

MINUTES  
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2022  
WOOD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ROOM #114, WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI

Members Present: Ken Curry, Robert Ashbeck (excused at 10:55am), Jake Hahn, Dave LaFontaine (arrived at 9:15 - WebEx), Bill Leichtnam

Members Excused: Carmen Good

Staff Present:

Land & Water Conservation Staff: Shane Wucherpfennig

Planning & Zoning Staff: Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn, Kevin Boyer (County Surveyor)

Extension Staff: Jason Hausler, Kelly Hammond (WebEx), Karli Tomsyck (WebEx), Hannah Wendels (WebEx), Rachael Whitehair (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), Sue Smith (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.**

Chair Curry noted the February 2<sup>nd</sup> CEED meeting will be held in the Riverblock Auditorium.

Chair Curry shared a letter from Saratoga Parks expressing gratitude for the grant funding received to help a piece of land by Nepco Lake reach its full potential and become a destination for kayakers, bicyclists, canoers, etc.

5. **Consent Agenda.** The Consent Agenda included the following items: 1) minutes of the December 1, 2021 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, 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, 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 Bill Leichtnam to approve and accept the December 1, 2021 CEED minutes, bills from Planning & Zoning, Land & Water Conservation and Extension, 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. Committee Reports
    - **Citizen's Groundwater Committee meeting.**

Supervisor Leichtnam shared updates from the January 4<sup>th</sup> meeting:

      - Representative Shankland gave an update on legislation statewide.

- Lynn Markham, Professor at UW-Stevens Point, was a wealth of information. She shared what Portage, Jefferson and Burnett counties are doing to control nitrates and pesticides with land use.
- Lynn offered her PowerPoint to all County Boards and related committees in the six county collaborative. Supervisor Leichtnam feels all supervisors would benefit from hearing Lynn speak.

Next meeting will be held on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Lynn Markham will be speaking again.

*Motion by Ken Curry to pay Supervisor Bill Leichtnam per diem to attend Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative meeting monthly for the year of 2022. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.*

Supervisor Leichtnam shared the 5 goals of the collaborative:

1. Understand current groundwater conditions by developing a sampling strategy to collect baseline water quality information across the Counties in the Central Sands Region. This information will be used to identify areas with elevated nitrate levels. In areas considered “hot spots”, further analysis will be conducted to evaluate likely sources of nitrate contamination.
2. Gain a uniform understanding of methods to prevent nitrogen contamination in groundwater based on information from previous studies conducted in the central sands and similar settings.
3. Understand where areas most vulnerable to groundwater contamination exist to guide the development and use of ordinances, practices and other preventative responses for land use.
4. Develop a unified regional outreach strategy to provide partisan-free education about groundwater conservation and water quality safety to the general public.
5. Create a model structure for regional collaboration on groundwater management that can be applied statewide.

Lengthy discussion on the collaborative and county wide zoning followed.

Shane Wucherpennig shared well testing data and results of the 2 year well sampling efforts by township. When the baseline water sampling program started, the goal was about 822 wells; targeting one section of every township across the county. Shane shared they were able to get 697 well points; about 85% participation. Shane highlighted the following data points:

- Of the total 697 wells sampled, 77 were above 10ppm (about 11% - which is about where the state average is right now)
  - Town of Grand Rapids - 112 wells were tested and 13 had over 10ppm (12.8% - a little higher than the state average)
  - Town of Port Edwards – 203 wells were tested and 51 were above 10ppm (25% contamination rate – double the state average)
  - Town of Saratoga – 175 wells sampled and 4 were above 10ppm (2.3%)
  - 13 of 22 townships tested had 0 hits above 10ppm
- **Golden Sands RC&D report.**  
Supervisor Leichtnam noted Golden Sands meets every two months – he reported on the last meeting previously. Next meeting is on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2022.

**9. Private Sewage.** Jason Grueneberg shared it’s the time of year Planning & Zoning is following up on non-compliance. He is very happy to say we have a very high level of compliance in the county. Jason noted a summary of permits issued in 2021 and breakdown by type of system will be in February meeting packet.

**10. Land Records.** Report is in the CEED packet.

**11. County Surveyor.**

- a. Annual report provided by County Surveyor, Kevin Boyer.

County Surveyor, Kevin Boyer, noted the annual report is available in the CEED packet. He highlighted

information on 2021 PLSS Quest Civil Engineers – there are some issues southwest side of the county that require frozen ground which requires an extension. 64 corners are remaining on that.

Kevin shared there will be an 8 year window where we're not going to have to spend a lot of money on PLSS. He noted we were very fortunate to do the program when we did. Surveyors are very busy right now. Wood County is getting corners for around \$250 each.

