

MINUTES  
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2021  
WOOD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ROOM #114, WISCONSIN RAPIDS WI

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

Staff Present:

Planning & Zoning Staff: Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn.  
Land & Water Conservation Staff: Shane Wucherpfennig, Rodney Mayer, Lori Ruess.  
UW Extension Staff: Jason Hausler, Allison Jonjak.

Others Present: Dist. # 14 Supervisor Dennis Polach, Dist. #15 Supervisor Bill Clendenning, Dist. #16 Supervisor Lance Pliml (via WebEx), Ed Newton, Wood County Finance Director (via WebEx), Josh Miller, City of Marshfield, Ray Bossert, Village of Port Edwards Administrator (Via WebEx), Jeremy Eichhorn, Grand Rapids Town Chairman, Amber France, Town of Grant Rapids, Ken Winters, Town of Armenia.

1. **Call to Order.** Chairperson Curry called the CEED meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
2. **Declaration of Quorum.** Chair Curry declared a quorum.
3. **Public Comment.** Bill Clendenning stated he is attending the meeting as a County Board District 15 representative, not a Town of Grand Rapids representative. Grand Rapids residents have requested him to attend to vote against an agenda item concerning Grand Rapids.

Ken Winters, Town of Armenia asked to speak and referred to a letter he drafted to the Central Sands Groundwater Group. He is seeking assistance with a groundwater problem he has at his residence. He lives in the Town of Armenia, Juneau County. He stated around 2010 the nitrate levels in his well water continually increased to the current level of 32.4 ppm. His water is also contaminated with the pesticide Imidacloprid and was told by the State of Wisconsin not to drink water from his well. Chairperson Curry mentioned that all CEED members received a copy of the letter and asked if there were any questions. Bill Leichtnam mentioned he would address this topic under agenda item 8c.

Ray Bossert, Village of Port Edwards Administrator, gave an update on the installation of trail signs in Port Edwards, Saratoga and Grand Rapids. The CEED and County Board will be invited to the ribbon cutting ceremony.

4. **Review Correspondence.** None
5. **Consent Agenda.** The Consent Agenda included the following Items: 1) minutes of the October 6, 2021 CEED meeting, 2) bills from Extension, Land & Water Conservation and Planning and Zoning and 3) staff activity reports from Laura Huber, Matt Lippert, Nancy Turyk, Allison Jonjak, Hannah Wendels, Janell, Wehr, Jacki Carattini, Rachael Whitehair, Shane Wucherpfennig, Caleb Armstrong, Emily Salvinski, Klayton Kree, Lori Ruess, Rodney Mayer, Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn, Paul Bernard, Jeff Brewbaker, Scott Custer, Kim Keech and Victoria Wilson.
  - A. Minutes of October 6, 2021. No additions or corrections needed.
  - B. Department Bills. No additions or corrections needed.
  - C. Staff Activity Reports. No additions or corrections needed.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve and accept the October 6, 2021 CEED minutes, bills from Extension, Land & Water Conservation, and Planning and Zoning, 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. Open/approve low bid for Luke Keuffer's prescribed grazing project.

Chair Curry opened the only bid received from Real Fence, LLC, Custer Wisconsin - \$18,232.30. Shane Wucherpennig mentioned Land & Water Conservation staff estimated the project at approximately \$20,000. This is a 70/30 cost-shared project.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to accept the only bid submitted for Luke Keuffer's prescribed grazing project from Real Fence, LLC in the amount of 18,232.30. Second by Carmen Good. Motion carried unanimously.*

B. Set crop prices for the 2021 Wildlife Damage Claims Program.

Rod Mayer presented the list of proposed 2021 crop prices for wildlife damage claims. He explained he took an average from various sources (listed on page 29 of the CEED packet) to arrive at the prices presented (below).

- Field corn - \$ 5.25
- Soybeans - \$ 13.06
- Alfalfa - \$168.29

*Motion by Ken Curry to accept and approve the 2021 crop prices for the Wildlife Damage Claims Program as presented. Second by Robert Ashbeck. Motion carried unanimously.*

C. Committee Reports

i. Citizens Groundwater Group meeting.

1. Discuss and possible action from CEED on the motion made at the Citizens Groundwater Group requesting Wood County Health Department and Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department investigate in Grand Rapids the extent of nitrate pollution of rural wells.

Shane Wucherpennig explained this agenda item was requested following a motion at the October Citizens Groundwater Group meeting requesting Wood County Health Department and Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department investigate the extent of nitrate pollution of rural wells in Grand Rapids. Lengthy discussion followed.

