

MINUTES  
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2022  
WOOD COUNTY RIVER BLOCK AUDITORIUM, WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI

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

Staff Present:

Land & Water Conservation Staff: Shane Wucherpennig

Planning & Zoning Staff: Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn (WebEx), Jeff Brewbaker (WebEx),  
Scott Custer (WebEx)

Extension Staff: Jason Hausler, Matt Lippert (WebEx), Karli Tomsyck (WebEx)

Others Present: Dist. #14 Supervisor Dennis Polach, Dist. #15 Supervisor Bill Clendenning, Dist. # 16 Supervisor Lance Pliml (WebEx), Ben Jeffrey (Wood County Health Department – WebEx), Amy Kaup (Wood County IT – WebEx), Josh Miller (Marshfield Economic Development Board - WebEx), Ray Bossert (Village of Port Edwards - WebEx), Jennifer Dolan (WebEx), Clara Kubisiak (WebEx), Chad Schooley (Wood County Parks & Forestry), Angel Whitehead (Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce)

1. **Call meeting to order.** Chairperson Curry called the CEED meeting to order at 9:03am.
2. **Declaration of Quorum.** Chairperson Curry declared a quorum.
3. **Public Comments (*brief comments/statement regarding committee business*)** None.
4. **Review Correspondence.**

Jason Grueneberg shared that Kim Keech, Program Assistant, has resigned from Planning & Zoning for an opportunity with the City of Marshfield. Their department wishes her well. Kim has been with Wood County for 15 and a half years, has done an outstanding job and will be missed. Jason noted they are in the process of refilling the position and will have it posted soon.

Jennifer Dolan prepared a public comment but wasn't able to get into the agenda. Jennifer expressed concern for lawn and garden chemicals used on public land and how it pertains to groundwater. Jennifer lives close to area parks and is concerned with one of the landscaping companies that serves this area being sued over continued use of glysophate.

5. **Consent Agenda.** The Consent Agenda included the following items: 1) minutes of the January 5, 2022 CEED meeting, 2) bills from Land & Water Conservation, Planning & Zoning and Extension and 3) staff activity reports from Laura Huber, Matt Lippert, Allison Jonjak, Hannah Wendels, Kelly Hammond, Janell Wehr, Jackie Carattini, Rachael Whitehair, Caleb Armstrong, Emily Salvinski, Klayton Kree, Lori Ruess, Rod Mayer, Shane Wucherpennig, Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn, Paul Bernard, Jeff Brewbaker, Scott Custer, 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 January 5, 2022 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. **Review items, if any, pulled from Consent Agenda.** None.
7. **Risk and Injury Report.** None.

## 8. Land & Water Conservation Department

### a. Committee Reports

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

Supervisor Leichtnam shared the last meeting was held on Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. Speaker Rob Lee, staff attorney for Midwest Environmental Advocates out of Madison, presented on the Wisconsin Spill Law.

The next meeting will be virtual on February 21<sup>st</sup> at 2pm. Supervisor Leichtnam has talked to Shane Wucherpfennig about being the speaker for the meeting.

#### ii. **Health Committee report.**

Ben Jeffrey shared there are no updates on AGC. The meeting with Juneau to discuss any further progress with farmer led initiative had to be rescheduled; they are hoping to meet this Friday. Ben noted they are getting things in a row for any potential ARPA funding in the future.

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

Supervisor Leichtnam gave an update on the January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. The group is working through a number of statewide organizations on putting together data from many sources so it can be housed late this summer in one centralized location and be much more accessible electronically. Reports from State Legislature, Katrina Shankland, followed. County updates followed.

The meeting speaker was Lynn Markham, UW-Stevens Point Professor. Lynn is doing a survey on how she can help with zoning and land use planning in a way to protect natural resources. Lynn has volunteered her services to all six counties and can speak to committees or full county boards.

The next meeting will be held virtually on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### iv. **Golden Sands RC&D report.**

Supervisor Leichtnam shared an update from the January 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. The lake groups are working on things they'll be doing come spring including Clean Boats, Clean Waters and virtual training for everyone involved. Supervisor Leichtnam also shared county updates.

Golden Sands RC&D is celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup> from 10am-11pm will be a family-oriented event at Pfiffner Park in Stevens Point. There will be children's activities during the day along with food trucks. The evening is geared towards adults with bluegrass music in the park.

Following discussion on voluntary county dues for Golden Sands RC&D, Chair Curry requested it be put on the March CEED agenda.

The next meeting will be held in March.

## 9. Private Sewage. None.

## 10. Land Records. Jason Grueneberg shared Planning & Zoning is actively working on paperwork for LIDAR.

## 11. County Surveyor. None.

## 12. Planning

### a. Present 2021 Annual Report – Plat Review

Adam DeKleyn prepared the annual report for the committee; it is included in the packet starting on page 33.

