

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 June 28, 2022

I. Meeting called to order at 10:07 am via Zoom call.

Roll Call:

Directors Present, via zoom:

Dwight Bruno

Dave Cammer

Wayland "Bud" Gladstone

Fred Huneke

Tom Hutson

John Vickers, NYC DEP

Marilyn Wyman

Karl Gockel

Steve Reed

John Riedl

Jennifer Grossman

Directors Absent:

Eleanor Blakeslee-Drain

Others Present, via Zoom:

Ryan Naatz

Carol Bishop

Larry Hulle

Kristan Morley

Dudley Harris, NYC DOI

Michael Vander Werff, NYC DEP

Patrick Palmer, NYS DOH

Lillian Browne, Editor, The Reporter

Amy Faulkner

Tom Pavlesich

Gibson Durnford

Serena Orleski

Jessica Nowlin, NYC DOI

Morgan Zyzik-Tarbell, NYS DOH

Bruce Dolph, DCSWCD Board

Bud asked if there were any additions to the agenda, Ryan mentioned that he wanted to add that Phoebe Schreiner and Ken Jaffe from CADE will be doing a presentation to provide an update on the CSC Grant item #4.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the May 24, 2022 minutes as presented.

Motion: Steve Reed

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

III. Executive Director Report

A. Programmatic and Operational Updates:

1. EoH Office Lease

Gibson has been working with Westchester County on the lease document as the current lease expires on June 30, 2022. The legal instrument has been modified from

a lease to a license agreement to allow for more equal access to the property amenities. The leasing arrangement has worked out great for WAC historically, we have been able to utilize the nursery for trees for tribs planting, the storage space in the barn as well as some other amenities. The draft lease was sent to the Committee in the packets. The lease is currently with the County's legal department for review. Susanne Sahler and Gibson prepared an illustration of comparable rates of lease space available in Yorktown and stretching out to other properties within the watershed. The proposed price per square foot of the EoH office space is significantly lower than other spaces in the area. Once a fully executed lease is in place payments will resume, however until then no payments will be remitted.

Motion to authorize Ryan Naatz, Executive Director, to execute the license agreement provided there is nothing substantive that arises in the final draft.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

2. FY23 Program Work Plan Approvals

FY23 Program work plans were included in the meeting packet; each work plan was approved at the Committee level.

Motion to approve the FY23 Program Work Plans, as presented

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Marilyn Wyman

Approved

IV. Chair's Report – Bud Gladstone

A. Executive Director Evaluation Update

Bud reported that the Executive Committee met last week and discussed the evaluation, Dave and Bud will set up a meeting with Ryan to finalize that.

B. Climate Smart Commodities Grant Update – Jennifer Grossman

Jennifer reported that the Resource Development Working Group has been meeting bi-weekly to work on follow up steps with the grant. The response to the grant program was outstanding, for the \$1 billion available there was proposals for over \$20 billion. Jennifer introduced Phoebe Schreiner and Ken Jaffe to share how CADE is preparing internally for the grant. Phoebe provided a brief presentation to provide insight of what CADE as the grant manager will be doing to oversee the grant. Jennifer added that WAC will not be using DEP funded staff to do any of this work other than oversight from the senior level.

Fred requested another meeting of the Resource Development Working Group to develop a list of questions to submit to Phoebe rather than take up a lot of time at the meeting today.

John Vickers asked to be invited to the Resource Development Working Group meetings.

Ken Jaffe and Phoebe Schreiner left the meeting at this time.

C. Recognition of John Riedl

Bud reported that John Riedl is retiring from the Council as of June 30, 2022. Bud recognized John for his dedication and commitment. John was presented with a plaque from the Council. Everyone expressed appreciation of the years of service. John Riedl thanked the group and stated that it has been an honor and a privilege to be on the Council. Ryan thanked John on behalf of the staff of WAC.

D. NYC DEP Commissioner Visit

Fred, Bud, Ryan and Karl met with John Vickers, Paul Rush and Rit Aggarwala, NYC DEP Commissioner. Bud felt the meeting went very well, very positive and was forward thinking. Looking forward to the partnership to continue to move forward with WAC's mission. Fred added that he was very encouraged by the meeting. Jennifer mentioned that she had an event at which she was able to talk to Vincent Sapienza and recognition of WAC as a very important partner at which she alluded to the climate component. She wondered if the commissioner mentioned the climate issues, agriculture and forestry. Fred said that it was stated that the NYC Mayor would like to look more at the farms in the watershed as a "Foodshed" for the school systems in NYC. There was a lengthy conversation regarding the City Food policy committee and the potential for partnerships there was discussed, Kristan Morley attends that Food Policy Committee representing WAC as a partner. Karl added the focus was on the fruits and vegetables portion of the 'food'.

V. Finance Committee – Karl Gockel and Carol Bishop

A. Financials

Motion to accept the April financials, as presented.

