

Golden Sands Resource, Conservation & Development Council, Inc.
Regular Business/Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2017
Golden Sands RC & D Office, Stevens Point, WI

Attendees: Al Barden (Member-at-Large); Gary Beastro (Marathon); Merlin Becker (Member-at-Large); Steve Bradley (Portage); Bill Clendenning (Wood); Karyn Eckert (Taylor); Bob Ellis (Waupaca); Everett Eckstein (Waushara); Reesa Evans (Member-at-Large); Brian Haase (Waupaca); Ed Hernandez (Waushara); Deb Jakubek (Farmer's Union); Joel Kuehnhold (Golden Sands); Bill Leichtnam (Wood); Ed Miller (Outagamie); Hugh O'Donnell (member-at-large); Paul Pisellini (Adams); Wally Sedlar (Adams); Amy Thorstenson (Golden Sands); Joe Tomandl (Taylor).

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by President O'Donnell at 11:15 a.m.

INTRODUCTIONS: At the request of O'Donnell, everyone attending verbally identified himself or herself and named the organization and/or county being represented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion made by Barden, seconded by Becker, to accept the minutes of the March 2017 meeting as written. Motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The treasurer's report for March and April 2017 was passed around. Thorstenson indicated there had been no unusual events; every dispersal and receipt was fairly standard. Some reimbursements are still to be submitted. No use of the contingency fund. Motion made by Clendenning, seconded by Evans, to accept and file the treasurer's reports. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

Wisconsin RC & D Update: Barden reported on the 4/28/17 state meeting that was attended by four state councils. A resolution on groundwater protection was discussed and drafted and sent out to other interested parties. Bob Walker presented information on the state association communication plan; the councils decided to coordinate on using similar color schemes, fonts and message, including trademarking the phrase "Conservation That Works". The MOA with the NRCS was signed on behalf of the state and is expected to be signed by the new NRCS State Conservationist.

3-Year Plan Steering Committee: Kuehnhold noted that the small business class ended and the course fee has been waived. He now has 90 days to complete a business plan; if it is acceptable, there will be free website assistance available.

Joe P Memorial: Further planting has occurred in the green space. Installation of the interpretative sign is still pending, but should happen by the July 2017 meeting. We may treat the July 2017 GS meeting as an open house for the space.

MOA with NRCS: Miller announced that the new NRCS State Conservationist, Angela Biggs, has signed.

Update on Groundwater Legislation: Leichtnam reported that a large liquid manure leak of several months in the LaCrosse area was discovered in March 2017. The county health department there notified up to 2000 people of possible contamination of their wells from this leak. Waushara County passed a resolution in March 2017 encouraging state legislators to support legislation for sound groundwater management for both quantity and quality. Wood County passed a similar resolution this week. Leichtnam suggests that counties in the Golden Sands area and Golden Sands itself consider passing similar resolutions, then sending them on to state legislators, as did Waushara County. Motion made by Leichtnam, seconded by Clendenning, to send a copy of the Waushara County resolution to Central Sands counties and recommend that they consider a similar resolution, sending it to state legislators when signed. Motion carried unanimously. Motion made by Leichtnam, seconded by Clendenning, to have Golden Sands send a similar letter to the majority and minority chairs of the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate. Motion carried unanimously. Motion made by Leichtnam, seconded by Clendenning, that groundwater be an ongoing part of the GS agenda. Motion carried unanimously. Clendenning issued a thank-you to Waushara County for taking action on this issue.

Leichtnam said he had discussed the Miller-Mason water bill with someone from the Wisconsin County Association. That person indicated he did not think the bill would pass, since it was not backed by any Republican leaders.

2017 dues: Thorstensen passed out dues statements to the counties that were present. She will be sending a list of projects to each county by email to make clear the services being provided for the dues.

NEW BUSINESS

Fiduciary Duty: Nathan Sandwick of UW-Extension Community Development gave a short presentation on the fiduciary duties for GS members and passed out some guidance material for members to use. Some of this is required by the IRS; other is recommended sound business practices. He discussed balancing the duty when one is representing a county and GS. Specific explanation was given about abstention if there is a conflict of interest: most people understand that this means a member refrains from voting on the related issue, but Sandwick explained that it also means that person should not participate in any way around the issue. Instead, the abstention should be announced, along with the reasons for the abstention, and that would end any involvement until after a vote was taken. It was also indicated that even if the member didn't benefit financially directly, taking action that would negatively affect Golden Sands would also be a violation of the fiduciary duty. Sandwick noted that many parts of the Wisconsin laws on conflict of interest emphasize that even the appearance of a possible conflict is a problem, i.e., there need not be an actual conflict. Thorstensen passed out copies of the GS Conflict of Interest Policy and asked members to sign the form and return to her soon.

