

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

nycwatershed.org



Minutes of the Watershed Agricultural Council

January 24, 2023

I. Meeting called to order at 10:12 a.m.

Directors Present:

Dwight Bruno
Dave Cammer, *Vice Chair*
James Darling
Paul Gallay, *via Zoom*
Wayland “Bud” Gladstone, *Chair*
Karl Gockel, *Treasurer*
Jennifer Grossman, *via Zoom*
Jason Helmbold
Fred Huneke
Tom Hutson
Steve Reed, *via Zoom*
John Verhoeven
Marilyn Wyman, *via Zoom*
John Vickers, *DEP Representative*

Directors Absent:

Richard Giles, *Secretary*

Others Present:

Ryan Naatz, *Executive Director*
Amy Faulkner, *Director of Operations*
Carol Bishop, *Finance Director*
Nate Townsend, *Whole Farm Planning Coordinator*
Peter Steenland, *Technician & Engineering Coordinator*
Elaine Poulin, *Program Procurement & Contract Coordinator*
Cindy McCarthy, *NM/PFM Coordinator*
Brian LaTourette, *Program Operations Coordinator*
Gibson Durnford, *EoH Agricultural Program Manager*
Tom Pavlesich, *Forestry Program Manager*
Tyler Van Fleet, *EoH Forestry Program Coordinator*
Serena Orleski, *Easement Program Manager*
Mike Morales, *Easement Program Stewardship Coordinator*
Bill Martin, *Easement Program Acquisition Coordinator*
Kayla Atanasoff, *Easement Program Executive Assistant*
Kristan Morley, *Economic Viability Program Manager*
Heather Magnan, *Communications Manager*
Michael Vander Werff, *NYC DEP*
Tom Ganz, *NYC DEP, via Zoom*
Lee Harris, *NYC DOI, via Zoom*
Alla Saint-Fleur, *NYC DOI, via Zoom*
Patrick Palmer, *NYS DOH*
Paul Kaczmarczyk, *NYS DOH, via Zoom*
Pauline Wanjugi, *NYS DOH*
Bruce Dolph, *DC SWCD Board, via Zoom*
Katie Lynch, *US EPA, via Zoom*
Elizabeth DeFalco, *The Reporter*
Mary Crisafulli, *The Mountain Eagle, via Zoom*

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Watershed protection through partnership.

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II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2022 and January 10, 2023 meetings as presented.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: John Vickers

Approved

III. Executive Director's Report – Ryan Naatz

Ahead of the operational and programmatic updates, Ryan took a moment to explain some organizational updates. First, that WAC is currently in the process of budget development for the CAT-403 and CAT-487 contracts for the next fiscal year (due on April 1, 2023). Second, WAC will begin discussions with DEP soon regarding successor contracts.

A. Operational Updates

1. Communications Update – Heather Magnan

Heather reported that all Communications deliverables were met for the 2022 year. The dashboard, as well as the 2022 annual report, outlined the watershed events and tours that were attended.

Looking ahead, Communications is currently in the process of filming new videos to be released in the spring on social media platforms. In addition, 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of the Watershed Agricultural Council's incorporation; she is in planning stages for outreach that will highlight this milestone. Finally, Communications is in the process of revamping the organization website. She is working with the web services team, as well as program managers, to update both the look and content; those changes are anticipated to be completed by May.

2. Information Technology Update – John Jackson

John was not present, so Amy Faulkner presented the included dashboard. The dashboard gave a breakdown of categories where the IT staff have been investing their time; between WIT, GIS, FAME, Reporting, and Admin. As the new GIS Coordinator, Ben Hendee spent a majority of his time in GIS, which freed John and Jimmy to spend more time working on WIT. She explained that FAME is WAC's existing database system that will soon be replaced by WIT (currently in a testing phase). John recently sent a projected timeline to WAC senior leadership regarding next steps in launching WIT. The team is looking to have staff begin utilizing both WIT and FAME at the end of February in order to identify any bugs that would need to be addressed ahead of full implementation. With that said, a full implementation of WIT would not take place until the server replacement and operating system upgrades are completed.

