

MINUTES  
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2021  
WOOD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ROOM #114, WISCONSIN RAPIDS WI

Members Present: Kenneth Curry, Robert Ashbeck, Jake Hahn (via WebEx), Dave LaFontaine and Bill Leichtnam.

Members Excused: Carmen Good.

Staff Present:

Planning & Zoning Staff: Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn, Scott Custer and Kim Keech.  
Land & Water Conservation Staff: Shane Wucherpfennig.  
UW Extension Staff: Jason Hausler, Nancy Turyk and Janell Wehr.

Others Present (for part or all of the meeting): Dist. #14 Supervisor Dennis Polach, Dist. #15 Supervisor Bill Clendening, Dist. #16 Supervisor Lance Pliml, Ray Bossert (Village of Port Edwards) and Angel Whitehead (Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce).

1. **Call 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 Comment.** None.
4. **Review Correspondence.** None.
5. **Consent Agenda.** The Consent Agenda included the following Items: 1) minutes of the December 2nd and December 15th, 2020 CEED meetings, 2) bills from Planning & Zoning, Land & Water Conservation and UW Extension and 3) staff activity reports from Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn, Paul Bernard, Jeff Brewbaker, Scott Custer, Kim Keech, Victoria Wilson, Shane Wucherpfennig, Adam Groshek, Caleb Armstrong, Emily Salvinski, Rod Mayer, Lori Ruess, Matt Lippert, Allison Jonjak, Janell Wehr, Jackie Carattini, Hannah Wendels, Kelly Hammond, Nancy Turyk, Rachael Whitehair and Laura Huber.
  - A. Minutes of December 2, 2020. No additions or corrections needed.
  - Minutes of December 15, 2020. 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 December 2nd and December 15th, 2020 CEED minutes, bills from Planning & Zoning, Land & Water Conservation and UW 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. Discuss Engineering Technician position. Shane Wucherpfennig shared that Adam Groshek has accepted a position in private business. Adam Groshek last day of employment with Wood County was January 4th. The Engineering Technician position is non-levied 100% state funded.

There were a total of 13 job applications received and expected to interview 3 applicants. All 3 applicants have AutoCAD experience. A tentative start date for the new hire is end of January.

- B. Update on Serenity River LLC TRM Grant. Shane Wucherpfennig commented that the department has signed an acceptance letter with the DNR for a Grant to fund an approved design for stream erosion on the Wisconsin River for Serenity River LLC. LWCD is the 2021 grant sponsor providing technical support and financial administration for the project. The grant is unanticipated revenue as funds are received and disbursed through the department. Project completion date is summer 2021.
- C. Application for DNR/EPA Technical Assistance Grant. Shane Wucherpfennig shared that the DNR contacted him that there was a Technical Assistance Grant available to assist in general operations. The \$20,000 grant was made possible with extra funds received from the EPA. If received, the grant would be unanticipated revenue which would need to be addressed later in 2021.
- D. Update on Central WI Farm Profitability Expo events. Shane Wucherpfennig gave an update on the virtual expo events. The first two events were very well attended with excellent feedback. The next virtual event is scheduled for Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> with Aaron Pape, Northeast WI Technical College – Grazing for Profit as speaker.

Upcoming dates:

- Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> @ 2:00-3:00 pm
- Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00-11:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> @ TBD
- Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> @ 2:00-3:00 pm

E. Committee Reports:

i. Citizens Groundwater Group

Bill Leichtnam shared that the nitrate level standard in drinking water is 10 parts or less which was approved by the EPA in 1962 and has not been re-examined. The latest data from health professionals suggests that it should be 3 parts.

Highlights: Allison Werner, River Alliance of Wisconsin and Michael Tiboris “Clean Water Farms” presentation. River Alliance of Wisconsin has been around for over 27 years.

- Statewide non-profit advocacy organization.
- Focus on nonpoint runoff and tourism.
- Clean Water Now campaign empowers Wisconsinites to have a voice on water issues. The campaign gives voters a voice on Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>. Wood County Resolution 20-12-10 passed 18-1.

Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group next meeting is on Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. held virtually through WebEx. Guest Speaker: David Trimner of Miltrim Farms. Miltrim Farms is the first farm in North America to be AWS certified. They are the largest automated farm in Wisconsin with 3,000 cows and 5,000 acres located in Athens.

- ii. Health Committee report DNR waiting on MOU. There have been 8 test wells installed by UW researchers.
- iii. Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGWCC) committee report. Bill Leichtnam reported that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup> @ 10:00 am held virtual. Agenda items: Wisconsin Water conference, grant request and support from other counties regarding the Clean Water referendum on April 6<sup>th</sup>.

- iv. Golden Sands RC&D report. Hannah Butkiewicz is the new Executive Director. Council meetings meet the third Thursday every month. The next meeting is January 21<sup>st</sup>.

**9. Private Sewage.**

- A. Introduction of Code Technician, Scott Custer. Jason Grueneberg introduced Scott Custer as the new Code Technician. Scott Custer shared that he graduated from UWSP in Soils and Land Management. Scott worked previously for the Lacrosse County Zoning, Planning & Land Information.

10. **Land Records.** Wood County Land Records Information Council met as a virtual meeting on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Land Records Information Council is a requirement by state statute. Quarterly meetings will be planned to discuss budgeting and ongoing projects.

11. **County Surveyor.** A Central Staking contract has been extended for 1 year to provide corners for town road maintenance.

12. **Planning.** Nothing to report.

**13. Economic Development.**

- A. Update on the Rural Economic Development Innovation Initiative. Nancy Turyk shared that the REDI Initiative Plan is in draft form with plan completion expected by the end of January. Meetings are held virtually with limited in person contact. The REDI Initiative Plan will be presented to the CEED Committee and County Board of Supervisors. The USDA will provide alerts to grant requests identified in the REDI Initiative Plan once approved.
- B. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission update. Jason Grueneberg commented that NCWRPC has been finalizing the work program for 2021. A multi-year plan (future projects) is being established. NCWRPC has been assisting in the REDI Initiative Plan. Wisconsin Rapids Verso Mill closure funding response for downtown redevelopment with matching funds from the Wisconsin Economic Development Association.

**14. Extension.**

- A. General Office Update

Jason Hausler shared the following office updates:

- Karli Tomsyck returned from family leave on Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup>. Karli has requested .80 job position status which has been approved. The position will remain 1.0 FTE.
- Staff job performance reviews are due at the end of March.
- A State Advisory Committee has been formed made up of the County Fair Association, 4-H Leaders, FFA Leaders and partners throughout the state to look at the roles and responsibilities of county fairs. Wood County Board Chair, Lance Pliml has accepted to serve on the committee.
- Limited in-person programming continues due to COVID-19.
- Discussion on summer programming will occur in March/April.

- B. Situational Analysis Preparation In 2018, Extension engaged in a statewide situational analysis to determine current and emerging needs in the community. Extension Educators developed strategies to address those needs. What's the situation now and moving forward? What do you see as the major needs in Wood County currently and moving forward? A special CEED Committee meeting to discuss the Situational Analysis is scheduled for Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup> immediately following the Wood County Board of Supervisors.

- C. Educator Presentation – Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator. Janell Wehr gave a presentation on the Master Gardeners and Foundations in Horticulture.

Master Gardeners:

- Level 1 Training – 13 weeks/36 hours of training, flipped classroom model
- Challenges with traditional Level 1 – lack of diversity, inconsistent programming, lack of access and burdensome.
- New Model: Foundations in Horticulture – lack of diversity, inconsistent programming, inconsistency across program, lack of access and burdensome. Web based canvas learning without volunteer concept.
- Positive Takeaways – addresses need for diversity, less burdensome, consistent programming, increased access, decreased confusion and unintended outcomes

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

**16. Schedule Next Regular Committee Meeting.** The next regular CEED meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at Wood County Courthouse in Conference Room #114.

**17. Agenda items for next meeting.** Agenda items are due by Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>.

**18. Schedule any additional meetings if necessary.** A special CEED meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup> immediately following County Board at Wood County Courthouse in Conference Room #114.

**19. Adjourn.** Chairman Curry declared the meeting adjourned at 11:20 p.m.

Minutes by Kim Keech, Planning & Zoning Office