

Golden Sands Resource, Conservation & Development Council, Inc.
Regular Business/Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2019
Golden Sands RC&D Office, Stevens Points, WI

Attendees: Al Barden (Member-at-Large); Rachel Bouressa (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Gary Beastro (Marathon); Merlin Becker (Member-at-Large); Joshua Benes (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Bob Ellis (Waupaca); Reesa Evans (Member-at-Large); Ed Hernandez (Waushara); Denise Hilgart (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Mike Kapp (Waupaca); Bill Leichtnam (Wood); Hugh O'Donnell (Member-at-Large); Paul Pisellini (Adams); Al Rosenthal (Marquette); Emily Salvinski (Wood); Amy Thorstenson (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Brent Tessmer (Taylor); Joe Tomandl (Taylor); Bob Walker (Member-at-Large); Shane Wucherpennig (Wood).

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by President O'Donnell at 11:10 a.m.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: One correction was made orally to the July 2019 minutes changing "President" to the term "Vice President" for the presiding officer at that meeting. Motion made by Barden, seconded by Walker, to accept the minutes of the July 2019 meeting as written. Motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The treasurer's report for July and August 2019, was passed around. Hilgart indicated that dispersals and receipts were fairly routine for the working season. No use of the contingency fund. Motion made by Becker, seconded by Wucherpennig, to accept and file the treasurer's report.

OLD BUSINESS:

Wisconsin RC&D Update: Barden reported that the last Wisconsin State Association of RC&Ds Meeting was held on January 24, 2019. The four active Wisconsin RC&D councils have some kind of connection with Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) work. There was discussion about the need to redefine the requirements for acceptable "forester" to make forest grants easier. Review of grazing and forest inventory requirements were also recommended. The new Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) was also discussed. The next meeting is November 1, 2019.

Groundwater Legislation: Leichtnam has been part of a move to combine several counties together to work on groundwater issues. Of the seven counties originally part of this group, six of the county boards have passed resolutions urging the state to work on groundwater issues together. This will increase the likelihood of getting grants and other funds for such work. A letter from each county to the legislature and other counties is also part of this coalition to urge actions and funds about preserving and caring for groundwater. Speaker Vos' task force has concluded all of its scheduled meetings, but there is talk that there may be an invitation-only meeting to gather information from scientific experts. So far, the task force has not issued any recommendations. There are about ten groundwater-related bills pending, but no action will occur on them before January 2020, at the earliest.

NEW BUSINESS

County Forest Grant Program: Burnett has been the main proponent for revising the state definition of ‘qualified forester’ (discussed by the state RC&Ds) and for requiring a four-year degree in forestry. It is urging other counties to join in this request. Benes passed around a copy of the information from Burnett County.

Council Flow Chart: Benes passed around a copy of the new organization flow chart. One side of the sheet had the new flow chart and the old flow chart was shown on the other side. The new chart will explain more clearly the oversight at each level. For example, the new chart shows the combined Forestry/Agriculture/Wildlife Committee. Motion made by Barden, seconded by Beaström, to approve the new flow chart as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel/Finance Committee Report: Evans reported on the meeting this morning. Reimbursements from the NRCS have started coming in. Expenses have been standard for the working season. The treasurer’s report was voted to be sent to the full council. Reports on the endowment fund are only issued quarterly, so there is no new report at this time. Six of the twelve counties have paid the full voluntary dues for this year; another three have increased the amount they are paying. Discussion about the need for some kind of family leave policy was had. The new CISMA employee, Asa Plonsky, started work in July. A recent discovery was that there was nearly \$7000 from prior rainwater barrels. \$1000 was transferred to the community garden fund. The P&F committee voted to add the remaining \$5976.70 to the Small Project Implementation Fund (SPIF). Benes is working on getting another CISMA started to cover some of the Fox Valley area. A professor at UW-Oshkosh is interested in being part of the effort. A grant has been applied for, but the results are not yet known. Should the grant not come through, the P&F Committee agreed by consensus to use some of the special projects fund to help this CISMA get started. There is a new flow chart for the operation of the office as well that will be distributed to the current employees and will become part of the new employee packet. Thorstenson has continued to post on the Facebook page and will be working on a new newsletter this fall.