3. Operational Update – Amy Faulkner

Amy started by explaining that WAC is currently in the final stages of procurement of services for the FY23 audit, and in contract development for the server/operating system upgrades previously mentioned.

She also touched on staffing updates; Bill Martin joined as *Easement Program Acquisition Coordinator*, Zach Wildenstein joined as an *Engineering Specialist*, Garrett Olsen transferred to a *Nutrient Management Specialist*, and Larry Hulle retired as *Agricultural Program Manager*. Although not indicated on the Dashboard, Aimee Forshee recently filled the position of *Executive Assistant* for the East of Hudson Agricultural Program. Admin/HR is in the second rounds of interviews for the *Agricultural Program Manager* position for the West of Hudson Agricultural Program; the remaining staff vacancies in the program will be filled after a manager is hired.

Finally, she reported that WAC received a final lease agreement for the 44 West Street office. She shared a copy of the agreement with the Council and highlighted important details. If Council wanted additional time to review the lease, she suggested that a motion to approve be postponed until the next meeting. There were some questions and comments ahead of the vote.

Motion to accept the sub-lease agreement dated 10/1/2022 through 3/31/2025 for 44 West Street, Suite 1, Walton, NY, 13856 as presented.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

B. Programmatic Updates

1. Economic Viability Program – Kristan Morley

Kristan presented highlights from the previous quarter. Firstly, the program released the *2022 Pure Catskills Holiday Gift Guide* ahead of the holiday season.

The program met most of its deliverables for the year, apart from the Business Plans and/or Farm Transition Plans. She explained that although that deliverable was missed there seems to be some traction for those initiatives; the program did recently approve an application and received a new application that is currently under review.

She concluded by explaining that a new grant round is currently open through the end of February. Staff have been working to bring in more applicants through various marketing efforts.

2. Agricultural Program – Ryan Naatz

As previously indicated, there is an active search to fill the vacant *Agricultural Program Manager* position. Ryan indicated that several good candidates have been interviewed thus far and took a moment to thank Karl, Marilyn and Steve for their participation on a review panel. He also thanked the Agricultural Program Coordinators and Jackie VanLoan for their help in keeping the program moving forward.

Ryan reported that the program fell short of just one deliverable - the 2023 deliverable for 50% design of the BMP backlog. With that said, 48% of the designs have been completed and he feels confident that the 50% metric will be completed by March 2023.

3. Forestry Program – Tom Pavlesich

Tom reported that the only missed program deliverable for the 2022 calendar year was for *Green Connections*, an education initiative that

partners upstate and downstate classrooms. The reason for the missed deliverable being that schools were still under COVID-19 safety measures in the spring when the program takes place. He anticipates meeting this deliverable in 2023 because there is currently enough participation to meet the required threshold. He mentioned that there is greater difficulty in finding participating update schools and encouraged everyone to reach out to himself or Tyler Van Fleet if they know of any educators that may be interested.

The Forestry Committee recently met to review and approve the FY24 budget; Finance Committee and Council will receive that budget proposal to review in the coming months. One thing he noted was that the program was not funding certain education initiatives throughout COVID; the proposed budget calls for monies that would allow for those initiatives to resume, as well as give funds to Title I schools, which are schools with greater financial needs.

The Forestry Committee will also review modifications to the Forestry Handbook at the March meeting. If the modifications are moved forward, they would be presented to the NYS DEC in May. The program workplan is currently being finalized and will also be presented to Committee in March.

Finally, the 2022 annual reporting is also close to being finalized, and will be submitted for approval by the end of the month.

4. Easement Program – Serena Orleski

Serena reported that the one program deliverable, Stewardship annual monitoring, was met for the 2022 calendar year. She explained that the program currently monitors 211 conservation easements that each require ground and secondary (historically aerial) monitoring visits. There were only three staff members performing these visits until Brent McKeon joined the team in September. Stewardship staff perform additional site visits to follow-up on violations and for landowner ‘reserved right’ requests (e.g. forest harvest plans). She highlighted that there has been a lack of communication with the program’s one East of Hudson conservation easement, and she was pleased to report that staff made important strides in improving that challenge at the end of 2022.

