

MINUTES  
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2020  
WOOD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ROOM #114, WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI

Members Present: Ken Curry, Robert Ashbeck, Jake Hahn, Dave LaFontaine, Bill Leichtnam

Members Excused: Carmen Good

Staff Present:

Land & Water Conservation Staff: Shane Wucherpfennig, Lori Ruess

Planning & Zoning Staff: Adam DeKleyn

Extension Staff: Jason Hausler (via WebEx), Nancy Turyk (via WebEx), Allison Jonjak (via WebEx)

Others Present: Dist. #14 Supervisor Dennis Polach, Dist. #15 Supervisor Bill Clendenning, Dist. #16 Supervisor Lance Pliml (via WebEx) Angel Whitehead, Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce (via WebEx)

**1. Call meeting to order.** Chairperson Curry called the CEED meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2. Declaration of Quorum.** Chairperson Curry declared a quorum.

**3. Public Comments (brief comments/statement regarding committee business)**

Supervisor Ashbeck stated there is an infestation of Canada thistle (noxious weed) on Highway 10. He has contacted the Wood County Highway Department to notify them of this infestation and suggested that John Eron, Weed Commissioner be contacted too.

Shane Wucherpfennig stated he would like to give a presentation on the progress of Wild Parsnip control in Wood County at a future CEED or County Board meeting. Chair Curry shared News 9 – WAOW had coverage on Portage County’s efforts to control Wild Parsnip.

Chair Curry mentioned he received notification from Jason Grueneberg that his father passed-away and he will be out of the office this week. Adam DeKleyn will cover the Planning section of the agenda. A special CEED meeting will be held following the August County Board meeting for Economic Development agenda items 12b – 12e.

**4. Review Correspondence.** No Correspondence to review.

**5. Consent Agenda.** The Consent Agenda included the following items: 1) minutes of the July 1, 2020 CEED meeting, 2) bills from Land & Water Conservation, Planning & Zoning and Extension and 3) staff activity reports from Laura Huber, Matt Lippert, Nancy Turyk, Allison Jonjak, Jackie Carattini, Hannah Wendels, Kelly Hammond, Rachael Whitehair, Shane Wucherpfennig, Caleb Armstrong, Davis Christensen, Adam Groshek, Rod Mayer, Lori Ruess, Emily Salvinski, Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn, Paul Bernard, Jeff Brewbaker, Kim Keech and Victoria Wilson.

a. **Approve minutes of previous meeting.** No additions or corrections needed.

b. **Approve bills.** No additions or corrections needed.

c. **Receive staff activity reports.** No additions or corrections needed.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve and accept the July 1, 2020 CEED minutes, bills from Planning & Zoning, Land & Water Conservation and Extension, and staff activity reports as presented. Second by Bill Leichtnam.  
Motion carried unanimously.*

**6. Risk and Injury Report. None.**

**7. Land & Water Conservation Department**

a. Update on Jeremy Kring's CREP grazing plan

Shane Wucherpennig shared an update on the progress of Jeremy Kring's CREP grazing plan. The plan was brought to the committee for review at the May 6<sup>th</sup> CEED meeting. Since the plan was presented in May, a few modifications to the boundary of the plan have been made. The purpose of writing a grazing plan is to ensure that a parcel is grazed safely and environmentally without creating a resource concern. The Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department works directly with DATCP and the landowner on plan completion.

b. Notice of Town of Hiles road (known as River Road) closure.

Shane Wucherpennig shared a public hearing notice from Trent Miner, Town of Hiles Chair, on the proposed closure of River Road in Hiles Township. Pursuant to State Statutes, townships are required to notify the CEED of a public hearing for road closures; no action is required by the CEED.

Trent Miner explained the road is being discontinued because it is not a priority road; it is surrounded by county forest and currently not maintained. Signage will be removed and it will be up to the HIRC Committee on future use of the road as land reverts to adjoining landowners.

c. Discuss Livestock Facility Siting.

Shane Wucherpennig explained this item was put on the agenda as a follow-up to last month's CEED meeting and direction from the committee to put this on a future agenda. He added that following discussion last month, he was hearing it is not so much a livestock siting issue or concern but more of an issue with high nitrates in water. WI DNR along with DATCP are about 8 months into a 30-month process of proposed rule changes to NR151. A nitrate task force, which includes some County Conservationists from around the State, has been formed. Wucherpennig expressed interest on serving on the task force, but was not selected. He reviewed the key items the task force will focus on for changing the NR151 standards. Current NR151 does not address nitrate in susceptible soils in parts of the State. Lengthy discussion followed.

Supervisor Leichtnam mentioned he would like to see this item on the agenda for an update from the County Conservationist every three months so Wood County could make a proposal if necessary. Chair Curry commented the County Conservationist will continue to update the Committee as necessary.