Adam shared they had another good year with the plat review program. This annual report provides a general overview with some highlights seen over the past year. Highlights include:

- 25% increase in number of certified survey maps reviewed and approved compared to 2020.
- CSMs have more than doubled since 2019. Adam noted Wood County is up 66% in the number of CSMs that have been submitted for plat review since 2019.
- 2021 had the highest number of certified survey maps since 2004.
- Town of Saratoga has led in the most land divisions that are being approved through plat review.

Supervisor Bill Clendenning requested special order of business on Wood County's GIS system. Discussion followed. Supervisor Lance Pliml agreed with the special order of business to highlight program attributes in a 5-10 minute demonstration for the County Board. Planning & Zoning staff will look into this for the future.

- b. Amend 2021 Planning Budget for Unanticipated Revenue (Wood County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan)  
 Jason Grueneberg shared the North Central Regional Plan Commission is facilitating an update to the plan. The last update was done in the 90s. The cost to update is being covered by a DOT grant. Jason is invoiced by Regional Plan Commission for the project and then requests reimbursement from the DOT so he would like to correctly reflect the unanticipated funds that will show up for Planning & Zoning.

*Motion by Ken Curry to approve the resolution to amend Planning budget for unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$30,800.00. Second by Dave LaFontaine. Motion carried unanimously.*

### 13. Economic Development

- a. Update from Marshfield Economic Development Board and consider release of 2022 Economic Development Grant Funds.

Jason Grueneberg noted page 35 of the packet is the grant request submitted to the county. The grant request was approved.

Josh Miller of the Marshfield Economic Development Board shared that the city installed the infrastructure for the subdivision. There are 23 lots total; Josh noted they have contracted with a local realtor to sell the 8 remaining lots that weren't pre-sold. Now that the road is in, they are getting a lot more interest. Pre-sold lots have until June 1st to execute and close. Josh anticipates at least 9 of those closing for sure. It is on pace to be a very successful project.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve release of 2022 Economic Development Grant Funds to Marshfield Economic Development Board in the amount of \$50,000.00. Second by Bob Ashbeck. Motion carried unanimously.*

- b. Update from Central Wisconsin State Fair and consider release of Junior Fair grant funds.

Jason Grueneberg explained this money was previously housed in Extension. There were questions about what this funding was being used for. It was a suggestion of the CEED Committee to run it through economic development projects. This allowed CWSF to show how the money is being used. Dale Christiansen completed the grant funding request form.

Dale was not in attendance for the meeting. Jason noted the committee could take action based on the request form or wait until a later date.

*Motion by Jake Hahn to approve release of 2022 Junior Fair grant funds to Central Wisconsin State Fair in the amount of \$32,000.00. Second by Dave LaFontaine. Motion carried unanimously.*

c. North Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission update.

Jason Grueneberg shared an update on the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. They are working with the Regional Plan Commission on broadband speed testing. The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation has decided to fund speed testing and they're working through the Regional Plan Commission to implement it.

Jason also noted they are working on the Bicycle Pedestrian Plan as mentioned earlier. Discussion followed.

d. Update on Broadband Request for Information process.

Jason Grueneberg provided an update from the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. It included four different providers: Astrea, Charter Communications, Frontier and Bug Tussel Wireless. Jason noted they reached out to a few other providers but they weren't able to participate at that time. The meeting provided a better idea of what's going on in the county and the role different players are playing right now.

Jason noted they plan to work with Bug Tussel Wireless. Discussion followed.

e. Consider release of Rural Economic Development Innovation Initiative (REDI) implementation funds for purchase of Business Retention and Expansion software.

This was a recommendation in the County REDI plan. Angel Whitehead, Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce, explained the previous software was InFocus, through WEDC; a state program given to economic development partners to track data for business expansion and retention. They got rid of the program about 2 years ago and shared the data with partners.

Jason Grueneberg explained Marshfield and Rapids don't have software to log information from visits. The County is looking to help this along by purchasing software for both Rapids and Marshfield. Between both Chambers, the hope is to cover all of Wood County and also have some overlap in some of the rural areas.

The cost is \$1500.00 per license, per year. They are looking at 2 years. After 2 years, the Chambers would take on the cost, if the program is to be retained. The Chambers can share the data back with the County, while keeping it private and secure. Discussion followed.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve \$1500.00 per year for 2 years to purchase Business Retention and Expansion software from Smart Solutions Group. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.*

f. Consider resolution authorizing Wood County to participate in a Public Service Commission grant application with an Internet Service Provider to improve broadband infrastructure.

Jason Grueneberg shared they are not ready to move forward with the resolution but hopes to have a special meeting in February before County Board to review and approve to meet the March 17<sup>th</sup> deadline.