She took a moment to introduce Bill Martin, the new *Easement Program Acquisition Coordinator*. Bill is currently working to revamp acquisitions following the pause, and though solicitation letters will be sent out soon, she encouraged anyone who knew of someone who may be interested in participating in the program to reach out.

Finally, she explained that the program is looking to resume aerial monitoring in 2023 and is currently working through details with DEP for how to go about doing it.

5. East of Hudson Program – Gibson Durnford

As previously mentioned, Aimee Forshee was recently hired as the East of Hudson *Executive Assistant*. The position has been open for a long time, and staff are happy to have her help; Gibson took a moment to thank East of Hudson and West of Hudson staff that took on extra duties while that position was vacant.

He reported that the program reached its Tier I and Tier II outreach efforts, developed two new whole farm plans and exceeded its ASR goals. All participating farms remained in an active status for the 2022 calendar year, but the program is looking to move three farms into an inactive status this year due to consistent lack of program participation; conversely, there is one inactive farm that will be moving to active. In addition, 10 structural BMPs, 6 nutrient management BMPs and 9 forage and biomass BMPs were completed. He concluded by discussing BMP implementation funding for the upcoming year.

IV. Chair's Report – Bud Gladstone

A. Committee Assignments

Bud explained that he will meet Amy and Ryan soon to discuss Committee assignments and present recommendations at the next Council meeting.

B. Approval of Governance Committee Members per By-Laws - Motion

Motion to approve the Chair's appointment of the following members to the Governance Committee:

John Verhoeven, Chair

****John Verhoeven recused himself****

Motion: James Darling

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

Steve Reed

****Steve Reed recused himself****

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Dwight Bruno

Approved

Tom Hutson

****Tom Hutson recused himself****

Motion: Dwight Bruno

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

Fred Huneke

****Fred Huneke recused himself****

Motion: John Verhoeven

Second: John Vickers

Approved

Jason Helmbold

****Jason Helmbold recused himself****

Motion: Dave Cammer
Second: Dwight Bruno
Approved

C. Approval of Audit Committee Members per By-Laws - Motion

Motion to approve the Chair's appointment of the following members to the Audit Committee:

John Verhoeven, Chair

****John Verhoeven recused himself****

Motion: Fred Huneke
Second: Karl Gockel
Approved

Dwight Bruno

****Dwight Bruno recused himself****

Motion: John Vickers
Second: Dave Cammer
Approved

Steve Reed

****Steve Reed recused himself****

Motion: James Darling
Second: Tom Hutson
Approved

V. Governance Committee – John Verhoeven

A. Slate of Officers Election - Motion

Upon the recommendation of the Governance Committee, motion to elect the following officers for the term of February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2025:

Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone – Chair

*****Bud Gladstone recused himself*****

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: John Vickers

Approved

Tom Hutson – Vice Chair

*****Tom Hutson recused himself*****

Motion: Bud Gladstone

Second: James Darling

Approved

Karl Gockel – Treasurer

*****Karl Gockel recused himself*****

Motion: Dwight Bruno

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

Jennifer Grossman – Secretary

*****Jennifer Grossman recused herself*****

Motion: Bud Gladstone

Second: Marilyn Wyman

Approved

B. Board Member Recommendation – Motion

Motion to elect the following as Watershed Agricultural Council Board Members for the term of February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2024:

Jeff Wilson

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

Barbara Hanselman

Motion: Dwight Bruno

Second: Bud Gladstone

Approved

C. Attendance Waivers - Motion

Upon the recommendation of the Governance Committee, motion to approve attendance waivers for the following non-Council Committee Members:

Paul Krickhahn

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

Eric Dahlberg

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: James Darling

Approved

VI. Finance Committee – Karl Gockel

A. November Financials – Motion

Motion to accept the November Financials as presented.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Jason Helmbold

