

Golden Sands Resource, Conservation & Development Council, Inc.
Regular Business/Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
July 16, 2020
Jordan Park's West Lodge

Attendees: Al Barden (Member-at-Large); Gary Beastrom (Marathon); Joshua Benes (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Bill Clendenning (Wood); Reesa Evans (Member-at-Large); Ed Hernandez (Waushara); Denise Hilgart (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Bill Leichtnam (Wood); Hugh O'Connell (Member-at-Large); Al Rosenthal (Marquette); Brent Tessmer (Taylor); Amy Thorstenson (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Joe Tomandl (Taylor); Al DrebeK (Marathon); Tommy Enright (Wisconsin Farmers Union); Tristyn Forget (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Amanda Burzynski (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Pat Kilbey (Marquette); Scott Wilhorn (Juneau). Paul Pisellini (Adams) attended via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by President O'Donnell at 11:04 a.m.

INTRODUCTIONS: Everyone introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion made by Clendenning, seconded by Barden, to accept the minutes of the May 2020 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The treasurer's report for May and June 2020 was passed around. Hilgart indicated that dispersals and receipts are picking up for the working season. Information on credit card use was also made available. Bob Walker and his wife donated \$1000 to the endowment fund. Motion made by Evans, seconded by Clendenning, to accept and file the treasurer's report. Motion carried unanimously.

ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS:

The Marathon County Board appointed Al DrebeK as its representative for Golden Sands RC&D. Gary Beastrom is interested in continuing to be involved in Golden Sands RC&D and applied to be an At-Large member. Motion by Evans, seconded by Barden, to accept Beastrom as an At-Large member. Motion carried unanimously.

Executive Committee Members:

President: Barden nominated Hernandez. Hernandez preferred to remain the P&F Chair so he nominated Tomandl and Beastrom, who both declined the nomination. Motion by Clendenning, seconded by Beastrom, to close nominations and cast a unanimous vote for Hernandez. Motion carried unanimously. O'Donnell passed the meeting to Hernandez.

Vice-President: Clendenning nominated Leichtnam who declined. Benes indicated that Bob Walker (who was not present) had indicated that he would consider this position. Barden nominated Walker. Motion by Clendenning, seconded by Barden, to close nominations and cast unanimous vote for Walker. Motion carried unanimously.

Secretary: Rosenthal nominated Evans to continue the position. Motion by Barden, seconded by Clendenning, to close nominations and cast unanimous vote for Evans. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer: Evans nominated Beastron to continue as Treasurer. Motion by Evans, seconded by Barden, to close nominations and case unanimous vote for Beastron. Motion carried unanimously.

Executive Committee Appointments: Golden Sands RC&D by-laws indicate that the President can appoint up to four members for the Personnel & Finance Committee. After some discussion, a motion made by Evans, seconded by Barden, to have members being appointed to the P&F Committee contact Hernandez or Benes about their interest. Motion carried unanimously. Hernandez will review the members who indicate interest and nominate up to four members by the next meeting. Diane Hanson, of Marathon County, has expressed interest in being in the P&F Committee.

Appointment of Delegates to State RC&D: The Golden Sands RC&D president is automatically a delegate, but can have up to two more. Clendenning agreed to continue as a delegate. Hernandez appointed Walker as a delegate.

Appointment of Delegate to Central Wisconsin Windshed Partnership: Pisellini and Clendenning were appointed as delegates.

OLD BUSINESS:

Wisconsin RC&D Update: Barden indicated that no state meeting has been held since the May 2020 meeting and it is uncertain when one will occur.

Groundwater Legislation: Leichtnam reported that he recently spoke with Representative Kristina Shankland. 160 bills that were passed by the Assembly, including 13 water-related bills, were scheduled to go to the Wisconsin Senate on March 24, 2020. However, that meeting was cancelled. Senator Fitzgerald says he will not have the Senate meet for an extraordinary session to deal with the pending bills, despite some pressure from various sources. The Wisconsin Counties Lobbyist said that a session will not occur until after the November 2020 election. In response, the Wood County Board passed a resolution calling for the Senate to meet and deal with the pending bills. Juneau County and up to 30 other counties have passed a similar resolution. The Wood County Board sent a copy of its resolution to all Wisconsin Counties, to all State Senators, and to several State Representatives.

NEW BUSINESS:

By-Laws and Conflict of Interest Policy: Benes outlined the actions of the P&F Committee and indicated that the issues wait until the next meeting.

COVID-19 and Future Meeting Locations: Portage County let Golden Sands RC&D use the Jordan Park shelter for free for today's meeting (it usually costs \$160). Benes will check to see if it will be available for the September meeting and will look for other meeting alternatives. The rooms at the Children's Museum would not accommodate social distancing.

Drafted Minutes Availability: A discussion occurred about Golden Sands RC&D meeting minute availability. Thorstenson expressed concern about potential damage if unapproved/unfinalized drafts were released. Evans will mark initial minutes as "unapproved draft."

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel/Finance Committee Report: Evans outlined the P&F meeting earlier today. The Treasurer's report was sent on to the full Council. Robert Bauer started this past Monday as the Soil Conservationist/Grazing Specialist for the NRCS Prairie du Chien office. Tristyn Forget also started on Monday in the NRCS Wisconsin Rapids office as the new Soil Conservationist. The current NRCS contract expires in September 2021, but Benes has already been talking with the NRCS for renewing the contract. Hannah Butkiewicz started a part-time position recently as the Habitat Management Coordinator. There are also several new seasonal employees. An updated roster of active members is available today which includes the new County Representatives. Benes provided information on the various types of Liability Insurance. The P&F Committee authorized Professional Liability Insurance and Crime Insurance for a \$200 annual premium. Details are needed on two other types of Liability Insurance. It was decided that information be sought about workshops that employees will review to develop more understanding on issues related to equal opportunity employment.

Forestry/Agriculture/Wildlife Committee Report: A Woods and Wildlife grant was received for a three year project to form cooperative groups and hold informational meetings for the county and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) staff. Six new demo forests are going to be set up as part of the Forest Service grant. Benes submitted other grants that would include replacing trees damaged by oak wilt and tornados. The two Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMA) groups are working on inventory and control actions. Work is still ongoing for the tree farm website. All neighborhood garden plots have been reserved, but not all are active. Several pasture walks have been postponed but not have not been rescheduled yet. Managed grazing plans are still being written. The workshop series about woods and wildlife cooperatives are going to be recorded and will hopefully be available in September 2020. The Waupaca County Conservation Field Day will happen online with the help of a small grant from a Fox Valley Community Organization. Plans for the Little Plover Appreciation Day are still being made. Brent Tessmer was elected as the new Committee Chair.

Water Committee Report: Kilbey reported on today's meeting. The committee elected Rosenthal to be Chair of the Waters Committee and Tomandl to be the Vice-Chair. Hamerla was congratulated on winning an Invader Crusader award along with his dog, Cisco. Leichtnam reported that he recently spoke with Representative Kristina Shankland. 160 bills that were passed by the Assembly, including 13 water-related bills, were scheduled to go to the Wisconsin

Senate on March 24, 2020. However, that meeting was cancelled. In response, the Wood County Board passed a resolution calling for the Senate to meet and deal with the pending bills. Juneau County and up to 30 other counties have passed a similar resolution. The Wood County Board sent a copy of its resolution to all Wisconsin Counties, to all State Senators, and to several State Representatives. The pandemic has made getting aquatic invasive species (AIS) volunteers, whose time is usually used for match on the AIS grant, difficult. The current AIS regional grant will expire at the end of 2021. AIS funding through a regional grant will no longer be available because of the coming change in WDNR Surface Water Grants. Hamerla noted that the counties currently covered by the grant will have to start thinking of how services from Golden Sands RC&D can continue under the new grant program. Many activities in Taylor County have been postponed due to the pandemic. Private well testing throughout the county continues to be popular. Stream monitoring has been ongoing for five years. The 14 Mile Creek 9 Key Element Plan is mostly approved, although some changes need to be made. Pisellini is the new LWCD Committee Chair. The former Chair had to resign due to health problems. No beetles were available to control purple loosestrife in Marquette County this year, so it has been growing well. Several lakes are experiencing heavy aquatic plant growth. Buffalo Lake has traditionally had two levels, one for summer and one for winter, but this year things have been so low that getting boats in has been difficult. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has been asked to change the dates of the two different levels to stop that problem from occurring.

NEW PROJECTS:

Waters has no new projects. Forestry/Agriculture/Wildlife has two new ones. One is for the inventory and control of invasives on private property in the Town of Belmont, Portage County. The total cost is \$8460, with \$6000 grant money, and the rest from in-kind match. The start date is July 1, 2020. The second project is connected to the Fox Valley Cisma to cover education, workshops, and other activities. The total cost is \$20,016, with \$15,000 in cash, and the remaining balance from in-kind match. The start date is July 1, 2020. Motion by Barden, seconded by Evans, to approve the two new projects. Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF/PROJECT UPDATES: Written staff reports were sent out electronically before the meeting. Benes reported that there are currently 13 full-time staff, 2 part-time staff, and about 15 part-time/seasonal staff, for a total of 30.

AGENCY/PARTNER REPORTS: Enright, from the Wisconsin Farmers Union, reported that they had to cancel several pasture walks. They are researching potential liability if someone were to get Covid-19 during a pasture walk. They will hold its summer conference virtually on August 13, 2020. The theme is climate change issues and the keynote speaker will be Wisconsin's Lieutenant-Governor, Mandela Barnes.

OTHER REPORTS:

Thanks: A round of applause was given to Hugh O'Donnell and Al Barden for their years of service to Golden Sands RC&D.

New Officers: Benes indicated that photos of the new officers and chairs were needed for Golden Sands RC&D's website.

Materials Available: The newest Farm Fresh Atlas and the 2019 Highlights were available at the meeting.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be September 17, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Rosenthal, seconded by Kilbey, to adjourn the meeting.
Meeting was adjourned at 12:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reesa Evans
Recording Secretary