Minutes of the Watershed Agricultural Council  
February 23, 2021

I. Meeting called to order at 1:04 pm via Zoom call.

Directors Present, via video conference call:
Dwight Bruno         Marilyn Wyman
Dave Cammer          Richard Giles
Wayland Gladstone    Steve Reed
Karl Gockel           Larry Burgin
Jennifer Grossman    Fred Huneke
Tom Hutson           John Verhoeven
Eleanor Blakeslee-Drain James Darling
John Riedl           Jeff Graff, NYC DEP

Others Present, via Zoom:
Ryan Naatz           Amy Faulkner
Heather Magnan       Tom Pavlesich
Gibson Durnford      Kristan Morley
Larry Hulle           Tyler Van Fleet
Josh Gorman          Nate Townsend
Elaine Poulin         Pete Steenland
Cindy McCarthy       Brian LaTourette
Morgan Zyzik, NYS DOH Katie Lynch, US EPA
Patrick Palmer, NYS DOH Paul Kaczmarczyk, NYS DOH

II. Approval of Minutes
Motion to approve the minutes of January 26, 2021, as presented.
Motion: Marilyn Wyman
Second: Dave Cammer
Approved

III. Executive Director’s Report – Ryan Naatz
A. Program Report
   • Ryan explained that Cindy McCarthy will be providing a presentation on Precision Feed
     Management to support Program managers at WAC developing more direct rapport with
     Council Directors. The Council members thanked Cindy for the presentation, and
     recognize that the work the Program is doing and highlighting this model proves this can
     be accomplished and utilized worldwide. Program Manager updates were provided
     through the Managers’ Memo from the Senior Leadership Team that was distributed to
     the group in the meeting packet. Ryan asked if there were any questions or comments
     regarding the information in that memo. Council Members stated they appreciated the
memo and the format. Jennifer asked Jeff for more information regarding DEP potentially purchasing farmland in Delhi. Fred questioned if DEP considered the fact that there were BMPs put onto the farm and that it is surrounded by viable farms all competing for land; from Fred’s perspective this is a piece of property that the City should have responded they aren’t interested in because it is viable agricultural land and they have already invested a considerable amount of money in the land being in agricultural production through BMPs. It also jeopardizes the future of the farm that currently uses the land, now that they will need to put in a bid for use of the property. Jeff mentioned this was best discussed in Executive Session. He mentioned DEP has an Acquisition Program and follows the process. Ryan mentioned that Josh Gorman routinely sits in on certain land acquisition meetings at DEP and he may also be able to shed some light on this.

B. Operational Report

- Ryan stated that the 44 West Street Lease update will be done in Executive Session.
- Today Ryan received a request for a meeting with Dave Warne to further discuss the procurement of Your Part Time Controller (YPTC); more information will be forthcoming on that. Management staff and DEP continue to work to get YPTC on board.
- Payment Request #6e has ‘hit the portal’ which means it should be in WAC’s bank account in the next two days; that was for the amount of $1,063,600. There was a Line H deduction instituted on that payment in an amount just under $50,000. Staff are working on a response to that line H deduction to explain why these are eligible expenses, although the entire payment amount was reflected in the Payee Information Portal (PIP).
- Staff continue to work on #7c and #7e payment requests currently. Staff is working with Jeff to work through the format as these are reimbursable requests. The issues causing the delay for submission for both 7e and 7c mostly relate to the fact that we have to modify the format to reflect these are reimbursable payments vs. advanced payments which is how the format was originally developed. WAC began uploading the documents on January 15th for both 7e and 7c but those couldn’t be processed because we were asked to wait until we had completed actuals to provide for December. This pushed us back a couple of weeks but has since been accomplished and all spreadsheets and files have been updated to include actual numbers for December. Subsequent to that we realized the issue with the Nutrient Management Credit liability that was discussed at the Finance Committee meeting and the fact that we never included those as encumbrances, and through further research also found that we didn’t reflect the 2019 credits as an expense in the payment request for the relevant period. So it is a few items to work with Jeff to determine the best way to reflect these in the payment request format.
- Payment Request #22 also had a line H deduction and approximately $85,000 of funds were deducted and should be rolled into payment request #23. Payment #23 was stopped at the level of OEA to ask for clarification on a number of items. The response to those questions were submitted to DEP last week; we have not received an update.
- The proposed one-year budget for the CAT 403 contract was submitted formally yesterday. Once that budget is approved we can begin to prepare payment request #24. This will result in only six months of funding for CAT 403 in the FY22 budget.
- Ryan provided an update on cash flow. With the receipt of payment #6e WAC can potentially pay off all outstanding invoices as well as first of the month expenses with those funds; however WAC will remain in a difficult financial position. Staff remain excited about the opportunity to get YPTC involved to make some immediate impacts on the financial management of the organization. Elaine questioned how monies coming in will be allocated across programs. Ryan responded that there will be much discussion on that at the management and Council level.
IV. Chair’s Report – Bud Gladstone

A. Committee Assignments
- Current Committee Assignments will remain the same through the process of evaluating and redefining the committee structure at WAC. Jennifer provided an update on the work of the Visioning Team; meeting materials were distributed for the initial Directors Only Strategic Management Forum. All are expected to come to the meetings prepared to have read the documents ahead of time and to participate in the discussion.

