

NERA Virtual Summer Business Meeting Minutes

June 23, 2021, 1:30 PM ET

In attendance: Matt Wilson (Chair-West Virginia), Jody Jellison (Past Chair-Massachusetts), Eric Wommack (Vice Chair-Delaware), Mark Hutton (Officer-at-large, Maine), Jan Nyrop (New York/Cornell AgriTech), Kumar Venkitanarayanan (Connecticut-Storrs), Anton Bekkerman (New Hampshire), Calvin Keeler (Delaware), Margaret Smith (New York/Cornell AES), Leslie Parise (Vermont), Puneet Srivastava (Maryland), Jason White (Connecticut-New Haven), Wendie Cohick (New Jersey), Blair Siegfried (Pennsylvania), Rick Rhodes (NERA), David Leibovitz (NERA)

1. Approval of agenda
 - **The agenda was approved by unanimous acclamation.**
2. Approval of [March 9, 2021 minutes](#)
 - **The minutes of the March 9, 2021 NERA meeting were approved by unanimous acclamation.**
3. NERA Chair comments (Matt Wilson)
 - On Monday 6/21, NERA held an inaugural meeting with northeastern communicators in attendance
 - **A NERA Communications subcommittee was formed including communicators (Lori Gula-NH, Lindsey Willey-WV, Erin Miller-ME) a NERA Director (Matt Wilson-WV), and the NERA Office of the Executive Director (Rick Rhodes and David Leibovitz)**
 - Moving forward, this communications subcommittee could take the form of a Northeast Multistate Coordinating Committee.
 - **ESS Meeting in Olympic Valley, CA will be held September 27-30, 2021 (<http://escop.info/ess-2021/>). NERA's fall meeting will be held in conjunction with the ESS meeting.**
 - **NERA Directors strongly suggested that ESS meeting organizers provide a virtual attendance option to complement in-person attendance.**
 - **NERA will review changes to its rules of operation and evaluate the OED at the Fall 2021 business meeting.**
4. Approval of NERA budget FY'22
 - In FY22, NERA proposes a level salary and fringe budget, and an increased operating budget reflecting pre-pandemic levels of expenses.
 - Travel budgets (for annual schedule of meetings) and meeting expense budgets (supporting NEED-NERA Ecosystem Services Symposium fellows) are restored.
 - Funding has been identified to support the to-be-named northeast communications effort.

- The NERA Planning Grants line item is retained at its full amount of \$31k. Planning grant applications were down in FY21
 - **A motion to approve the FY22 NERA budget as proposed was introduced by Mark Hutton, seconded by Jan Nyrop, and approved unanimously.**
5. [MAC Report and Recommendations of June 11, 2021](#). Updates and MAC recommendations approval (several peer-reviewed multistate projects and AA) (Jan Nyrop, Chair)
- The MAC approved one request to write: *NE_TEMP2220 Multi-state Coordinated Evaluation of Grape Cultivars and Clones, AA Brad Hillman*
 - Recommendations from the MAC for approval by NERA:
 - *NE_TEMP2140 Sustainable Management of Nematodes in Horticultural and Field Crop Plant Health Systems, AA Anton Bekkerman (10/1/2021 – 9/30/2026)*
 - This project was reviewed by six peer experts, reviews were largely “excellent” and the MAC had no further recommendations for the technical team.
 - *NECC_TEMP2103 High Tunnel Specialty Crop Production, AA Anton Bekkerman (10/1/2021-9/30/2026)*
 - The MAC recommends that the NECC_TEMP2103 team consider transition to a multistate research project during its 5-year cycle. As a multistate project, NE Experiment Stations will be able to commit funds to FTEs and operating expenses in this area.
 - NERA input (Mark Hutton): the Northeast is decades ahead of other regions in high tunnel production, and we need to continue our leadership in this area. The challenge is that high tunnels behave differently and are used for different purposes around the USA.
 - Becky Sideman (UNH) is the driver of this project and wants to use the Coordinating Committee model to develop a strong plan, get participants on board, and develop corresponding grant proposals to support the effort.
 - *NE_TEMP2101 Eastern White Pine Health and Responses to Environmental Changes, AA Mark Hutton (10/1/2021 – 9/30/2026)*
 - The MAC recommends that the NE_TEMP2101 team improve its outreach plan as submitted in the proposal. NEED members on the MAC provided suggested language to assist with this revision.
 - **A motion to approve the recommendations from the MAC for NERA’s approval was introduced by Mark Hutton, seconded by Jody Jellison, and approved unanimously.**
 - Administrative Adviser Assignments
 - *Reminder to NERA Directors:* Administrative Advisers do not need to be subject area experts, and do not need to be AES Directors. AES Directors may approve of designees at their stations to serve as Administrative Advisers.

- Matt Wilson (West Virginia) volunteered to serve as the ESCOP Incoming Chair in 2021-22.
 - **A motion to approve Matt Wilson as the next ESCOP Incoming Chair was introduced by Puneet Srivastava, seconded by Jody Jellison, and approved unanimously.**
9. Fill miscellaneous committee slots (MAC members, 1 NERA, 1 NEED; APS liaison.)
- **The open committee slots listed above will be filled electronically as a follow-up action to the NERA business meeting.**

The meeting adjourned at 2:33 pm ET.