Kevin explained they will now be focusing on cleaning up and creating consistency within right of way records. There will be consistent maps coming through the county. Kevin noted he wouldn't be able to do this work part time without the support of the Planning & Zoning office.

- b. Consider annual contract with Central Staking for PLSS maintenance due to road projects in County. Jason Grueneberg shared the pricing was the same so they have signed the contract for 2022.

## 12. Planning

- a. Discuss 2021 Wood County ATV/UTV Survey Report

Adam DeKleyn noted the report was handed out at the December CEED meeting and can also be found in the CEED packet, starting on page 34. This information came out of a survey sent to ATV/UTV users to solicit input and feedback. The report is to help determine basic economic impacts from that user group and is intended to guide future projects, funding and decision making related to ATV/UTV use in the county.

Adam explained the report is broken down into a few different sections. Pages 1-2: present key findings from a lot of the questions in the survey. Pages 2-3 present basic economic impact assessment. This looks at mainly non-county visitors/users to determine basic economic impact.

At the December CEED meeting, Supervisor Hahn had questions about determining an overall economic impact for Wood County. Adam reached out to Regional Plan Commission to request some sort of overall economic impact assessment based on the information and data collected in this report. Unfortunately, because of the data collected and the type of our ATV/UTV system, it is going to be hard to determine an estimated number of non-resident visitors utilizing our system. Discussion followed.

Chair Curry suggested to take the report and improve on what's being asked for, rather than determining what outside money is coming in. Is the trail system meeting the needs of the people who use it?

Adam noted what people are generally looking for in the county: developing more trails, high importance placed on trail maps and information, maintaining existing areas and signage. Discussion followed.

Planning & Zoning will work with applicable stakeholders to develop an implementation plan to address some of the feedback from the user survey.

The survey is available electronically on the Planning & Zoning website under community surveys.

## 13. Economic Development

- a. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission update.

Jason Grueneberg shared they've established a steering committee for the bicycle pedestrian plan. There are staff shortages right now but hopefully they will be back up to full staff soon. If supervisors have any recommendations for people to join the committee, let Planning & Zoning know.

- b. Consider intergovernmental agreement with Brown County for broadband implementation services. Jason Grueneberg shared copies of a draft intergovernmental agreement to work with Brown County.

Brown County made the offer to counties a while back offering their services to help with broadband implementation. Brown County has limited resources to do this and other counties will try to work with them. Jason noted they worked with Corporate Counsel, Peter Kastenzholz, on the agreement.

The cost is \$80 per hour for the Brown County Broadband Director to work with Wood County.

Based on what we would decide to do with Brown County, if we decide to go in that direction, Jason wants to make sure we're in a position to move quickly to work with Brown County on this agreement. This agreement could be put into effect by the CEED Committee and Property & IT Committee and wouldn't have to go through full County Board approval, per Corporate Counsel.

Chair Curry asked about REDI funds to pay for the services. Jason noted it could be paid with REDI money or paid for with IT funds. Discussion followed.

*Motion by Ken Curry to approve intergovernmental agreement between Brown County and Wood County for broadband services. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.*

Supervisor Polach noted IT Department Head, Amy Kaup, discussed this with the Property & IT committee yesterday. Supervisor Polach asked who is going to be responsible for this agreement. Jason sees this as a joint resolution between the two committees. Jason and Amy will bring updates back to the committees.

c. Update on Broadband Request for Information process.

Jason Grueneberg noted the CEED Committee this authorized in December and they have contracted with Mary Ann Lippert to coordinate. Mary Ann has reached out to providers in Wood County and asked them to meet with us confidentially to talk about plans in the county. There will be a closed meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup>. The meeting should provide more direction on future grant applications and broadband infrastructure investments.

*Chair Curry called a break at 10:55am. The meeting was called back in session at 11:00am.*

#### **14. Extension**

a. General Office Update

Jason Hausler provided the following updates:

- Over the last two months, Extension has been trying to recruit and hire a part-time 4-H Associate Educator. Last night, Jason secured additional funding to hire a part-time educator in Marathon County so they will be moving forward on a split position between Wood and Marathon Counties. This will create a full-time, benefits eligible position.
- The Extension office closed for an afternoon last week because of a variety of illnesses. Jason referenced a recent email from Health Department Director, Sue Smith, about local Covid numbers and isolation guidelines. He noted Extension is being diligent about having staff in the office but wanted to give the committee a heads up of the closure.

b. Community Development Position Update

Jason Hausler shared Community Development position posting closed end of last week. There were a total of 8 applicants. Screening will take place tomorrow, January 6<sup>th</sup>. Jason is optimistic they will hold preliminary interviews the week of January 17<sup>th</sup> with final interviews projected for February 1<sup>st</sup>.

