

**Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council
Full Council Meeting
Hybrid Meeting (Microsoft Teams Meeting)
September 22, 2025
12:00 – 5:00 p.m.**

MEETING MINUTES – APPROVED

Members Present: Sec. Randy Romanski; Sec. Amy Pechacek; Scott Loomans; Michael Orth; Betsy Leonard; Greg Cisewski; Rep. Travis Tranel; Monica Gahan; Alicia Pavelski; Jen Pino-Gallagher; Bob Hagenow; Nick Stadnyk; Andy Bensed; Shelly Mayer; Erik Huschitt; Larry Lee; Brad Brusveen; Gwen Boettcher; Jeff Wright

Others Present: Sarah Gibbs; Ashley Andre; Sally Ladsten; Pat Lonergan; Julia Halopka; Jen Cole; Emily Hein, Jeri Barak-Cunningham; Jeff Curry; Kietra Olson; Rachel Harvey

I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Shelly Mayer called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

II. Introduction and Roll Call

Roll was called, and the individuals present were recorded in the meeting minutes. Council members introduced themselves and provided a brief update on workforce development activities happening in their area.

III. Review Meeting Agenda

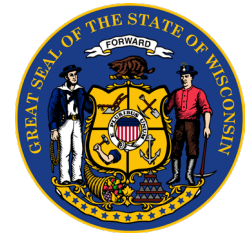
The council reviewed the agenda. Erik Huschitt requested that future meetings include a review of member term limits. It was agreed that this would be reviewed during agenda item VIII: 2026 Proposed Meeting Schedule. No more additions or changes were made. Mr. Huschitt made a motion to approve the agenda, Larry Lee seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved as amended.

IV. Approval of the June 16, 2025, Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Huschitt to approve the June 16, 2025, meeting minutes. Greg Cisewski seconded the motion, and the meeting minutes were approved unanimously and without correction.

V. WAEWDC 2025 Annual Report

The 2025 annual report was distributed electronically to all council members ahead of the full council meeting. Each council member was asked to review the report and provide input. The final draft was distributed, and members were asked to provide their approval or dissent. Scott Loomans made a motion to approve the 2025 annual report. Mr. Huschitt



seconded the motion, and the 2025 annual report was approved unanimously and without correction.

VI. Department Updates

Sec. Randy Romanski provided updates from the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The Youth Council, made up of high school seniors, recently held their first session discussing agriculture topics and career pathways. This is the 6th year of the council and interest continues to grow in the number of people applying. The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) had their annual meeting for all states. Sec. Romanski was named president, giving the Midwest and Wisconsin a strong voice. Next June, the meeting will be hosted in Wisconsin. The association, specifically the Animal Committee, is doing a lot to help promote careers in Veterinary medicine which we need. Wisconsin has historically been a leader in animal health and DATCP will be hiring three new animal health inspectors.

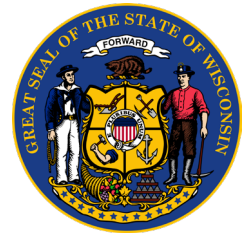
Wisconsin ranks 12th in the nation by exporting \$2.3 billion of food products to 138 countries. Wisconsin is unique in the diversity of products the state offers. The Evers Administration, with support from the Legislature, agree that promoting international exports is a positive and continue to include funding in the state budget. We have reached unaffected status from the USDA regarding Avian influenza. We will continue to test but we move to a lower level of monitoring. UW – River Falls has received national recognition for the Meat Talent Development Program. Curriculum and equipment has been delivered to 100 high schools across WI. Funding for the program ends mid-2026.

Sally Ladsten provided updates from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The department is monitoring changes at the federal level. The Personnel Development grant, which was used to help schools find Special Education teachers has been cut. US DOE and DOL are entering into a partnership and DOL will have a greater role in adult education and Perkins funding. There are only two open Agriculture Educator positions in the state, which is positive. The state also saw fewer teacher changes meaning we are retaining teachers at a stronger rate. Wisconsin reached record membership in FFA and the national organization has recognized Sec. Romanski for his support of FFA across the state and nationally.

Sec. Amy Pechacek provided updates for the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). September is national workforce development month and Wisconsin continues to be a leader in labor development. We are seeing a softening of economy. Unemployment rates held steady and we remain below the national rate. Long term unemployment, individuals unemployed for 27 weeks or more, is the highest it has been since the pandemic. There is still uncertainty around federal funding and a government shut down is looming. Fast Forward training grants are accepting applications. These are employer led training grants, employers can use to upskill current workers or hire new workers.

VII. Draft Strategic Plan

Bob Hagenow provided an overview of the work Subcommittee 3 has done for the Council's Strategic Plan. Members were asked to review the three strategic initiatives and the deliverables and provide comment and feedback. Minor changes were made to the document to reduce duplication, correct language and provide clarification.



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Gwen Boettcher made a motion to approve the strategic plan as amended. Greg Cisewski seconded the motion, and the strategic plan was approved as amended.

VIII. Proposed 2026 Meeting Schedule

Staff reviewed the upcoming term limits for members. Some significant members are terming out and the council will need to consider these changes. Staff reviewed the statutes regarding term limits and ex-officio membership. The council then reviewed the proposed 2026 meeting schedule and changes were made to the June and September meetings.

IX. Other Business

a. Public Comment

No public comments were offered.

X. Closing Remarks & Adjournment

Bob Hagenow made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Greg Cisewski seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 4:22.