural Program staff that work for CCEDC and DC SWCD, funded by WAC through subcontracts. CCEDC is experiencing turnover in their finance department causing delays in submission of payment requests, actuals and payment of invoices. Carol and Connor met with the Executive Director and staff provided through the SBN network including regional Finance Director and regional Executive Director. The understanding at the end of that meeting is that all outstanding documents will be submitted to WAC by March 31<sup>st</sup>. At the present time, CCEDC has not been advanced funds for March or April. Ryan feels confident that CCEDC is clear on what is expected. Jennifer asked if the staff at CCEDC were getting paid, Bud stated that he felt that CCEDC has the funding available to cover those salaries. Jennifer questioned whether it would be better to internalize some of this work vs relying on subcontracted staff.

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af: 3/21/23

Ryan shared the staffing model for DCSWCD and the USDA-NRCS to illustrate the staff that continue to help administer key components of our contracts with DEP. The current MOU with NRCS expires this year, Connor and Ryan met with Dennis DeWeese on negotiating a new MOU. All very well intended and in good faith a number of years ago, however now it means that in order to meet the contractual and financial standards required of WAC, we are dependent on subcontracts. Dave Cammer questioned whether this issues at CCEDC will affect WACs ability to meet Farmer Education deliverables. Ryan is hopeful that both WAC and CCEDC will work through this and be able to continue to implement programming.

Jennifer would like to better understand what DCSWCD staff are doing that is different than our own technicians and if that is 'too heavy' and duplicative knowing that we will likely be reducing planning and designing in the future. Fred agreed that this may be too many positions outside of our in-house expertise. Jennifer would like to see some additional information on the tasks of those employees.

Connor will be working with Ryan and DEP on the timeline and goals of the Agricultural Program redesign, Connor will likely be joining Executive Committee in subsequent months to keep the committee up to date on that process. Connor also asked that members reach out to him with any questions, input, comments that he should consider while working through the redesign.

### **C. WAC Building**

Ryan shared the Town of Hamden letter with the Council regarding demolishing the buildings on the property, future building site, or to rehabilitate the buildings in accordance with Code. Fred stated that the buildings have been there long enough and WAC has been aware of this situation and he would like the demolition completed as quickly as possible. Dave asked what prompted the letter, Fred felt that it has been a thorn in the side of the town, Ryan also had a discussion with Wayne Marshfield regarding resolution of the building demolition, Ryan had discussions with DEP and Executive Committee in January encouraging a position from the Town of Hamden, Wayne had indicated they were previously reluctant to push too hard and didn't want to jeopardize a relationship. Ryan explained that if Wayne felt the need to send a more strongly worded letter. The language in the letter is directly from state law. John Vickers stated that he is meeting tomorrow with the ACCO's office and lawyers and other administrative staff to discuss the letter and to brainstorm how DEP can fund the demolition of those two structures. He is hopeful that coming out of that meeting he will have a direction on how best to do this. Based on that he would like to work with WAC to put together a reasonable plan and timeline to present to the Town. Jennifer expressed that WAC shares the same goals with the Town.

### **IV. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned by common consent at 10:37am.