c. WEXA Update

Jason Hausler noted supervisors should have received an invite to a virtual WEXA meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup>. This will be the first meetings of the newly formed group. If supervisors didn't receive the message, Jason can forward it but simply wanted to make the committee aware of the opportunity.

d. Funding Opportunities for 5th Grade Groundwater Lessons

Rachael Whitehair shared this is a partnership with Golden Sands RC&D – their educators offer this curriculum in Waupaca and Waushara counties. They are hoping to expand this program throughout the central region and further. This is an annual in-person hands on lesson, about an hour in length, where

educators come to individual schools to have one-on-one experience with classrooms. It's about \$280 per one hour lesson which covers the materials, staff time and travel. They do have a follow-up virtual option as well that includes a total of 3 lessons – 1<sup>st</sup> in person (1 hour long) with 2 follow-up virtual lessons to drive home concepts about water use. The 3 lesson package is about \$300 per classroom or per presentation. There is an option to do individual classrooms or more assembly style.

Rachael noted the only thing standing in the way of getting this into Wood County is finding funding to cover annual costs and connecting with teachers at local schools.

Following discussion, it was determined the CEED Committee is in support of the program. Next steps will be to determine interest and number of classrooms for the total cost. Extension will come back to CEED with more information.

e. Educator Presentation – Hannah Wendels, FoodWise Nutrition Educator

Hannah Wendels shared the following updates and highlights for FoodWise:

- StrongBodies is back in Wood County – Hannah and FoodWise partnered with the SWC YMCA. The program started in September and ran through November. Participants improved strength, flexibility and balance, learned about healthy eating habits and nutrition to stay healthy and socially connected. Hannah is in the process of planning for a spring series.
- Virtual and in-person elementary education had a successful fall season. Hannah was able to be back in person in the classroom this fall at Grove and Howe Elementary Schools. She was also able to provide a 5 week virtual series for Mead Elementary School.
- New partnerships were created with the Wisconsin Rapids Area Boys & Girls Club. Hannah planned 2 back to back nutrition education series lasting 4 weeks each. The program taught youth and teens how to make a healthy, low-cost snack. It was a great series and Boys & Girls Club wants FoodWise to come back in the spring.
- Another project Hannah worked on was the StockBox program. This was a collaborative effort with the local hunger coalition, United Way and ADRC. It is a free program available to low-income seniors where they receive a 30lb box of healthy and nutritious foods. The first program was in November; about 70 boxes were picked up by community members. They are now planning to have a stockbox pick up the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month, beginning January 18<sup>th</sup> due to the local demand.
- Looking ahead to winter and spring education, Hannah starts teaching next Tuesday with Ho-Chunk Head Start in Nekoosa. This program teaches 4-5 year olds about fruits and vegetables. They'll try a new food with each session. Hannah worked with these students last spring over Zoom and is excited to be there in-person this winter.
- The Extension Wellness Series for 2022 kicked off yesterday. The series features 4 different lesson topics each Tuesday of the month - ranging from financial wellness, nutrition, gardening, and mental health. The Wood County office collaborates to bring both virtual and in-person lessons options this year on a rotating county basis.
- Coming this spring, Hannah will be teaching another session of StrongBodies at the SWC YMCA and doing classroom education in 3 WRPS schools for Kindergarten and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

**15. Discuss and review 2022 goals of department heads.**

Land and Water Conservation - Shane Wucherpfennig

1. Plan a single day in person event for the 2022 Farm Profitability Expo

2. Take all of the data collected with the 2 year well testing program, summarize and put it together into a formal report or brochure distributing to county board, township representatives, social media, websites, etc.

Planning & Zoning – Jason Grueneberg

1. Allocate \$100k of REDI implementation funds towards projects in 2022.

2. Develop an annual Economic Development Report for Wood County by the end of 2022. The annual report will be presented to the CEED Committee and distributed to the County Board of Supervisors. The report will outline economic development activity and accomplishments for the year that work towards the implementation of the Wood County Economic Development Plan.

*Motion by Ken Curry to approve goals submitted by Land and Water Conservation and Planning & Zoning Department Heads. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.*

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

**17. Schedule next regular committee meeting.** The next regular CEED meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 at 9:00am at Wood County Riverblock Auditorium.

**18. Agenda items for next meeting.** *Agenda items are due by Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>.*

- Economic Development - Release of Fair Funds

**19. Schedule any additional meetings if necessary.** None.

**20. Adjourn.** Chair Curry declared the meeting adjourned at 11:57am.

*Minutes by Karli Tomsyck, UW-Madison Division of Extension - Wood County*