B. Other
- Bud again thanked Ryan and Amy as well as all other staff that have stepped up to help get WAC through this and added that he appreciates the Board’s involvement to be a fully engaged board to move forward. Bud reported that he has received some concerns that select staff have regarding employee morale and specifically the suspension of the flexible scheduling, Non-Working Day option. Bud explained that he wanted staff to know that the message has been received and has been heard loud and clear and that the Board remains committed to its employees. Bud reiterated that WAC is in the position where tough choices have had to be made and that he supports the decisions of the Executive Director. Bud will be meeting with Paul Rush next week and Fred will be joining as the former chair. The Farm Bureau reached out to Bud recently with regards to WAC’s financial situation and asked if there was anything the Farm Bureau could do to assist. At the next Executive Committee meeting the process will begin to get a full time Executive Director in place.

VI. Finance Committee – Karl Gockel

A. December Financials
- Karl reported that Thomas’ last day was last Friday and Amy has stepped in to act as the liaison and oversee the administrative aspects of the Finance Department.
- Next month the Committee and Council will be accepting the October and November financials presented with the updated realignment budget.

Motion to accept the December Financial Statements on the recommendation of the Finance Committee.
Motion: Fred Huneke
Second: Tom Hutson
Approved

B. Bank Account Maintenance Update
- Karl provided a brief update that this was all up to date.

VI. Easement Committee – Tom Hutson

- Tom provided a brief update on the Program activities over the recent quarter. He again recognized the hard work of the staff.

VII. Agricultural Committee – Bud Gladstone

- Bud provided a brief update on the activity of the Program; he reported staff are working steadily along. Fred asked if there was any feedback on the letters that went to the participants. Larry mentioned that staff confirmed that participants are still eligible for all of their nutrient management credits, that only current payments are being delayed. Ryan added that Agricultural staff have worked very well to provide the information they can and to address all concerns to the best of their ability. Fred asked how expiring nutrient
management credits will be affected. Larry responded that with expiring credits as long as
the participants have their paperwork in prior to the expiration it will be honored. Bud asked
if there could be a separate account set up just for nutrient management credits. Jennifer
added that the Ag Program staff and partners had an amazing showing at the recent
roundtable on the Design of Regulatory Matrix for Climate Leadership. Columbia
University’s Institute subsequently reached out to Jennifer asking to be connected to
select participating farms. Fred added that he has been contacted by a PhD candidate
who is doing her thesis on watershed programming and she has asked if Fred could
connect her with some other participants. He asked anyone interested to reach out to him.
He will be taking the student on a farm tour this summer. Bud read aloud a letter he
received from a new landowner in Andes praising WAC for the work that we do.

VIII. Forestry Committee – Dave Cammer
• Dave Cammer stated all highlights were provided by Tom Pavlesich in the Managers’
Memo.

IX. Economic Viability Committee – Richard Giles
• Kristan reported that Pure Catskill Membership drive is open, with the deadline of March
22, 2021. The City released their new 10 year Food Policy Plan yesterday; Kristan was
involved in roundtable discussions regarding the development of that policy. Richard
added that the Guide deliverable is due in June so Kristan is working to accomplish that.

X. Human Resources Committee – John Riedl
• The HR Committee has not met again since the January meeting. Nothing new to report

XI. Governance Committee – John Verhoeven
• John encouraged everyone to attend the Strategic Visioning Forum and thanked Tyler,
Kristan and Serena for all of the work they have been doing.

XII. NYC DEP – Jeff Graff
• Jeff reiterated that he is working with staff to address the payment request and work
through the due to due from. Capital payment requests will be zero dollar payments until
that due to due from is cleaned up. Jeff stated that he appreciates the work that Spring
has done to help figure these issues out. Jennifer pointed out that WAC has been
handicapped by not having legal counsel specifically with regards to the Eminent Domain
issue in Middletown. Jennifer wants to know how WAC ensures it is getting the type of
legal counsel it needs; could that be General Counsel on staff or a more significant budget
line? This will be discussed further in the near future. Serena Orleski is the only attorney
on staff and her expertise is greatly appreciated. The Board added that Jennifer’s
contribution as an attorney on the Council is invaluable.

XIII. Executive Session
Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss contract issues.
Motion: Steve Reed
Second: John Verhoeven
Approved

All staff members were excused at this time except for Amy Faulkner and Ryan Naatz.
Motion to come out of Executive Session.
Motion: Dave Cammer
Second: Jeff Graff
Approved

XIV. Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.