

**Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.**  
**Regular Business/Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**May 20th, 2021**  
**Online via Zoom**

**Attendees:** Ed Hernandez (Waushara); Al Barden (Member-at-Large); Gary Beastron (Member-at-Large); Amanda Burzynski (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Bill Clendenning (Wood); Bill Leichtnam (Wood); Pat Kilbey (Marquette); Al Rosenthal (Marquette); Brent Tessmer (Taylor); Paul Pisellini (Adams); Hannah Butkiewicz (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Bob Walker (Member-at-Large); Scott Wilhorn (Juneau); Denise Hilgart (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Amy Thorstenson (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Jen Schmitz (Monroe); Brian Haase (Waupaca); Joe Tomandl (Taylor); Bob Ellis (Waupaca); Darren Schroeder (Columbia).

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by President Hernandez at 11:04 a.m.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Everyone introduced themselves.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion made by Barden, seconded by Rosenthal, to approve the minutes from the March 2021 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The treasurer's report was emailed prior to the meeting. Hilgart discussed the beginning and ending balances for each of the organization's accounts. She then summarized the Endowment Fund's first quarter Performance Report. Motion made by Ellis, seconded by Barden, to accept and file the treasurer's report. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Wisconsin RC&D Update:** The next meeting will be held on May 27th, 2021, at the Matsche Center. The president, Dave Solin, has resigned. Nominations will be made at this meeting.

**Groundwater Legislation:** Leitchnam expressed concern about the 13 water bills. Assemblyman Novak and Senator Testin are offering a budget amendment.

**Conflict of Interest Policy and Board of Directors:** There are a few board members who have not signed the conflict of interest statement yet. These statements are important for Golden Sands RC&D's transparency. Emails and mailings were sent to these individuals with statements to sign.

**Golden Sands RC&D Voluntary Membership Dues:** Four counties and one corporate member have not paid voluntary dues. Butkiewicz expressed the value of paying dues and will be following up with each county with a phone call to discuss voluntary due payment.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**New Employees:** All of the open positions have been filled for both seasonal and full-time staff. Onboarding and orientation will be complete by June 7th.

**Group Benefits:** Golden Sands RC&D has found a more competitive benefits package for STD/LTD, Life, and AD&D insurance. The current insurance provider is Anthem and the new plan will be through Hartford. The administrative team is waiting for all new employees to be onboarded before making the switch.

**Document Retention Policy:** Butkiewicz notified the council that the organization is working on developing a Document Retention Policy and asked members to share their thoughts and suggestions regarding the policy. She mentioned that, during the P&F Committee Meeting, Clendenning and Walker suggested that the organization connect with Nicholas Flannegan, an attorney who assisted with the "Conservation that Works!" tagline, to assist with policy development.

**COVID-19 Policy:** Butkiewicz presented the updated Covid-19 Policy. The organization is taking a more conservative approach in regards to Covid-19 and will require staff to continue taking precautions, which will include the use of masks and social distancing, to provide the safest work environment for all staff. Pisellini requested that a similar policy be created for the board for in-person meetings.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Personnel/Finance Committee Report:** Thorstenson notified the council that P&F went into a closed session to discuss items regarding staff pay rates. After returning to the open session, Denise presented the treasurer's report and endowment fund. A significant increase in credit card charges have been made due to the number of tree shelter sales. P&F was notified that the group will be changing the current line of credit. All positions have been filled for the season. Not all county and corporate members have paid voluntary dues so Hannah will connect with these members. Changes will be made regarding insurance benefits because a new and more competitive plan has been identified. The organization is working on document retention and has updated its COVID-19 policy. Changes were made to the title of the "Personnel Flow Chart" to "Organizational Chart." The administrative staff is working to develop an internal staff communications flow chart. Basic updates were made to the handbook. The 2020 highlights draft is complete and waiting for review before publishing. An electronic newsletter went out for the month of May. Changes will be made to the current process of purchasing refreshments for the council meetings so that it is more efficient. The administrative team is requesting a modification to the current process for how new projects are formed and receive approval.

**Forestry/Agriculture/Wildlife Committee Report:** Walker notified the council that Hannah has continued to fill her responsibilities with the Cooperating for Woods and Wildlife project. However, a new employee has been hired to assist with these responsibilities. Both the Northeast Wisconsin Invasives Partnership (NEWIP) and the Central Wisconsin Invasives Partnership (CWIP) steering committee meetings have taken place, grant applications have been submitted, and new applications are being worked on. NEWIP has developed a website and facebook page. New Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) co-employees in Medford and Westfield have been hired. 23 tree shelter orders have been submitted. The largest was for about \$3,200. Planning for the in-person Waupaca County Conservation Field Day (WCCFD) is taking place and will be held on September 24th with a severe weather date of October 1st. The NACD grazing project has 26 plans that are currently in progress or pending. Pasture walks are taking place and being planned. Funding is being sought for the Little Plover

River Appreciation Day. Both community gardens are up and running. All beds have been reserved and site captains have been established.

**Water Committee Report:** Kilbey reported that the committee discussed groundwater legislation, which was reported on by Bill Leichtnam earlier in the business meeting. The group also discussed new aquatic invasive species (AIS) hires and the new AIS grant program, which starts this upcoming year. Anna Cisar and Chris Hamerla have requested that counties commit to working with Golden Sands RC&D by September 1st, but that November 1st is the actual deadline. Counties should reach out to Cisar and Hamerla if they have any questions regarding the new program and funding. During the committee meeting individual county updates were shared. These updates are included in the committee meeting minutes.

**NEW PROJECTS:** None

**STAFF/PROJECT UPDATES:** Staff reports were sent out before the meeting via email.

**AGENCY/PARTNER REPORTS:** Tyronne Larson, from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, attended the meeting and updated the council on the upcoming May 21st Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) deadline. He additionally provided updates about NRCS' COVID-19 policy. NRCS offices will remain closed and will be staffed up to 50% capacity. NRCS employees who have received their second shot and are two weeks out do not need to wear masks. Larson also thanked Golden Sands RC&D for filling vacancies in the Medford and Westfield offices.

**OTHER REPORTS:** Rosenthal asked whether the July meeting would be held in-person and/or with a virtual option and Clendenning asked who would be making the decision regarding the July meeting. Walker suggested that Hernandez and Butkiewicz should work together to plan out the next meeting by July 1st, 2021. Motion was made by Clendenning and seconded by Rosenthal to have Hernandez and Butkiewicz be responsible for planning July's meeting. Discussion on this item continued following the motion. Burzynski requested that the decision be made prior to July 1st, 2021, because of Golden Sands RC&D's administrative timeline for sending out meeting minutes and agendas. The COVID-19 Policy for the board will be developed for the July meeting too. Following further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion made by Barden, seconded by Pisellini, to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 11:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Butkiewicz  
Executive Director- Golden Sands RC&D