

# Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council

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**Full Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday, May 31, 2023**  
**10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**  
**Hybrid Meeting**

## Northcentral Technical College

**Tour:** 6625 County Rd. K.  
(10:00am – 11:30am) Wausau, WI 54401

**Business Meeting:** 1000 W. Campus Dr.  
(1:00pm – 4:00pm) Room D100  
Wausau, WI 54401

## ***DRAFT MEETING MINUTES***

**Members Present:** Kevin Bernhardt\*; Gary Besaw\*; Gwen Boettcher\*; Greg Cisewski; Jeff Edgar\*; Jeff Eide\*; Monica Gahan\*; Bob Hagenow\*; Ben Huber\*; Erik Huschitt\*; Sen. John Jagler; Larry Lee\*; Scott Loomans; Karl Martin\*; Shelly Mayer\*; Paul Palmby\*; DWD Secretary, Amy Pechacek; DATCP Secretary, Randy Romanski; John Rosenow\*; Sara Schoenborn; Nick Stadnyk\*; Sharon Wendt\*; Jason Wood\*; Jeff Wright\*.

**Others Present:** Ashley Andre\*; Ami Bliefertnicht; Lisa Brennean\*; Arielle Exner; Beth Haskovec\*; Jeff Kratochwill\*; Sally Ladsten\*; Patrick Lonergan; Shamane Mills; Kylie Nelson\*; Kietra Olson\*; Leah Peterson\*; Jennifer Sereno; David Specht-Boardman\*; Heather White; Maria Woldt.

\*Virtual Attendee

### **I. Call to Order and Welcome**

Chair Sara Schoenborn called the business meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

### **II. Roll Call**

The roll was called, and the meeting attendance was documented.

### **III. Review Meeting Agenda**

Council members reviewed the items on the agenda and Chair Schoenborn briefly summarized each topic to be addressed. No additions or corrections to the meeting agenda were required.

### **IV. Review and Approval of WAEWDC Meeting Minutes**

#### **a. February 2, 2023**

DWD Secretary, Amy Pechacek made a motion to approve the February 2, 2023 WAEWDC Full Council meeting minutes. Scott Loomans seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously and without correction.

V. Secretary's Updates

a. DWD – Introduction of new Legislative Liaison, Arielle Exner

Secretary Pechacek introduced the new Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Legislative Liaison, Arielle Exner to the Council. Ms. Exner shared her background with the Council members and expressed her excitement to be working with the Council.

Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary, Randy Romanski reported that the 2022-2023 Wisconsin Agriculture Youth Council members completed their term on May 11, 2023 and that the forth Wisconsin Agriculture Youth Council will begin their term in September 2023. Secretary Romanski then informed the Executive Committee members of an idea being developed at DATCP to launch a "Faces of Agriculture" initiative which would demonstrate the various backgrounds and diversity in the agricultural industry to engage others to become interested in the different opportunities available in the agricultural industry. Sally Ladsten supported the idea and noted the initiative could be connected to the Agriculture Career Pathway efforts as part of subcommittee work for goal #2. Dr. Greg Cisewski commented that it is difficult for the public to comprehend the full extent and reach of the agricultural industry and this initiative would be a great way to showcase it. The rest of the Council members showed their support for the idea and Sec. Romanski said he would follow up as the project develops.

VI. Dairy Innovation Hub – Agriculture Talent Development Pipeline Presentation

Dr. Heather White gave a presentation on the recent work and accomplishments of the UW Dairy Innovation Hub. The Dairy Innovation Hub represents a \$7.8 million per year investment by the State of Wisconsin that harnesses research and development at UW–Madison, UW–Platteville, and UW–River Falls campuses to keep Wisconsin's \$45.6 billion dairy community at the global forefront in producing nutritious dairy foods in an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable manner. Dr. White explained to Council members how this investment is used to bring a positive impact to Wisconsin dairy through building research capacity, recruiting top talent, innovative research and engaging in outreach and instruction.

VII. Easterseals – Supportive Services for Connecting Agricultural Education and Careers in Agriculture Presentation

Jeff Kratochwill provided an overview of Easterseals Wisconsin and their work with DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation through the FARM Program to provide individualized, on-farm vocational rehabilitation services. Ami Bliedernicht then shared details on Easterseals Wisconsin's mission to educate high school students with disabilities about the vast agricultural opportunities in Wisconsin as well as provide fun activities while building knowledge about the growing agricultural industry. Ms. Bliedernicht proceeded to describe the group's efforts to achieve their primary goal "to engage students to want to learn more about a position with an agricultural business through participating in a job shadow or a short-term work experience" and shared success stories of student outcomes. Chair Schoenborn asked if Easterseals Wisconsin is looking for additional companies or organizations to partner with for tours, job shadowing, etc. Ms. Bliedernicht responded that it is always challenging finding companies in all areas of the state and Easterseals is always looking for additional partners.