Motion: Steve Reed

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

B. FY21 and FY23 Audit Update

Carol reported that the June 30, 2021 audit has been subcontracted to an auditing firm, this contract spans through the end of August. They are working on the FY21 audit. Carol is working with staff to issue an RFP for audits for the next four years, through the end of the CAT 487 contract.

C. Payment Request/Financial Update

Carol reported that with DEP's assistance, all payment requests were submitted timely, all payment requests have been received. Carol is working with Michael and Tom at DEP to work through the line h's from previous payment requests.

D. FY23 WAC Organizational Budget

A few modifications were made to the budget subsequent to the finance committee to address intern funding and to move the FY22 audit fee to FY23 which does not change the overall contract budget. The budget included a summary worksheet.

Motion to accept the FY23 WAC Organizational Budget, as presented.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

VI. Human Resources Committee – John Riedl and Amy Faulkner

John reported that the HR Committee approved a 5% annual salary adjustment as reflected in the FY23 budget approved by the Finance Committee. Amy provided an explanation as to how the salary increases are implemented.

Upon the recommendation of the Human Resources Committee, motion to approve the 5% salary adjustment for WAC employees to be implemented as follows:

- 4% Base Annual Adjustment for all employees that receive a rating of at least a 33 'Meets Expectations' on the FY22 performance appraisal.
- Employees that receive less than a 33 rating will receive no salary increase until such time that their performance improves.
- The remaining 1% budgeted for Base Annual Salary Adjustments will be distributed per a merit-based system developed by the Executive Director with input from WAC Program Directors and employees.
- Total Base Annual Adjustment increase will not exceed 5% per employee.

Motion: John Riedl

Second: Marilyn Wyman

Approved

VII. Governance Committee – John Verhoeven

A. Board Member Recommendation

John reported that the Governance Committee met to discuss potential members.

Upon the recommendation of the Governance Committee, motion to appoint Paul Gallay as a Council Director, at-large for the term of July 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

Interviews with other potential candidates will be set up in the next few weeks.

B. SVT Working Group Updates

John reported that the Board Member Recruitment and Orientation group has defined the recruitment process and will be working on the orientation packet over the next few weeks. Jennifer reported that the Board Structure working group has been making tremendous progress. Jennifer asked if WAC could rejoin NYCON as a membership.

VIII. Easement Committee – Tom Hutson

Tom Hutson and Serena Orleski provided a brief update on the activities of the Easement Program over the past month.

IX. Agricultural Committee – Steve Reed

A. Agricultural Committee Approvals

1. Agricultural Committee Approvals

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

Whole Farm Plan Revisions:

- **DEP-042 – Revision 13 – Cost changes for designed BMPs and approved repairs**

Motion: Bud Gladstone

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

- **DEC-093 – Revision 8 – CREP Re-enrollment and 2022 Design Workload**

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

- **DEP-165 – Revision 14 – FSA funding approved for CREP**

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

- **DEP-120 – Revision 14 – FSA funding approved for CREP**

Motion: John Verhoeven

Second: Jim Darling

Bud Gladstone Abstained

Approved

Design Projects Cost Increases

- **Motion to approve the BMP approved funds up to the 2022 current engineers design estimates for projects in phase II, as per the chart presented.**

Motion: Karl Gockel

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

X. Governance Committee

SVT Working Group Updates: Working groups continue to meet with the intent of having updates to share at a July Directors Only Meeting.

XI. Forestry Committee – Dave Cammer and Tom Pavlesich

Tom Pavlesich provided an update on the activities of the Forestry Program for the previous month.

XII. East of Hudson Committee – Fred Huneke and Gibson Durnford

Upon the recommendation of the East of Hudson Committee, motion to approve the following:

Whole Farm Plan Revisions:

PUCF-003 – Revision 4 – Watering Facility Modification

Motion: Bud Gladstone

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

WENC-005 – Revision 7 – Obstruction Removal and Storm Runoff Control

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

Annual EOH Whole Farm Plan Cost Guideline Update

Motion: Steve Reed

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

XIII. Economic Viability Committee – Richard Giles and Kristan Morley

Kristan provided a brief update of the first farms and forest in transition grant applications received this round. She is hopeful this is a start to more businesses using this opportunity.

XIV. NYC DEP Report – John Vickers

John reported that he met earlier today with DCSWCD, DOI and WAC regarding the subcontract with them, this will be discussed in Executive Session. DEP staff continue to prioritize working with Ryan on these prime subcontracts. Still have some work to do on the NMC and due to due from accounting that DEP staff will be working through. John feels that OEA is expressing continued issues with the NMC reconciliation. Richard thanked John Vickers and expressed that it is extremely important how DEP needs to coordinate the contract with the climate smart commodities proposal.

XV. Department of Health Report – Pat Palmer

Pat Palmer reminded all that the FAD comment period closes at the end of this week.

XVI. Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: John Vickers

Approved

Lillian Browne, Jessica Nowlin and Bruce Dolph left the meeting at this time.

Motion to come out of Executive Session

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

XVII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:13 pm.

Motion: John Vickers

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

The next regular scheduled meeting will be held July 26, 2022 at 10:00am