*Motion by Ken Curry to authorize Planning & Zoning to create a resolution to participate in the Public Service Commission grant application and set a meeting before County Board on February 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am. Second by Bill Leichtnam. Motion carried unanimously.*

- g. Consider release of Rural Economic Development Innovation Initiative (REDI) implementation funds to contract for broadband grant writing assistance.

Jason Grueneberg explained for grants submitted with ISP, they worked with a local grant writer. The first two grants that were submitted, Operations Committee approved help of a grant writer. Jason noted they were successful with those grants.

Jason would like to have access to funds to put towards a grant writer for the March application and other grant applications later in the year. Hourly cost is about \$60-80. Discussion followed.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve release of REDI implementation funds to contract for broadband grant writing assistance up to \$5000.00. Additional funds will require additional committee approval. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.*

- h. Consider release of Rural Economic Development Innovation Initiative (REDI) implementation funds for the creation of a Wood County winter recreation video.

Jason Grueneberg shared in the REDI Plan there is one area that talked about boosting tourism in Wood County. This is the reason they're looking at doing this video – a lot of people come into the County for Powers Bluff, snowmobiling and winter activities. There hasn't been a video to promote that.

This would be a minute long video with a cost of about \$4000.00 by a local business out of Marshfield. It would be put on the county website and accessible for use by municipalities, tourism and visitors bureaus, etc.

Jason has talked with Chad Schooley, Parks & Forestry Director. Chad is in favor of this to help promote some of the activities offered by Parks. Chad isn't aware of any professionally made videos in the past. It would be great to put on the website, Facebook, Instagram, etc. and can be used in future years.

*Motion by Jake Hahn to approve release of REDI implementation funds for creation of a Wood County winter recreation video in the amount of \$4,000.00. Second by Dave LaFontaine. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### 14. Extension

- a. General Office Update

Jason Hausler provided the following updates:

- An email came out from WEXA (Wisconsin Extension Association) regarding regional meetings. Chair Curry forwarded it. The northern region met last Thursday. The south region is meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup> from 8:30am-12pm.
- Annual Report for 2021 is in process. Jason hopes to have that complete by the end of the month. The 2020 Annual Report can be found on the Extension website. Printed copies are available upon request.
- Last summer, when the state budget was passed, there was a million dollar increase to Extension budget per year (2 million over the biennium) for Ag positions. Final approval to appropriate those funds to Extension is expected any day now and thus Extension will be able to post Ag specialists positions in the coming weeks and months.

- b. Staffing Update (Community Development and 4-H)

Jason Hausler shared an update on the 4-H and Community Development positions.

4-H – Laura Huber's position was 100% county funded and is now co-funded by the state. They re-

appropriated dollars to hire a part-time educator. The position was posted but ended in a failed search. Jason explained candidate pools have been down. They have now reposted the 4-H position. Jason was able to find funding with Marathon County to create a 1.0 position split between and funded by both Wood and Marathon Counties.

Community Development – Final interviews were scheduled for February 1<sup>st</sup> but both candidates withdrew over the weekend. Jason will be reposting the position and is hopeful and optimistic someone will be in the CD position in the near future. Jason noted the county is not charged for vacant seats on the state contract. The discount will be reflected on the second invoice.

Supervisor LaFontaine asked if Extension overall is looking at raising some of the salaries or monies because of the competitive job market. Jason explained last spring/summer the entire organization (UW-Madison) went through a title and total compensation study, aimed at finding out where Madison fit within the Big Ten system and also to look at titling to ensure equity across positions. Discussion followed.

c. Educator Presentation – Matt Lippert, Agriculture Agent

Matt Lippert shared a Winter Forage Report.

**Wood County Dairy Industry:**

- 17,000 milking cows
- 22,000 pound average production
- \$4,400 value of production per cow
- Depending on price, about 75 million revenue at the farm
- Multipliers – value added by cheese production (upstream and downstream multipliers, value of dairy production)
- 139 herds in Wood County – about 122 cows per herd.

**Corn Silage:**

- 2020 Wood County – 15,000 acres of corn harvested for silage
  - One acre per lactating cow
  - 2/3 the area of a standard township
- 18.5 ton per acre average yield
- \$40/ton value
  - \$11.1 million

Matt provided historical information on corn silage vs. current practices and value calculation.

Next week, Matt is giving an online presentation (Badger Dairy Insights) on how to price corn silage. They expecting attendees to join from across the country.

**15. Requests for per diem for meeting attendants.** None.

**16. Schedule next regular committee meeting.** The next regular CEED meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 at 9:00am at Wood County Courthouse Room #114.

**17. Agenda items for next meeting.** *Agenda items are due by Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.*

**18. Schedule any additional meetings if necessary.** Tentative meeting scheduled before County Board at 9:00am on Tuesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>.

**19. Adjourn.** Chair Curry declared the meeting adjourned at 11:15am.