Treasurer Appointment: After the resignation of Cathy Guth as treasurer, Gary Beaström of

Marathon County was appointed by the Executive Committee to be the new treasurer.

2017 Budget: Thorstenson passed out the 2017 budget for member information. Items in green are non-restricted funds; items in red are those not allowable under grants. Items in yellow may not have sufficient funding. Money from direct services would be green.

State Branding Initiative: the state RC & D association is developing a branding initiative to be followed by all the state RC & D groups. A draft may be available for the July 2017 meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel/Finance Committee Report: Evans reported on the meeting this morning. Thorstenson passed out the treasurer's report and explained several entries. The committee voted to pass it on to full council. The 2016 Actuals were made available so they could be compared to the 2017 budget. The 2017 budget was accepted by the committee. Spring planting in the green space was done, but the sign is still pending. Ways to publicize the 45 year anniversary are being considered. This could include branded t-shirts for the staff to wear and updating the promotional video done for the 40th anniversary. Kuehnhold is still working on fundraising and direct marketing issues, including grazing. He has been to all the county LCC meetings except Adams, Wood & Marathon. Marathon has been handled by phone at their request. Adams & Wood will be scheduled soon. Feedback has been generally positive. The business plan class has been completed and the fee waived. He now has to complete a business plan within 90 days for GS to get free website assistance. An appeal for donations will go out soon. Information emphasizing the 45th anniversary of GS is being added to posters, the facebook, and other spots. The Executive Committee appointed Gary Beaström of Marathon County to take the place of Treasurer that was left open by the resignation of Cathy Guth. Thorstenson will be handing out 2017 dues statements today. Statements of specific services will be sent out later. Mike Beacom is working on donor software that would work for GS, such as Mailchimp. After discussion, the committee voted to drop the business auto plan GS has been carrying and go with the state's overall plan. The donation appeal will take the place of the spring quarterly newsletter, but quarterly newsletters will resume after that. Kuehnhold is working on updating and augmenting the website.

Forestry/Agriculture/Wildlife Committee Report: Kuehnhold outlined today's meeting. Ways to publicize the upcoming 6/3/17 Emerald Ash Borer workshop to gain more participation were discussed. There are two tracks: one for woodland owners; one for individual owners. Amherst schools will be asked if they are interested in taking on making bluebird and bat houses. There is a new Eagle Scout contact. Ways to increase sales of these items are also being looked for. More outreach needs to be done for the demo forests and the Woods & Wildlife projects. Tree shelter sales were up this year. More community gardeners signed up; grants are being sought to help cover the cost of repairs of some beds. There was a change in the leading gardener. Joel has completed his TSP certification for grazing. Currently, the NRCS in Wood & Portage counties is sending all requests for grazing plans to him. Although most of the planning in the green space has been completed, the smoke tree requested by Ruth Moody for Joe Piechowski has not been planted. More money from Grassworks grazing has been found, so

some further pasture walks will be planned. There is money for the Farm to Home project, but plans aren't complete as yet. He is exploring a project connected to farmer mental health, but isn't yet sure it fits with GS missions.