- Chair Curry shared he 100% supports doing more testing in 2022. He added that homeowners with a private well should test them annually.
- Bill Clendenning shared he is assisting the Land & Water Conservation Department with getting sample bottles to Grand Rapids residents. He has been going door-to-door offering the sample kit and also picks up the sample and returns it to the Land & Water Conservation Dept. He mentioned some people don't want to have their water tested because they feel if the results come back high it will lower their property value.
- Dave LaFontaine shared there is a lack of testing and lack of funding. CEED needs to request additional funding from the County for additional nitrate testing with the capability to test for pesticides.
- Shane Wucherpennig mentioned that the Health Department lab is not able to test for pesticides and that pesticide testing is costly.
- Dave LaFontaine suggested Shane Wucherpennig put together a resolution to present to County Board to continue well water testing in 2022 and include some funding for pesticide testing.

- Lance Pliml mentioned a resolution shouldn't be presented to County Board until a Comprehensive Plan on what is going to be done and how the dollars will be spent is complete. He added that most real estate transactions require a well water test.
- Upon conclusion of the discussion, consensus was to have Share Wucherpennig put together and bring to a future meeting the costs to continue and expand the nitrate testing currently offered through the Land & Water Conservation Department.

Bill Leichtnam addressed the CEED with concerns regarding Ken Winter's contaminated well and proposed the CEED recommend the pesticide Imidacloprid be ban from use in Wood County.

- Shane Wucherpennig shared that this would be a DATCP call and most likely DATCP would require more testing before they would consider a ban.

Bill Leichtnam gave a brief report on the October 18<sup>th</sup> Citizens Groundwater Group meeting. Catherine Christenson presented on the UW Madison Progress Report – Nitrate Testing in Wood & Juneau Counties. The next meeting will be Monday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. Guest speaker will be Ray Bossert. A virtual WebEx option will be available for this meeting.

Robert Ashbeck mentioned he read the Citizens Groundwater Group meeting minutes and appreciates what they are doing, but he is not happy with the negative comments towards agriculture and farmers.

ii. Health Committee report.

Chair Curry shared he received an email message from Ben Jeffrey stating he will not be able to attend the CEED meeting. Ben attached a written update, which Chair Curry shared.

- No major updates on AGC. The next meeting is Wednesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.
- To date, received and tested 35 well water samples from Grand Rapids residents for nitrates. Twenty percent, or 7 of the 35 tested high.

Bill Leichtnam asked about the December 15<sup>th</sup> meeting in regards to the MOU. These meetings are telephonic and closed to the public; he was wondering if the meetings could be open to the public. Per Chair Curry this is something that should be discussed with Corporation Counsel.

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

Bill Leichtnam gave an update on what was discussed at the October 21<sup>st</sup> Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative committee meeting and the outreach that is going to take place. The next meeting will be held on November 29<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.; this will be a virtual meeting. Bill also mentioned that Wood County has not provided three of the six specific data/information requests.

iv. Golden Sands RC&D report. Bill Clendenning gave a very brief report and shared meetings are held every two months.

At this time, with no opposition, Chair Curry moved agenda items 13c and 13d up. (See 13c and 13d)

9. **Private Sewage.** Jason Grueneberg mentioned not much to report beyond what is in the CEED packet. It is that time of year for private sewage activity to wind down.
10. **Land Records.** Everything is in CEED packet.
11. **County Surveyor.** Everything is in CEED packet.
12. **Planning**

- a. Request to approve several zoning map amendments/rezones - Town of Grand Rapids.

Adam DeKleyn explained the Town of Grand Rapids submitted several zoning map amendments/rezones to the Wood County Planning and Zoning Department for review and approval. The request is to rezone four parcels zoned Agricultural (AG) to Residential (R-2) to allow for a residential subdivision on one parcel and additional residential development on the other three (map of parcels on pages 38 & 39 of CEED packet). Planning and Zoning has reviewed the request and recommends the CEED approve and forward the resolution to County Board. Discussion followed.

- Dave LaFontaine expressed his concern with encouraging growth in an area where there could be high nitrates.
- Jason Grueneberg explained Planning and Zoning has no control to prevent building based on water quality, but they do have control for septic systems.

*Motion by Jake Hahn to sign and forward to County Board the resolution approving the Town of Grand Rapids zoning map amendments/rezones. Second by Robert Ashbeck. Motion carried unanimously.*

- b. Consideration to conditionally approve a preliminary plat for Deer Road Acres Subdivision.

Adam DeKleyn presented a request for conditional approval of a preliminary subdivision plat located at the SW corner of Deer Road and 48<sup>th</sup> Street S, Town of Grand Rapids. He referred to pages 43 – 46 of the CEED packet where the plat, location map and future land use map are located. Preliminary plats require CEED review and conditional approval prior to final plat approval. He explained the CEED Committee's options: 1) conditionally approve the plat, 2) reject the preliminary plat, or 3) table the item to a later date with just cause. Adam recommended the CEED conditionally approve the Preliminary Plat of Deer Road Acres Subdivision based on review and findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law. Discussion followed.

- Bill Leichtnam questioned if the radius of the cul-de-sac on the west end of Deer Road is sufficient for fire trucks. Adam responded it appears it would meet current standards.