Forestry/Agriculture/Wildlife Committee Report: Benes reported on today’s Forestry/Agriculture/Wildlife meeting. There are three new demonstration forests in Taylor, Outagamie, and Adams for a total of six. A second forest owner in Waupaca county is interested in participating. Demo forests still need to be identified and developed in the other six counties within Golden Sands. NRCS wants to have a new Soil Conservationist Technician in Medford through Golden Sands. New bat houses need to be built, but there are bluebird houses available now. A revised tree shelter brochure is going out to the counties and is also available for pickup today. Neighborhood garden repairs are pending. Follow-up meetings on Woods & Wildlife are ongoing. The new CISMA coordinator started in late July 2019. She is working on revising the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and getting ready for the landowner invasives workshop, which is set for next Saturday. Grazing plans and pasture walks are being set up. Waupaca County Field Day is coming up. Benes has been working on closing up old projects like the forest placemats and revitalizing some others.

Water Committee Report: Evans outlined today’s water meeting. Two new waters projects were voted to be sent to the full council. Leichtnam discussed the Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGCC) and the ten pending groundwater bills looking for sponsors in the legislature. Waushara is working on its second round of well testing, covering the middle of the county. There is a court date for October 19, 2019, on a runoff violation that will hopefully be resolved. The

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has also fined this landowner. Several county conservationists are touring the Isherwood farm today. There is a tour of the Sand Valley Golf Course set for Friday. Taylor is continuing its long-time program for private well testing. Spraying for terrestrial invasives has been occurring. There is a water quality field day for seventh graders. Wood has funding to continue nitrate sampling until the end of this year. Two rounds have already been completed. So far, about 5% of the wells tested county-wide have excessive nitrate levels. Some wells in the sandier areas have higher nitrate levels. A no-till drill purchased by the county is being rented out. Evans noted that last Saturday, the Adams County Lake Alliance had a report on the Wisconsin River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). There is a public hearing coming up on September 23, 2019, about annexing Jordan Lake to the Widow Green Drainage District. Hamerla touched on some of the pieces of the written report he submitted. He will be filing for final reimbursement on the old regional Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) grant by the end of the year. He is also working with a waterfowl hunting group on Lake Puckaway to prepare a video about waterfowl hunting and aquatic invasive species. Golden Sands has gotten lots of calls about high water levels. Ellis reported that higher-than-usual water levels on the Chain of Lakes are an ongoing issue. However, the control for AIS (mostly Eurasian watermilfoil) has been good this year. Pisellini reported that Adams is part of the groundwater coalition that Leichtnam talked about and passed the resolution. A private well testing program to last four years is being funded by the county. A new recycling plant will be built in Adams. In Marquette, a dive team came to speak to its lake group about the results found on the bottom of several lakes. High water in some lakes has required temporary slow no-wake designations. Purple loosestrife has been rampant this year. Marquette County took operating/management duties from the DNR in the form of an operating easement at two landings that are located at the Lower Locks Property at Grand River. The meeting ended by a multi-county discussion about security measures in various courthouses.

NEW PROJECTS: The new projects from the Forestry/Agriculture/Wildlife Committee involve cash matches for the cooperative forestry and terrestrial invasives projects. The third project from that committee was for starting to organize partners to develop a Fox Valley CISMA. Two projects came from the Waters Committee. One is the continuation of the Regional AIS work for a grant of \$150,000 and \$50,000 in match. The second is a project of contracted services for various AIS work, including control efforts, on the White River Flowage. Motion by Barden, seconded by Becker, to approve the new projects. Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF/PROJECT UPDATES: Written staff reports were sent out electronically before the meeting.

AGENCY/PARTNER REPORTS: None.

OTHER REPORTS: None.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be Nov 21, 2019.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m. upon motion by Rosenthal, seconded by Becker.

Respectfully submitted,

Reesa Evans
Temporary recording secretary