

MINUTES
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2023
WOOD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ROOM 114, WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI

Members Present: Bill Leichtnam, Tom Buttke, Jake Hahn, Dave LaFontaine, Laura Valenstein, Carmen Good

Staff Present:

Land & Water Conservation Staff: Shane Wuchterpfennig, Barb Peeters
Planning & Zoning Staff: Jason Grueneberg, Paul Bernard, Victoria Wilson, Kayla Rautio
Extension Staff: Jeremy Solin, Laura Huber

Others Present (for part or all of the meeting): Dist. #11 Supervisor Jeff Penzkover, Dist. #14 Supervisor Dennis Polach, Dist. #15 Supervisor Bill Clendenning, County Board Chair Lance Pliml (WebEx), Justin Casperson (WebEx), Kevin Boyer (WebEx), Ray Bossert (WebEx), Reuben VanTassel

1. **Call meeting to order.** Chairperson Leichtnam called the CEED meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
2. **Declaration of Quorum.** Chairperson Leichtnam declared a quorum.
3. **Public Comments (*brief comments/statement regarding committee business*)**
 - Jason Grueneberg introduced Kayla Rautio as the new Program Assistant in Planning & Zoning. The CEED Committee welcomed Kayla.
 - Regarding the public hearing for battery storage in Wood County, Jason Grueneberg noted battery storage in Saratoga does not generate revenue for the county. It was also noted battery storage was part of the initial PSC approval of the Wood County Solar Project for which the county will receive \$350,000.00 per year with payments starting in December.
 - Shane Wuchterpfennig shared that Rick Georgeson was the recipient of the 2023 Wisconsin Lake Stewardship Award for excellence in building partnerships at the Lakes and Rivers Conference in Stevens Point.
4. **Review Correspondence.** None.
5. **Consent Agenda.** The Consent Agenda included the following items: a) minutes of the April 5, 2023 CEED meeting; b) bills from Extension, Land & Water Conservation and Planning & Zoning; c) staff activity reports from Laura Huber, Jasmine Carbagal, Matt Lippert, Kayla Rombalski, Allison Jonjak, Hannah Wendels, Mallory McGivern, Janell Wehr, Jackie Carattini, Anna James, Barb Peeters, Caleb Armstrong, Emily Salvinski, Kyle Andreae, Rod Mayer and Shane Wuchterpfennig, Jason Grueneberg, Paul Bernard, Jeff Brewbaker, Victoria Wilson and Kayla Rautio.
 - 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.
 - d. **Receive committee reports.** Chairman Leichtnam noted that the Citizen's Groundwater Committee met April 25th at Conservation Lobby Day but had no secretary so there were no meeting minutes for the packet. The Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative Committee (CSGWCC) and the Golden Sands RC&D both meet every other month so there were no April meetings to include in the packet.

Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve and accept the April 5, 2023 CEED minutes; bills from Extension, Land & Water Conservation and Planning & Zoning; and staff activity reports as presented. Second by Laura Valenstein. 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 and possible action on RC&D membership dues.

Discussion regarding what percentage of RC&D voluntary membership dues should be paid.

Motion by Bill Leichtnam to approve 75% contribution of \$1,900.00 Golden Sands RC&D voluntary membership dues. Second by Laura Valenstein. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Discuss designating supervisor as Wood County representative for the North Central Land and Water Conservation Association. Shane Wucherpfennig shared that per bylaws, there is an obligation for both a county and LCC representative on the North Central Land & Water Conservation Association. Shane serves as the county conservation representative. The association meets approximately 2-4 times per year and each of the 9 counties in the association hosts a summer tour as part of the summer meeting on a rotating basis. Supervisor LaFontaine tentatively volunteered to serve as the LCC representative pending further information regarding responsibilities of the representative and requested the agenda item remain on the June agenda for further discussion.

9. **Private Sewage.** None.

10. **Land Records**

a. Review Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) ARPA funding request to supplement and continue the collaborative effort between various county departments and municipalities.

Paul Bernard reported phase 1 of LiDAR entailed buying into project with significant support from Land & Water Conservation, County Highway Dept. City of Marshfield and City of Wis. Rapids, with completion in 2022. Phase 2 entailed CFIP request for additional deliverables (contours, culverts and online application) with completion in 2022. Moving on to phase 3, ARPA funding seen as an opportunity to increase phase 3 deliverables for water quality, specifically for impervious surfaces to make the program more robust. The itemized quote from Cloudpoint Geospatial for impervious surface layers (roads, parking lots, alleys, sidewalks, driveways and patios/courtyards) ranges from \$125,342.00 to \$217,425.00 and would give ARPA the option to approve any or all of the layers for impervious surfaces. The ability to view layers for all impervious surfaces would be very beneficial to multiple county departments, municipalities, surveyors and landowners.