Water Committee Report: Evans reported on today's water meeting. Five gold sheets were approved to send on to the full council. Hamerla discussed the recent use of a mass rearing cage for raising purple loosestrife beetles. Some are available for loan from the WDNR. The Main Street Parks project was closed out, as it is being taken over by Create Portage County for continuation. Leichtnam reported on a large liquid manure leak of several months in the LaCrosse area was discovered in March 2017. The county health department there notified up to 2000 people of possible contamination of their wells from this leak. Waushara County passed a resolution in March 2017 encouraging state legislators to support legislation for groundwater. Considerable discussion was had in the meeting about sending this resolution to other counties and from GS. Pisellini announced a cooperation between the Tri-Lakes Management District and the Town of Rome to improve water quality and quantity. They are offering free well testing of up to 120 wells. Hamerla participated in the Buckthorn Bash in Taylor County and is working on some flowering rush control in 2 of the GS counties. The Trappers Convention in Marshfield has asked for an AIS presentation at its annual meeting. Invasive *Phragmites* have been found at Sentry Insurance. Anna Cisar, the new AIS Coordinator for Green Lake, Marquette, Waupaca and Waushara County introduced herself and discussed some of her activities, including an estuary restoration in Green Lake that involved planting about 27,000 native plants. Thorstenson has been involved in setting up the projects outlined in the gold sheets and the necessary hiring connected to them. The Invaders of the Water lesson plans packet is in final editing. Hernandez suggested that GS work with some of the lakes in Waushara County that failed to get funding for their DASH projects. There were 2 Healthy Lakes grants received. Work on the Lake Winnebago management plan continues. A CAFO spill of over 100,000 gallons that flowed into a neighbor's property and some wetlands was the 2nd spill from the same farm. Sedlar added further information about the watershed groups in the Town of Rome and the Tri-Lakes Management District. Soil sampling is still ongoing. Nitrogen will be studied as a contributor to algae blooms (in addition to phosphorus). There will be a complete overhaul of the Fawn Lake dam, owned by Adams County. The Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation conference, to be held 10/16-17/2017 will be held in Elkhart Lake and will have sessions on groundwater quality and quantity. Thorstenson announced she plans to resubmit a multi-county request on dealing with wild parsnip that will include mapping and management, so counties should contact her if they want to participate. Wuchterpfennig's office has been moved to a new building. His office is still working on wild parsnip as a noxious weed and has started entering location information into a national database. They are interested in getting other counties on board (Portage is already participating). There are purple loosestrife projects on several sites, as well as a Rusty Wrangler project in the high school. There have been ongoing manure complaints. One CAFO was recently fined \$1000 by the county. More fines from the state may occur. Eckstein attended a meeting of the Winnebago watershed group where there were useful WDNR presentations. Tomandl reported that the county tree sale is done. Most of the work connected with the Buckthorn Bash occurred along the River Walk in Medford. A local youth group is raising Purple Loosestrife beetles. Goats will be returning to attack new buckthorn shoots. Stream monitoring has resumed. A school group recently did a biotic index on streams in the school

forest, using insects. Bob Ellis and his group have been working with Onterra about some whole lake treatments. There appears to be a lot of garlic mustard. There are also Purple Loosestrife projects ongoing. Evans announced she held a biannual refresher for monitors recently. She has been preparing parcel maps to be used for habitat assessment this summer. Zebra mussels were confirmed in Arkdale Lake. A rain garden will be going in at the Town of Rome Library, which recently doubled its size. Haase's office is involved in a county-wide well testing project, with the goal of testing at least one well per section (at county expense). A long-pending deliberate manure leachate dump into public waters ended in a \$100,000 fine for the CAFO involved. It was discovered that a local septic hauler that had lost his hauling license had continued to haul and dump the pumping results in his backyard. Free well-testing of his neighbors' wells is ongoing.

Motion made by Miller, seconded by Clendenning, to approve reports. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW PROJECTS: The Waters Committee had 5 new projects.

- (1) Purple Loosestrife Control at Mead Wildlife Center: in cooperation with Wisconsin Public Service Commission, GS will provide PL plants & pots and necessary information and a mass rearing cage for Mead Wildlife. WPS will provide \$632.69 in 2017 for startup. If the program is successful, it will commit to giving \$500 per year for continuation.
- (2) Lake Wausau APM update: GS will work with the Lake Wausau Association to do a PI survey and recommend updates in its aquatic plant management plan. Estimated cost is \$26,886.
- (3) 2017 CBCW Silver Lake: this continues an already established CBCW program at Silver Lake in Waushara County. Estimated total cost is \$5346.
- (4) 2017 Pearl Lake CBCW: this continues an already established CBCW program at Pearl Lake in Waushara County. Estimated total cost is \$5346.
- (5) Co-employment of Watershed Planner in Waupaca County: assist in writing a watershed management plan in Waupaca County. Total estimated cost: \$24,542

Motion made by Clendenning, seconded by Evans, to approve outlined new projects. Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF/PROJECT UPDATES: Written staff reports were sent out to council members receiving paper copies of materials, but were inadvertently left out of those getting information by email. Thorstenson will forward those reports to those who missed them.

AGENCY/PARTNER REPORTS: Jakubek passed around copies of the latest Wisconsin Farmers Union newspaper for people to take. There are a number of pasture walks set up across the state. There will also be two Women Caring for the Land presentations in Wood and Waupaca Counties.

OTHER REPORTS: None.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be July 20, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 12:42 p.m. on motion by Clendenning, seconded by Becker.

Respectfully submitted,

Reesa Evans
Secretary, Golden Sands RC & D