Supervisor LaFontaine asked about the use of the no-till drill and if there is any data on the impact of nitrate reduction with no-till. Wucherpennig shared that the LWCD maps every acre of no-till that is cost-shared, however there are farmers that no-till and do not receive cost-share. He added that the LWCD tracks phosphorus reduction on surface water and can determine nitrogen reduction, but tracking nitrogen in groundwater takes a lot of modeling. This could change with the revision to NR151.

In January, John Exo accepted the Water Quality Program Coordinator position created by the Division of Extension and CALS. He took a two-year leave of absence from his duties as a Natural Resource Educator to fill this role. He will give a presentation at the August 18<sup>th</sup> County Board meeting.

d. Update on virtual County Conservationist meeting.

The WI Land + Water hosts two meetings each year for the state's County Conservationists to discuss statewide issues on land and water conservation implementation. Due to COVID-19, the summer (July 9 – 10) County Conservationist meeting was virtual. Breakout sessions covered topics of climate change, update on DNR's targeted performance standard, Financial Implications of COVID-19 on Counties and

Accessing Well Water Data. Wucherpennig mentioned attendance was very good and there were no glitches. The Winter County Conservationist meeting will most likely be virtual.

e. Committee Reports

i. **Citizen's Groundwater Committee meeting.**

Supervisor Leichtnam shared they are going to try a virtual meeting on Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. Due to COVID-19, they have not met for five months.

ii. **Health Committee report.**

No report.

iii. **Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGWCC) committee report.**

A Central Sands Groundwater meeting will take place sometime in late August. Waiting on best dates from the doodle poll.

Supervisor Leichtnam gave a brief report on the Golden Sands RC&D meeting he attended. At that meeting, RC&D stated they have staff and time to work on projects. The LWCD should contact them if they have a project for them to work on.

Supervisor Leichtnam and Supervisor Clendenning attended the Portage County Land & Water Committee meeting on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Supervisor Leichtnam gave a brief update on the steps Portage County is taking for nitrate reduction as the Village of Nelsonville has a high percentage of private wells with high nitrates.

**8. Private Sewage.** Nothing to report.

**9. Land Records.** Nothing to report.

**10. County Surveyor.** Nothing to report.

**11. Planning**

a. Update on cancellation of fall CEED Tour.

Adam DeKelyn asked if there was any discussion on the fall CEED Tour as due to COVID-19 it might be difficult to hold an actual tour. He recommended tabling until the September CEED meeting.

**12. Economic Development**

a. Update from the Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce and consider release of 2020 economic development grant funds.

Angel Whitehead shared the key updates from the Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce and reviewed 2020 goals and metrics.

- Increase visits to the regional website by 10% resulting in the attraction of 50 qualified workers to Wood County employers.
  - Developed Community Guide and area maps for promoting local businesses and communities. ATV/UTV trails are included on the maps.
  - Promotion and execution of the Revolving Loan Program. You do not have to be a Chamber member to utilize the loans. Interest rates are on an individual basis, based on collateral and ability to pay.
  - Distributed 50+ relocation packets.
- Bring awareness to 600 students of careers available in region and community.
  - Due to COVID-19 Student Bus Tours were canceled for the beginning of the year. Looking at doing a virtual tour for the Fall Semester.

- Increase Inspire enrollment from businesses by 10%
    - The Inspire Program is on hold until further guidance from Centergy.
  - Other Workforce Items
    - Employment and Resource Fair will be held at East Junior High on September 2, 2020. Masks and hand sanitizer will be provided.
    - How to Video Mini-Series – video to prep for job fair on finding jobs, resume writing, interviewing and more.
  - Assist 40 entrepreneurs resulting in new business start-ups.
    - Currently communicated with 12 different new entrepreneurs and had contact with 37 different people on questions for growing businesses.
  - Provide 40 quality networking events and programs with over 1000 Wood county residents in attendance. Events for the promotion include:
    - Annual meeting, Mardi Gras Business Expo, Coffee with the Chamber, Business After Hours, Lunch by the River and Leads Group.
  - Provide four training events resulting in 100 Wood County residents reporting increased knowledge on training topics.
    - Hosted two training sessions with the Small Business Development Center. There are two other session scheduled for fall and winter.
  - Have 80 residents, businesses, and municipal representatives from Wood County take part in Central Wisconsin Days and Legislative breakfast that discuss pro-Wood County issues.
- Angel briefly covered COVID-19 initiative and small business grants.

Jake Hahn commended the Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce and MACCI on a phenomenal job especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to release \$19,500 of grant funds to the Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce from the 2020 Economic Development budget. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.*

A special CEED meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 (immediately following County Board – approximately 11:00 a.m.) for agenda items 12b – 12e.

