

MINUTES  
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022  
WOOD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ROOM 114, WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI

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

Staff Present:

Land & Water Conservation Staff: Shane Wucherpfennig  
Planning & Zoning Staff: Jason Grueneberg, Kevin Boyer  
Extension Staff: Jason Hausler, Jackie Carattini, Karli Tomsyck (WebEx)

Others Present: Dist. #14 Supervisor Dennis Polach, Dist. # 16 Supervisor Lance Pliml (WebEx), Ben Jeffrey (Wood County Health Department – WebEx)

1. **Call meeting to order.** Chairperson Curry called the CEED meeting to order at 9:00am.
2. **Declaration of Quorum.** Chairperson Curry declared a quorum.
3. **Public Comments (*brief comments/statement regarding committee business*)** None.
4. **Review Correspondence.**

Shane Wucherpfennig wasn't able to get this item on the agenda because it recently developed. Land and Water Conservation has been administering the Wildlife Damage program since 1986. It is 100% reimbursed by the state for LWC to administer the program. Shane has been tracking a bill that's been in the works for 2 years to take the program away from counties and give it to the DNR. It appears there is movement on the bill. Shane has concerns because the position historically has not been tax-levied; the state funds half time of the position. There are concerns if the program goes away, how it will affect the position and the Land and Water Conservation office. Shane wanted to bring this up to the committee for awareness.

5. **Consent Agenda.** The Consent Agenda included the following items: 1) minutes of the February 2, 2022 CEED meeting, 2) bills from Extension, Land & Water Conservation and Planning & Zoning 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 Wucherpfennig, Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn, Paul Bernard, Jeff Brewbaker, Scott Custer 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 February 2, 2022 CEED minutes, bills from Extension, Land & Water Conservation and Planning & Zoning, and staff activity reports as presented. Second by Jake Hahn. 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. Review/action on resolution to amend the 2022 LWCD budget to carryover unused dollars and extend free countywide well testing for nitrates until remaining funding is used.

Shane Wucherpfennig was contacted by Finance Director, Ed Newton, regarding the well testing budget line item. It is up to the committee if they want to continue to offer free water sampling across the county. The Health Department runs samples through their nitrate lab – the cost is \$20 each. This would allow for another 110-120 well samples across the county. Discussion followed.

*Motion by Bill Leichtnam to approve the resolution to amend 2022 LWCD budget to carryover unused dollars and extend free countywide well testing for nitrates until remaining funding is used. Second by Dave LaFontaine. Motion carried unanimously.*

- b. Update on Conservation Engineering Technician position.  
Klayton Kree's last day is Friday, March 4th. The position is posted with a deadline of March 7<sup>th</sup> to apply.
- c. Review/action on resolution from Wood County Citizens Groundwater Group to support bipartisan Water Bill AB 727/728 and SB 677/678.  
Supervisor Leichtnam shared copies of SB 677 with committee and gave an overview of both 677 and 678. This is supported by almost all of our area representatives, less one. Discussion followed.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to direct Land and Water Conservation staff to create a resolution in support of Water Bill AB 727/728 and SB 677/678. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried.*

*Ayes – Ken Curry, Carmen Good, Jake Hahn, Dave LaFontaine, Bill Leichtnam  
Nay – Bob Ashbeck*

- d. Presentation on Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGCC) GAP Analysis Grant Project.  
Shane Wucherpennig shared this presentation at the Citizens Groundwater meeting to update the group on the six-county program. Shane and Supervisor Leichtnam also did a radio spot last week in Wisconsin Rapids to talk about the grant project and get word out around the county.

Shane went through the full presentation for the committee. A copy will be included in the March County Board packet. Discussion ensued.

e. Committee Reports

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

Supervisor Leichtnam shared that Chair Pliml was in attendance at the meeting last week. Dr. Carla Romano was also in attendance virtually; Supervisor Leichtnam asked Chair Pliml if Dr. Romano could present findings to the full County Board when data compilation is complete.

The next meeting will be held on March 21<sup>st</sup> at 2pm in Wood County Courthouse Room 114. Lisa Anderson (Nelsonville, WI) will be speaking.

ii. **Health Committee report.**

Ben Jeffrey shared there are no updates from the Health Department. They had to reschedule the meeting with Juneau on AGC for this Friday.

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

The group met on Monday, 2/28.

The 3 components of the Gap Analysis are:

1. Compiling the data from 6 counties
2. Producing a document that would go to the decision makers (leaders on the county and state levels)
3. Finally, make recommendations to both county and state leaders.

Supervisor Leichtnam shared when the 6 county wide program began, there were 4 partners. That has now expanded to 7 partners. Involved in this are DNR, DATCP, US Geological Society, Wisconsin

Geologic and Natural History Survey, UW Madison School of Soils, UW Stevens Point Water Analysis Lab, UW Madison Water Research Institute and Extension efforts under John Exo.

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

Golden Sands RC&D meets every two months. The next meeting is on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**9. Private Sewage.** None.