Motion by Bill Leichtnam to send request for ARPA funding to supplement LiDAR with range of \$125,342.00 to \$217,425.00. Second by Dave LaFontaine. Discussion followed.

Motion by Bill Leichtnam to amend original motion for up to \$217,425.00. Second by Dave LaFontaine. Discussion followed. Motion carried unanimously.

11. **County Surveyor**

a. Review and recommend proposals for Wood County Highway Transportation Project Plat (TPP). Kevin Boyer is in discussions with the county highway dept. regarding right of way

location issues throughout the state with the largest concern identified as County F through Sherry. Mr. Boyer's estimate through Sherry affects 28 parcels. The next step is to determine from a mapping standpoint where the right of way is as well as who owns the right of way. This affects the Register of Deeds and Treasurer's office for tracking property descriptions and taxation and will save both the county and taxpayers money long term. The

project will monument exactly where right of way is and will be a shared cost project with the county surveyor's budget covering \$10,000.00 and county highway dept. covering up to \$15,000.00. Bids were submitted by Quest Civil Engineers, LLC for \$24,000.00 and Gremmer & Associates, Inc. for \$32,600.00. Mr. Boyer noted both are very qualified and his recommendation would be to accept the \$24,000.00 bid from Quest Civil Engineers, LLC.

Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve \$24,000.00 for the Wood County Highway Transportation Project Plat (TPP). Second by Laura Valenstein. Motion carried unanimously.

12. Planning & Zoning

- a. Consider resolution approving zoning ordinance amendments for the Town of Sigel. Jason Grueneberg noted solar energy systems and wind energy systems were added to the zoning ordinance. Neither section conflicts with any county ordinances in effect.

Motion by Tom Buttke to approve zoning ordinance amendments for the Town of Sigel. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.

13. Economic Development

- a. Consider request for release of REDI implementation funding for Central Wisconsin State Fair feasibility study. Justin Casperson, Director of Parks & Recreation for the City of Marshfield, is working closely with the Central Wisconsin State Fair committee to address the aging fairground buildings. It would be beneficial to the county as well as surrounding communities to build a large expo building as an indoor option for year-round seasonal activities, i.e. farm shows, RV events, weddings, fundraisers, home & garden shows, etc. The funds would be used to hire a firm to complete a feasibility study on the costs and location (to be built on fairground property) for a large expo building. The expo building would be managed and operated by the fair committee.

There was some concern with releasing \$50,000.00 of the remaining \$63,000.00 REDI implementation funding, but it was noted that some of the approved 2023 grant projects may not occur this year with an estimated \$75,000.00 that could potentially be used to fund economic development. It was also noted there are currently no formal requests to other parties to request funds to support this project.

Motion by Tom Buttke to approve release of \$50,000.00 in REDI funding for a Central Wisconsin State Fair feasibility study. Second by Dave LaFontaine. Discussion followed.

Motion by Laura Valenstein to amend original motion to release \$25,000.00 in REDI funding for a Central Wisconsin State Fair feasibility study. Second by Bill Leichtnam. Voting Aye: Bill Leichtnam, Laura Valenstein. Voting Nay: Jake Hahn, Tom Buttke, Dave LaFontaine. Motion Failed.

Motion to amend original motion by Tom Buttke to approve release of up to \$50,000.00 in REDI funding for a Central Wisconsin State Fair feasibility study. Second by Dave LaFontaine. Voting Aye: Tom Buttke, Jake Hahn, Dave LaFontaine. Voting Nay: Laura Valenstein, Bill Leichtnam. Motion carried.

- b. Update from Village of Port Edwards Bike Trail project and consider release of 2023 Economic Development Grant Funds. Ray Bossert reported that the north section of the bike trail extension has been completed. Ongoing collaboration continues with Saratoga and Grand Rapids to expand the network. The \$20,000.00 in economic development grant funds will be used to focus on the south side of trail for bike trail signs, pavement marking, additional

concrete work and trail extension into the village of Port Edwards in conjunction with the DOT. The DOT will assist with the bike trail crossing by the train tracks as part of the DOT's project to replace highway 54 through the village. It was noted the Riverwalk bike train extension section is being funded by a Legacy grant.

Suggestion for either a site visit to occur at June CEED meeting or dept. head/supervisor to tour project for proof of progress.