*Motion by Jake Hahn to approve the preliminary plat for Deer Road Acres Subdivision. Second by Ken Curry. Motion carried unanimously.*

- c. Discuss 2022 budgets (Planning, County Surveyor, Land Records & Private Sewage).  
Nothing to discuss on this agenda item.

### 13. Economic Development.

- a. Discuss 2022 Economic Development Budget.  
Nothing to discuss on this agenda item.
- b. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission update.  
Dave LaFontaine was not able to attend the meeting due to difficulties with the virtual Google link. He expressed his concerns and frustration with Dennis Lawrence. Jason Grueneberg shared NCWPC has had a turnover of staff and currently has vacant positions.
- ATV/UTV study is in draft form; committee should see results of that formally within the next couple of months.
    - Jake Hahn requested a copy of the study.
  - Jake Hahn asked about the \$45,000 REDI funding & 2021 projects. Jason Gruenberg will provide a list of projects at the December CEED meeting.

*Motion by Jake Hahn to decide on REDI project at the December CEED meeting and carry uncommitted funds to 2022 Economic Development budget. Second by Bill Leichtnam. Motion carried unanimously.*

- c. Update from the City of Marshfield on the West 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Development Plan, and consider release of 2021 Economic Development Grant Funds.

Josh Miller gave an update on the West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Development project.

- Conclusion of project in 2022.
- Project budget \$50,000; may have increased costs.
- Project area central area to east border of downtown (revitalization of downtown area).

Dave LaFontaine shared this is a valuable project that will benefit the County and the County Highway Department.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve release of \$25,000 of Economic Development Grant funds to the City of Marshfield for the West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Development project. Second by Jake Hahn, Motion carried unanimously.*

- d. Update from the Town of Grand Rapids on proposed connecting trail and signage, and consider release of 2021 Economic Development Grant Funds.

Amber France gave an update on the progress of the connecting trail and signage in the Town of Grand Rapids.

- Some residents are already using the trail.
- Small group of residents brought concerns to the Town Board.
  - Safety of crossing 48<sup>th</sup> street – Police Department is addressing this issue.

Discussion ensued.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve release of \$15,000 of Economic Development Grant funds to the Town of Grand Rapids for the connecting trail and signage project. Second by Robert Ashbeck. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### 14. Extension.

A. General Office Update.

Jason Hausler gave an office update.

- Nancy Turyk resigned; her last day is Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. The departure of Nancy will be a loss to Wood County and Extension.
- Will bring an update on the 4-H Associated Educator position to the CEED in December. The .4 FTE position will close on November 12<sup>th</sup>, however may have to postpone interviews, as the applications that are being received are not that strong. May be able to partner with a surrounding County and repost as a full time position.

B. 2022 State Contract Discussion.

Jason Hausler referred to the contract (on pages 49 and 50 of the CEED packet) between Wood County and the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. He explained the changes to language and position fee for the Communities Extension Educator position.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve the contract between Wood County and the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System as presented with changes. Second by Ken Curry. Motion carried unanimously.*

C. Community Development Position Update.

Jason Hausler presented the Community Development position description and asked the CEED if the program focus is what they want to see in the description. The initial programming focus outlines three benchmarks:

- Local Government Education and Support
- Strategic Planning and Organizational Development
- Economic development with an Emphasis on Workforce Development

Discussion ensued.

- Bill Leichtnam shared he would like to see a candidate that has a working knowledge of water hired for this position.
- Dave Lafontaine commented that “Emphasis on Workforce Development” should be eliminated.
- Jason Hausler added the position should be posted by the end of next week. Two CEED members will be asked to serve at the interviews the first part of January.

**D. 4-H Update (Snyder 4-H).**

Jason Hausler gave an update on the Snyder 4-H clubhouse that recently burned. Unsure of timeline for rebuilding due to property line dispute, which has to be figured out before moving forward. He also gave an update on the Meadow Brook 4-H property located at 8233 Co Rd K in the Town of Arpin. This is an old brick clubhouse, which has not been in use in years. Laura Huber came across this clubhouse after doing some research.

**E. Educator Presentation – Allison Jonjak, Cranberry Outreach Specialist.**

Allison Jonjak shared total cranberry harvest was down this year. She covered what she has been doing for virtual outreach and traditional outreach.

- Brown bag lunch meetings – lunch hours on Fridays.
- Video interviews.
- Mini clinics with growers & staff.
- Marsh visits for trouble shooting.
- Cranberry Crop Journal – up to 462 recipients.
- Pesticide applicator training.
- Summer Field Day and Winter Cranberry School.

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

**16. Schedule Next Meeting.**

The next regular CEED meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at the Wood County Courthouse in Room 114.

**17. Agenda items for next meeting.**

- A. Agenda deadline for the December 1st CEED meeting is November 24th.
- B. Closed Session for Department Head Evaluations.

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

**19. Adjourn.**

*Chair Curry declared the meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.*

Minutes by Lori Ruess, Land & Water Conservation Department