**10. Land Records.** None.

**11. County Surveyor.**

- a. Select a Professional Land Surveyor to complete maintenance of 198 Public Land Survey System corners in Wood County.

County Surveyor, Kevin Boyer shared this is the last planned contract for the next 10 years or so. These are the last corners in the county to visit and occupy since the program started in 2010. 4 bids were received for the 198 corners.

- Vreeland and Associates - \$290 per corner
- Badgerland Survey - \$275 per corner
- Central Staking - \$182 per corner
- 90 West with Borderland Surveying - \$159 per corner

Kevin recommends to accept the bid from 90 West with Borderland Survey as the primary for \$31,842 (\$159 per corner). They have requested a minimum of one reference per person by one week from today. If that doesn't follow through, Kevin recommends accepting the Central Staking bid for \$36,050 (\$182 per corner).

Following discussion, it was determined the County Surveyor will move forward with gathering references by March 14<sup>th</sup> for presentation and action at the special CEED meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

**12. Planning** None.

**13. Economic Development**

- a. North Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission update.

Jason Grueneberg shared they are working with regional economic development organization to push broadband speed testing out to the central part of the state. There is no cost to the County to get that set up. Some agreements need to be signed to utilize speed testing data to determine areas of the county that need additional broadband planning. This should be up and running by mid-March. Jason noted there will need to be some marketing done to inform residents of the speed testing availability.

- b. 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 explained they had a request for information process in January; 4 ISPs showed up and Bug Tussel was selected. There is another provider they wanted more information from that came through later – Charter Spectrum. They are still looking to partner with them on a grant application and met with them in the last couple of weeks. Charter Spectrum is looking to invest \$7.5 million in Wood County – they would provide 3.8 million and would be asking for the remaining 3.7 million. Jason noted there isn't a need to participate in the grant application but they will need something that shows Wood County is a partner on the project.

*Motion by Jake Hahn to have Planning & Zoning staff draft a letter of support signed off by the chairman for the grant submittal for broadband infrastructure. Second by Dave LaFontaine. Motion carried unanimously.*

## 14. Extension

### a. General Office Update

Jason Hausler provided the following updates:

- Laura Huber and Jason were in a meeting regarding the settlement of the land vacated by the Meadowbrook 4-H club. There was a judgement in favor of the Extension office to get the property back. There was no defendant in this case. The deed was tied to a defunct organization. Corp. Counsel Kastenholz was working on behalf of Extension to get a deed that Extension could do something with.
- Snyder 4-H is beginning to move debris from their building fire. The club plans to rebuild.
- There will be an Area 7 in-person meeting on Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup> for all staff. This will include professional development opportunities, program planning, etc. The Extension office will be closed that day.
- Marshfield Ag Research Station on Yellowstone Drive is now closed and no longer processing soil samples locally. All samples will be tested in Madison. Extension Wood County used to take soil samples collected in the office and deliver them to the lab in Marshfield but will no longer be doing that with the closure. The office can supply forms for the Madison lab and walk customers through their test results. The customer will now be responsible for shipping since it is no longer a local lab. Extension will also have information for additional testing facilities certified by DATCP.

### b. Staffing Update

The Community Development position has been re-posted following a failed search. The position application is open through March 18<sup>th</sup>.

The 4-H Associate Educator position posting yielded 10 applicants. Preliminary interviews will be held this Friday. Jason is hoping to have someone on staff by Mid-April. Final interviews are scheduled for week of March 14<sup>th</sup>.

### c. Educator Presentation – Jackie Carattini, Human Development & Relationships Educator

Jackie Carattini presented the UW Madison Division of Extension [Money Matters](#) website. This page provides online modules to learn about financial strengths, gain new money management skills and build knowledge to share with others. Community partners can refer the public to this website to complete modules and exams for assistance.

Jackie shared she was approached by a local organization, Love INC to partner on a new program. Love INC will be providing volunteers to be trained by Jackie as financial coaches. When clients come in, they have a contract and will choose which of the 15 Money Matters modules they would like to complete. They will need to complete at least 3 modules with the help of their coach and after completion, they will be eligible for financial incentive. The goal is to increase the amount of people getting assistance and also going out on their own to do the education. The program starts March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Jackie is offering Rent Smart in-person, through a grant, in Marshfield and Wisconsin Rapids starting this month. It has been held virtually monthly for the last 2 years. This is specific to people who have come out of the jail system, or are in peer mentoring for substance disorders who are on their way to sobriety and need assistance with housing.

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

**16. Schedule next regular committee meeting.** The next regular CEED meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 9:00am at Wood County Courthouse Room #114.

**17. Agenda items for next meeting.** *Agenda items are due by Wednesday, March 30<sup>th</sup>.*

**18. Schedule any additional meetings if necessary.** A special meeting is scheduled before County Board for Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> and 9:00am at Wisconsin Rapids City Hall.

**19. Adjourn.** Chair Curry declared the meeting adjourned at 10:55am.