VIII. Committee Updates

Subcommittee on Goal #1 Co-Chair, Betsy Leonard reported that the subcommittee is focusing on the aspects of its goal related to highlighting the opportunities available in agriculture and how to introduce students to agricultural education at a younger age. Ms. Leonard noted that the subcommittee is exploring potential partnerships with the Wisconsin Farm Bureau regarding the Agriculture in the Classroom programs presented at the last Full Council meeting for ideas of how to connect students to agricultural education at a young age. Ms. Leonard added that the

subcommittee also discussed the challenge agricultural education instructors face due to all the uncompensated work they are required to do outside of school hours leading to burnout. Secretary Pechacek mentioned DWD is in conversations with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to move forward with a teacher apprenticeship model to strengthen the educator pipeline and establish a "earn to learn" pilot program in school districts.

Subcommittee on Goal #2 Chair, Sharon Wendt turned the floor over to Sally Ladsten to provide an update on the subcommittee's recent efforts. Ms. Ladsten reported that the subcommittee served a vital role in the development and publishing of a statewide agriculture pathway. Not only were members of the subcommittee asked to be part of the Statewide Agriculture Career Pathway group, but they also served as reviewers of the final draft prior to publishing.

Subcommittee on Goal #3 Chair, Paul Palmby reported that the Bylaws Subcommittee reviewed multiple versions of the draft WAEWDC Bylaws and Subcommittee members had the opportunity to submit their input and questions to DWD Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) for feedback. A final draft was circulated to the subcommittee members following the review by OLC. The subcommittee held a meeting to review the latest draft of the bylaws and voted to recommend approval of a version of the bylaws that was reviewed and voted on at the most recent WAEWDC Executive Committee.

## **IX. Old Business**

### **a. Draft WAEWDC Bylaws**

The Council reviewed the latest draft of the WAEWDC Bylaws that the WAEWDC Exec. Committee voted to recommend approval by the Full Council. Council members discussed the provisions included in the draft bylaws and raised no concerns. Larry Lee made a motion to approve the WAEWDC Bylaws as written, and Secretary Pechacek seconded the motion. There were no objections and the WAEWDC Bylaws were adopted unanimously and without correction.

### **b. Council Vacancies & Appointment Authority**

- i. University of Wisconsin System President – Wis. Stat. § 15.227(15)(a)5
- ii. School District Administrator/Superintendent – Wis. Stat. § 15.227(15)(a)27
- iii. Legislative Appointments
  1. Chair of one Assembly Standing Education Committee – Wis. Stat. § 15.227(15)(a)9.
  2. Chair of one Assembly Standing Agriculture Committee – Wis. Stat. § 15.227(15)(a)10.

Chair Schoenborn reviewed the statutorily required positions that still remain vacant on the Council and the status of filling those positions. The appointed authorities for the UW System and school district administrator positions indicated they have identified individuals to fill those vacancies and are simply waiting on confirmation of the appointment paperwork. There was no update on the progress for the pending Legislative appointments.

## **X. WAEWDC Executive Officers**

Chair Schoenborn called attention to the Executive Officer positions that are currently vacant on the Council including the Council Vice Chair and Secretary. Chair Schoenborn opened the floor to nominations for the Executive Officer positions.

Motion by Chair Schoenborn to nominate Dr. Cisewski for the position of WAEWDC Vice Chair, and Secretary Pechacek seconded the motion. Motion by Bob Hagenow to close nominations for the WAEWDC Vice Chair position. Erik Huschitt seconded the motion and nominations for the WAEWDC Vice Chair were closed. The Council voted and Dr. Greg Cisewski was unanimously approved as the WAEWDC Vice Chair.

A question was raised concerning the criteria for Executive Officers as stated in the recently adopted WAEWDC Bylaws. Election of additional Executive Officers was tabled pending legal review.

**XI. Upcoming 2023 WAEWDC Full Council Meetings**

The Council discussed the upcoming meeting dates and proposed locations for the remaining 2023 meeting schedule.

**XII. Other Business**

No other business was discussed at this time.

**XIII. Adjourn**

Motion by Secretary Pechacek, seconded by Dr. Cisewski to adjourn the meeting. There were no objections and the meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.