### **13. Extension**

#### **a. General Office Update**

Jason Hausler provided the following updates:

- He has spoken with Shane Wucherpennig and Jason Grueneberg about the fall CEED Tour and more than likely it will be canceled.
- Mid-September one of the Administrative Assistants will be on leave; looking at staffing plans for when that person is on leave.
- Nancy Turyk and Jackie Carattini are serving on the Community Impact sub team in response to Verso closing. Nancy gave a brief update on the task force meeting. A three part Zoom & Lunch will be held from 11 a.m. – Noon on:
  - Wednesday, August 12 – Retool your Marketing Strategy
  - Wednesday, August 19 – Complete a Cash Flow Analysis
  - Wednesday, August 26 – It's Okay to Pivot and Diversity

Lance Pliml thanked Nancy for everything she does everywhere. He also thanked Bill Leichtnam for attending the Portage County Land & Water Conservation meeting on August 4.

b. County Board Presentation

- Jason Hausler will be presenting the 2019 Annual Report to County Board on August 18<sup>th</sup>.
- John Exo, Water Quality Program Coordinator will also give a presentation to County Board on August 18<sup>th</sup>. The Committee requested John bring an outline of his presentation to hand out to county board members.

c. DOA Agreement update

Jason Hausler explained the DOA agreement is a documentation that supports him, as a state employee, approving county employee time cards, overseeing county budgets, signing county vouchers etc. Jason added the DOA does not give him authority outside of other county department heads, but gives him as a state employee the authority to manage county dollars. The DOA will continue and there is no expiration date unless the CEED wants to change or update. Brief discussion followed.

d. Horticulture Position Update

Jason Hausler shared Wood County Extension office currently has a vacant (1/2 time) Horticulture Assistant position. The hiring freeze has been softly lifted and he is proposing a split county, shared position with Marathon County Horticulture Educator. The Horticulture Educator would be a 20 - 30 percent Wood County employee and a 70 - 80 percent Marathon County employee. This does not need to be a long-term commitment and can be reviewed after one year. Money exists in the 2020 budget for this proposal. Discussion followed.

*Motion by Bill Leichtnam to support the shared county Horticulture Educator position (Wood 20 – 30% Marathon 70 – 80%) instead of a part-time Wood County Horticulture Assistant position. Second by Dave LaFontaine. Motion carried unanimously.*

e. Fair Donation Discussion

Jason Hausler shared that for years the Junior Fair donation (currently \$32,000) has “passed through” the Extension budget. This is county levied money with no oversight from Extension on how these dollars are used. Money was appropriated to the Junior Fair in January and due to COVID-19, the fair has been canceled. Lance Pliml, County Board Chair, shared history as to why this is in the Extension budget. Supervisor Ashbeck commented that the fair struggles year after year and needs this donation. This money is used for Judges, ribbons, etc. Dale Christianson, Executive Director, provides an annual report to the CEED before funds are released. Supervisor LaFontaine suggested a Junior Fair line item be set up in the Economic Development budget. Supervisor Hahn liked Supervisor LaFontaine’s idea of rolling this into Economic Development. Following discussion, Chair Curry stated he will talk to Jason Grueneberg about including this on the August 18<sup>th</sup> CEED - Economic Development agenda.

f. Educational Presentation – Allison Jonjak

Allison Jonjak gave a brief PowerPoint presentation on the Cranberry Outreach Program. She highlighted what she has been working on since April.

- Grower Outreach
- Cranberry Crop Management Journal – electronic copies are on Extension webpage
- Monthly brown bags with specialists
- A couple of marsh visits
- Grower Education
  - Working with DATCP & NRCS for nutrient management plans.
  - Pesticide Applicator training
  - Cranberry school – to be held in the winter months
- Strengthening Partnership

- Working with Cranberry Growers Association, Ocean Spray, DATCP, NRCS and other agencies.
- Plan of Work Development
  - Focus on issues that affects all growers
  - Virtual learning/training

Dave LaFontaine thanked Allison for the great presentation and thanked Jason Hausler for a great hire.

**14. Schedule next regular committee meeting.**

The next regular CEED meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 9:00 a.m., at the Wood County Courthouse in Conference Room #114.

**15. Agenda items for next meeting**

*Agenda items are due by August 26<sup>th</sup>.*

**16. Schedule any additional meetings if necessary.**

CEED – Economic Development - Tuesday, August 18, 2020 immediately following County Board (approximately 11:00 a.m.) at the Wood County Courthouse in Conference Room #114.

**17. Adjourn.** Chair Curry declared the meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

Minutes by Lori Ruess – Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department