Approved

B. Bank of America Credit Card Account – Motion

Motion to approve the following individuals be authorized representatives for all Watershed Agricultural Council's Bank of America corporate credit card accounts:

Amy Faulkner, Director of Operations

Carol Bishop, Finance Director

Jaclyn Dunlop, Staff Accountant

Amy Harby, Staff Accountant

Wendy Hanselman, Contracts & Grants Specialist

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: James Darling

Approved

VII. Agricultural Committee – Steve Reed

A. Program Approvals – Motion

1. Revisions

Upon the recommendation of the Agricultural Committee, motion to approve the following Revisions:

DEC-269 – Revision 9 – Backlog & Component BMPs

Motion: Dwight Bruno

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

DEC-062.1 – Revision 13 – New BMP/2019 Build

Motion: John Verhoeven

Second: Marilyn Wyman

Approved

2. Funding Increases

Motion to approve the funding increase for DEC-225, BMPs: #13aRR1, 35, 38, 48, 24bWRE1, 24cWRE1, 25bRR1, 37, Water Control, Spring Developments, Pipeline, Animal Trails, Grassed Waterway.

Motion: Fred Huneke
 Second: John Verhoeven
Approved

Based on the recommendation of the Agricultural Committee, motion to approve the following WFP project funding increases:

Farm ID	Project BMPs	Original Design Estimate
SUR-001	03bRR1, 23RR1	\$75,220.00* Phase II Project
DEC-SF043	21	\$33,000.00
DEC-SF043	02a2M1, 10M1, 11M1, 20	\$369,914.00
ULP-003	21ER1	\$13,887.00
ULP-003	11RR1,14,16	\$142,964.00
DEC-184	21, 22, 26, 27, 6bRR1, 6dRR1	\$44,197.00
DEC-111.1	35	\$20,404.00
DEC-111.1	32	\$90,374.00
DEC-281	07b, 07c, 22	\$31,291.00
DEC-281	07e, 07f, 20, 21, 23, 24	\$102,895.00
DEC-311	33	\$51,188.00
DEC-311	21 & 38	\$260,231.00
DEC-114	05RR1, 22	\$34,937.00
DEC-SF008	08aWRE1	\$10,962.00
DEC-SF008	02RR1, 02aRR1, 08dWRE1, 09iWRE1	\$94,844.00
DEC-326	2, 2S2	\$39,146.00
DEC-326	1, 1S2	\$14,112.00
DEC-069	28	\$24,226.00

****Bud Gladstone and Steve Reed recused themselves****

Motion: Dave Cammer
Second: John Verhoeven
Approved

VIII. NYC DEP Report – John Vickers

John announced that Michael Vander Werff was selected and is currently acting as the *Deputy Director for Watershed Agricultural Programs*. Tom Ganz is also now working full-time in Watershed Agricultural Programs.

John touched on the goals he has for 2023:

- (1) Collaborate with WAC to complete the financial accounting
- (2) Collaborate with NYC DOI and WAC to procure the assistance of *BoardStrong*, an affiliate of the *New York Council of Nonprofits (NYCON)*
- (3) Gain approval from the DEP Office of Engineering Audits (OEA) to resume advance payments from CAT 487 Capital OTPS
- (4) Collaborate with WAC on development of successor contracts
- (5) Support the potential climate-related BMP assessment by the Columbia University AgMIP Program
- (6) Begin working on the Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD) requirement (due June 2024)

IX. NYS DOH, US EPA Reports – Patrick Palmer & Katie Lynch

As previously mentioned, the updated FAD was recently released. Patrick indicated where to find the FAD on the DOH website and highlighted some key changes.

X. Other

XI. Executive Session

Motion at 11:55 a.m. to go into Executive Session to discuss the Congressional Community Project Funding Award and the Michael Merritt (Emerald Isle, LLC) Conservation Easement.

Motion: John Verhoeven
Second: Steve Reed

Approved

Motion at 12:35 p.m. to go out of Executive Session.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

XII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Dwight Bruno

Approved

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 28, 2023 at 10:00 a.m., via Zoom.