

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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Executive Committee Meeting January 18, 2022

I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Bud Gladstone via Zoom.

Members Present, via Zoom: Dave Cammer Tom Hutson
 Karl Gockel Bud Gladstone
 Fred Huneke Richard Giles
 John Vickers, NYC DEP

Others Present, via Zoom: Ryan Naatz Amy Faulkner
 Larry Hulle Jeff Graff, NYC DEP
 Lee Harris, DOI Jessica Nowlin, DOI
 Michael Vander Werff, NYC DEP

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2021 meetings as presented.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

III. Executive Director's Report

A. Executive Committee Meeting Format

Ryan distributed the Executive Committee Charge to the group prior to the meeting and asked that the group consider the function of the Committee and the frequency of meeting, simply because it is routine. Too often the same things are discussed at both Executive, Finance and Council. Bud stated that he leaned on Ryan and Amy working through the first year of the new position, but feels things are in a good place now to be able to move the focus of the Committee to these other duties and responsibilities. Fred added that the Committee has been mainly focused on getting things back on track and topics that the Committee would normally be working on have been set aside in order to focus on getting through the financial crisis, but he is hopeful that as things continue to get better the group can commit more time to focusing on the long term viability of the organization. Dave Cammer mentioned the NAS report and thought that would be something that Executive should be looking at. John Vickers would like to see regular discussion regarding compliance with the monitor agreement. Bud stated that this was a good time to be looking for efficiency factors, currently carrying much of the same discussion from meeting to meeting, but he doesn't want there to be an appearance that WAC is reducing the amount of meetings just to avoid DOI involvement at meetings. Tom agreed with that but added that

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what is discussed at Executive is always discussed the following week at WAC. He would suggest looking more at merging committee based on the work of the SVT. Richard stated that the Charge does not include the approval of recommendations from technical committees, i.e. Ag Whole Farm Plan Revisions. Ryan explained that that needs to be more defined, that the implementation of that was to triage an immediate need. Richard is concerned that we have decided to do that but it isn't reflected anywhere, and based on efficiency, running the same approval through numerous committees is not efficient. Ryan suggested this be part of the discussion at the next Directors Only meeting. Richard would like it noted somewhere that those approvals are an interim policy and a long term plan needs to be addressed. Fred suggested a list of priorities that get ranked and are brought to the Executive Committee in order to get things accomplished. Next month can focus on the Code of Conduct and the monitor agreement as it stands. John suggested the Executive Committee meeting review the Charge as it stands and come back to the group with any suggested modifications. Dave added that he is struggling with the decision making process, we need to clearly define what needs to be moved to the full Council and what can be handled at the Committee level. John feels full Council should receive the compliance update from DOI. Dave Cammer asked if there were deliverables that could be placed in a schedule for the Monitor Agreement. Ryan replied, short answer, yes. There are deadline dates for Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest statements. Amy and Ryan are working with DOI on the draft Code of Conduct currently. Karl said there is no reason to get payment request, financial status or staffing updates in the Executive Committee meeting. It should not be the focus of the agenda of this committee. Policy formation and review is the focus and he suggested that everyone review the current policy book and reach out to members, employees and participants to ask for any input. This group's focus should stay on policy moving forward. Next meeting will include an update of the Policy Book, the Code of conduct and the Conflict of Interest. The group discussed the possibility of bringing on the services of NYCON or a like organization. Amy added that when things are discussed at Executive and Council, they need to be discussed in a confidential manner as those are open meetings. Ag Committee revisions will be advanced to Council.

B. Operational Report

Karl asked for an update on the CAT 403 extension budget. Ryan reported that he feels general consensus has been reached, DEP requested minor tweaks to the format which was submitted. WAC is still awaiting the extension to make its way through the registration process. No other action necessary currently for CAT 403. Payment #28 will be submitted as soon as the contract is registered. WAC is currently in a good cash position otherwise.

C. Programmatic

Karl asked Ryan if he feels WAC will be in a position to ramp up implementation in the spring. Ryan responded that we need to get certainty on the Due to Due From, YPTC has indicated they would have the numbers available this week. Ryan is hopeful this will put us in a better position to be able to request the FY23 BMP monies, unless that can happen it will be impossible to advance things to get back up and running. Bud felt that he thought that YPTC was close to getting the Due to Due From figured out, Ryan stated that they are close on reconciling the Nutrient Management Credit (NMC). The Due to Due From is a tremendous amount of transactions. Ryan is hopeful he can forward something to Executive Committee, OEA and DEP this week. The monies are all accounted for in WAC's accounts in total, but they need to be restored to the specific account of which they belong.

IV. Chair's Report – Bud Gladstone

A. Committee Assignments

Bud reported that the Governance Committee meeting was this morning. The Committee

will be considering new Committee and Council members. Bud had asked Dwight Bruno to be the Agricultural Committee Chair; Dwight did not feel as though now was the right time for him to step up. Steve Reed will be stepping up as the Ag Chair; Bud has asked Dwight to be NMC Committee Chair.

V. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 am.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved