

MINUTES

CONSERVATION, EDUCATION, & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, November 1, 2023

TIME: 9:00 AM

PLACE: Courthouse – Room 114

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Leichtnam, Dave LaFontaine, Laura Valenstein, Jake Hahn, Tom Buttke

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Carmen Good

OTHERS PRESENT: Trent Miner, County Clerk; See attached sign-in list

1. Chairman Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and declared a quorum present.
2. There was no public comment.
3. Motion by LaFontaine/Buttke to approve the minutes of the previous meetings. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Motion by LaFontaine/Hahn to approve the vouchers and monthly department reports. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Wucherpennig presented the bids for one part of the Keuffer livestock watering system, this being the drilled well. There were no bids for the other components. Motion by Buttke/LaFontaine to accept the bid from Bertram Junemann Well Drilling for \$8,800 as a basis for cost share dollars. Motion carried unanimously.
6. Joe Behlen introduced himself to the committee and vice versa, and is interested in serving as the ag producer member. The timeline for appointment will be finalized in December. Due to a state law change, the citizen member of this committee has to be an ag producer and not a Farm Service Agency representative.
7. Chair Leichtnam reviewed the process for conducting the evaluations of the Planning & Zoning Director and Land Conservationist. The department heads were instructed to complete a self-evaluation and narrative and to return those to Chair Leichtnam by December 1st.
8. Gruenberg informed the committee of the resignation of the Code Administrator. Recruitment continues and the use of contracted help to sign off on certain plans, etc. is in place.
9. Grueneberg updated the committee on the funds remaining (approximately \$11,000) for economic development and an opportunity for broadband expansion in the Town of

Lincoln. Country Wireless is looking to apply for a \$7M broadband grant to bring fiber to that section of the county. A matching fund donation may help with the scoring of this grant. Motion by Leichtnam/Valenstein to release \$500 in economic development grant funding for a cost share in the Country Wireless grant application, with the funds being released only if the grant request is successful. Motion carried 3-2, Voting no were Buttke and LaFontaine.

10. Grueneberg & Arndt presented a resolution approving a zoning amendment for the Town of Saratoga. The amendments do not conflict with any Wood County zoning ordinance. Motion by LaFontaine/Buttke to approve the resolution and forward onto the county board for their consideration. Motion carried unanimously.
11. Solin provided an Extension office update, stating they are fully staffed at this point.
12. Solin reported that due to additional funding from both the state and federal government, we still have a 50% educator position available. In working with NRCS, there is funding to make a full 100% position using the county's 50% funding and NRCS' 50% funding to fund a full time Groundwater Regional Educator. This would be a 2 year pilot program. Motion by LaFontaine/Valenstein to approve the creation of this educator position using the funding mechanism described above. Motion carried unanimously.
13. Solin presented the 2024 Extension contract that was handed out at the last meeting. Motion by LaFontaine/Buttke to approve the 2024 Extension contract as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
14. Grueneberg & Rombalski presented the Rural Economic Development Initiative dashboard website. While it is not public yet, it soon will be. It shares the information from the various workgroups and their membership as well as their meeting minutes. A link was sent to the committee members.
15. The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 6th at 9:00 AM and will include department head evaluations.
16. Motion by Buttke/LaFontaine to adjourn. Motion carried at 10:55 AM.

Minutes taken by Trent Miner, County Clerk, and are in draft form until approved at the next meeting.

**Conservation, Education, & Economic Development Committee
November 1, 2023**

NAME	REPRESENTING
Bill Clendinning	WCB #15
Jeff Fenzler	WCB #11
DENNIS POLACH	WCB #14
Jeremy Solin	Extension
Jason Greenberg	P+Z
Emily Amott	P+Z
Peter Kastenholz	Corp. Counsel
Kayla Rombalski	EXTENSION
Joe Benken	SELF
Lance Pliml - WebEx	County Board Chair
Barb Peters - WebEx	LWCA
Victoria Wilson - WebEx	P+Z