Motion by Tom Buttke to approve release of \$20,000.00 in 2023 Economic Development Grant Funds for the Port Edwards Bike Trail Project. Second by Laura Valenstein. Voting Aye: Dave LaFontaine, Laura Valenstein, Bill Leichtnam. Voting Nay: Jake Hahn, Tom Buttke. Motion carried.

c. Update on broadband and Bug Tussel projects. Jason Grueneberg reported:

- All towers are live with the exception of one in the Meadow Valley State Wildlife Area. Some residents have reported access issues. Bug Tussel clarified bandwidth areas between Marshfield and Wis. Rapids should provide sufficient access. It was noted each tower's service provides coverage in a 6 mile diameter.
- The highway dept. has had more requests for fiber in the ground over the past 2 months than for all of the requests submitted last year. A meeting has been scheduled on May 10th to discuss reason behind increase in requests and provide advice to municipalities on best practice for fiber installation and right of way issues.
- Looking towards RFI (request for information) process in August to meet with all providers to get idea of what their plans are for the county, provide basic permit forms for contractors to fill out for installs and potentially support applications next year for federal funding. Residents have expressed frustrations with lack of coordination between providers but it is an unregulated sector. Please let Jason know of any positive or negative comments from residents.
- The county is working on a broadband strategy due to the difficulty in providing broadband in the county when providers are sharing little to no information.
- The county Broadband team will kick off with a meeting scheduled in mid-June in Pittsville in anticipation of federal broadband funds being released next year.

14. **Extension**

a. General Office Update: Jeremy Solin reported:

- DATCP released an announcement of funding for the Nitrogen Optimization Project which is a new program. Extension staff are working on a Cranberry Creek project for a \$50,000.00 grant that was received.
- Interviews are scheduled next week for the Healthy Communities Coordinator position.
- Reports of unanswered phone calls in the Extension office were related to the Outlook email suffix change that directly affected voice mails not forwarding appropriately. The issue has been resolved by I.T.
- Laura Huber, 4H Educator for Wood County, presented six entries for the 2023 Wood County Plat book cover and asked those present to help decide on the cover by submitting votes. The plat books are sold as a fundraiser which directly supports youth programs. Laura noted there are 100 youth registered for summer camp with 35 youth in 3rd to 5th grades from Wood County. Dexter County Park will be also be used for a one-day outdoor adventure camp this summer to promote youth getting in the outdoors.

15. Sustainable & Renewable

- a. Discuss structure of sustainable and renewable oversight. Chairman Leichtnam noted any agenda items for Sustainable & Renewable require prior discussion with the CEED Chairman or one of the 3 department directors in order to be included on the meeting agenda.

- b. Solar options for Jail Project. Reuben VanTassel distributed copies of the Solar Power System Design and Installation Proposal from Northwind Solar for the Wood County Jail. The design for the roof of the jail was designed to support solar panels to tie into the electrical system. Solar panels would offset 10% of the annual consumption of electricity. The total cost of the proposal for solar panels is \$525,000.00 with an ROI of 12 years based on preliminary data and a service life of 25-35 years. It was noted potential donations and/or grant opportunities were discussed at the last county board meeting. The next step would be to determine what grants are available. It was noted after pricing incentives and tax credits, the estimated cost for the project is \$347,369.00.

Motion by Dave LaFontaine to recommend further investigation and to pursue solar panels on the roof of the Wood County jail by the Properties &IT (PIT) Committee and the Jail Adhoc Committee. Second by Bill Leichtnam. Motion carried unanimously.

- c. Discuss Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification and consideration for Jail Project. Reuben VanTassel shared that LEED certification was previously discussed with county board input on design and development but did not elect to move forward with the LEED certification during that process due to the high expense. We are not aware of any tax benefit for LEED certification. The new jail will be more efficient than the current jail and Reuben is consistently considering long-term effects for value versus cost. The general consensus was to not pursue LEED certification at this time.

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

17. Schedule next regular committee meeting. The next regular CEED meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 7, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at Wood County Courthouse, Room #114.

18. Agenda items for next meeting. *Agenda items are due by Wednesday, May 31st.*

- Discuss implementation of request for progress report/proof of progress completion report
- Presentation by Uniquely Wisconsin regarding their program as potential use of REDI funds
- Discuss designating supervisor as Wood County representative for the North Central Land and Water Conservation Association

19. Schedule any additional meetings if necessary. None.

20. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Minutes by Barb Peeters – Land & Water Conservation – Wood County