

MINUTES

CONSERVATION, EDUCATION, & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, December 3, 2025
TIME: 8:30 AM
PLACE: Courthouse – County Board Room #300

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Leichtnam, Tom Buttke, Wayne Schulz, Russ Perlock, Tim Hovendick, George Gilbertson

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

1. Chairman Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM and declared a quorum present.
2. Representatives from Invenergy (Saratoga Solar Project) reviewed a possible amendment to the developer's agreement in place with the county to allow for the burning of cleared vegetation from the site. A list of questions from the committee had been compiled after the last meeting and answered by the representatives in advance of the meeting. Additional concerns of the committee were shared with the representatives.
3. Because of time constraints, Chair Leichtnam asked Corp Counsel Flanagan to weigh in on this subject as well as the Hub City Wind Farm and the Extension contract and MOU before he had to leave for court. Extension Assistant Dean Hausler noted that in the past, Wood County has not signed an MOU, nor have a number of other counties. Some counties have wanted further definition of roles and responsibilities which necessitated an MOU.
4. After hearing from Corp Counsel and Hausler, motion by Schulz/Perlock to approve the 2026 Extension Contract as presented and forego the signing of an MOU at this time.
5. Chair Leichtnam opened public comment for those interested in the amendment to the developers agreement with Invenergy. There were 2 public comments shared, both having concerns with the open burning being contemplated in the amendment. Chair Leichtnam closed public comment. Motion by Hovendick/Schulz to adhere to the original developers agreement and not move forward with the amendment. Motion carried unanimously.
6. Ben Tanko from Alliant Energy spoke on the current status of the Hub City Wind Farm and their request to possibly place a wind turbine on land owned by Wood County in Marathon County. The question before the committee was whether to continue to proceed towards the drafting of a Wind Lease & Easement agreement. Chair Leichtnam opened the floor for continued public comment, whereby 4 Marathon County residents spoke against and had concerns with wind turbines. The Board of Regents is considering this matter yet this year, as they lease the land in question. Motion by Hovendick to table this item until after the Board of Regents makes a decision. Hovendick withdrew his motion. Motion by Schulz/Hovendick to not enter into a lease agreement with Hub City Wind Farm for land owned by Wood County in Marathon County. Motion carried unanimously.
7. A 3-minute recess was called.

8. The minutes of the November 5 & 13, 2025, meetings were presented. Motion by Buttke/Hovendick to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
9. Motion by Buttke/Hovendick to approve the vouchers, monthly department reports and committee reports. Motion carried unanimously.
10. Associate Extension Dean Hausler reported that he expects a new Area Extension Director to be in place, possibly by the beginning of March, and that our district changed to include Marathon, Portage, Wood, and Waupaca Counties. Chair Leichtnam will be on the interview committee.
11. Extension Educator Rombalski gave a report on the Clean Sweeps held in 2025. This was a record turnout year in which the county had two separate events during the year. The same is scheduled for 2026. (Saturday, May 30 & Saturday, September 12)
12. County Conservationist Wucherpfennig shared the bids received for the Vruwink Manure Pit Closure. He reviewed the internal cost estimate of \$7,651. Bids received were:
 - Becker Trucking - \$22,311.88
 - Brad Brehm - \$7,158.75
 - Dvoran Trucking - \$6,450.00Motion by Buttke/Perlock to accept the low bid of \$6,450.00 from Dvoran Trucking for the basis of cost share. Motion carried unanimously.
13. Wucherpfennig reviewed the current status the Mill Creek chloride issue and that he met with officials from the City of Marshfield in this regard. They will be moving forward with efforts to try and determine the cause of chloride.
14. Wucherpfennig brought the committee up to date on the current violations. It was noted the manure overflow site is pretty much cleaned up.
15. Leichtnam presented the committee a set of rules for the Citizens Water Group, as a subcommittee of CEED, which was patterned from the Wood County Wildlife Advisory Committee rules. Motion by Schulz/Hovendick to approve the rules as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
16. The Citizens Water Group drafted a letter requesting legislative and regulatory action on the nitrate and water pollution issues. The letter was addressed to various stakeholders. Motion by Buttke/Hovendick to approve the sending of this letter to the addressees listed on the letter. Motion carried unanimously.
17. Wood County Surveyor Kevin Boyer presented his annual report to the committee noting that the county is 100% monumented and maintained until about 2030. He discussed projects that have been worked on and noted that they might be looking at updating the Land Subdivision ordinance in the near future.
18. Planning & Zoning Director Grueneberg introduced the new county planner, Emmett Simkowski, to the committee, who in turn gave a brief background and work experience to the committee.

19. Motion by Buttke/Schulz to approve per diem and mileage to Chairman Leichtnam for his service on the interview team for Extension Area Director. Motion carried unanimously.
20. Motion by Buttke/Perlock to approve Supervisor Hovendick per diem and mileage for attending the upcoming Citizen Water Group meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
21. The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, at 9:00 AM.
22. Motion by Hovendick/Buttke for the committee to move into closed session pursuant to Wis Stats 19.85 (1)(c) to conduct performance evaluations of the department heads the committee oversees. Motion carried unanimously.
23. Motion by Schulz/Hovendick to return to open session. Motion carried unanimously.
24. Chair Leichtnam declared the meeting adjourned at 12:18 PM.

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

Conservation, Education, & Economic Development Committee

December 3, 2025

NAME	REPRESENTING
Bill Clandorin	WCD #15
Trine Spindler	Farmland First
Neidi Roske	Farmland First/McMillan
Jackie Dillinger	Farmland First/Town of Day
Kristine Seehafn	Farmland First/McMillan
Emmett Simkowski	WC P+Z
Jason Gruenberg	WC P+Z
DENNIS POLACH	WCB- 14
George Gilbertson	LWC Dept Rep.
Burt Pester	LWCD
Nick Flanagan	Corp Counsel
Shane Wucherpfenning	LWCD
JOE KIWAK III	FARMLANDS FIRST
Ben Tanko	Alliant Energy
Jason Hausler	Extension
Kogel Wilex	Public
Paul Bynah	Public
Don White	Barton Malow
Paul Arsetz	BARTON malow
Sejal Dhindsa	Invenergy
Henry Petrash	Invenergy
Conner Newell	Invenergy
Paul McGowan	Invenergy
Bryan Kolman	Barton Malow
Lorelei Fuehrer	Town of Saratoga
Kayla Rombalski	Extension
Karin Boyer	County Surveyor

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