

**Golden Sands Resource, Conservation & Development Council, Inc.**  
**Regular Business/Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**September 17th, 2020**  
**Jordan Park's East Pavilion**

**Attendees:** Al Barden (Member-at-Large); Gary Beastrom (Member-at-Large); Joshua Benes (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Amanda Burzynski (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Bill Clendenning (Wood); Reesa Evans (Member-at-Large); Ed Hernandez (Wausara); Denise Hilgart (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Bill Leichtnam (Wood); Pat Kilbey (Marquette); Hugh O'Donnell (Member-at-Large); Al Rosenthal (Marquette); Brent Tessmer (Taylor); Amy Thorstenson (Golden Sands RC&D Staff); Joe Tomandl (Taylor); Al Drabek (Marathon); Robert Bauer (Golden Sands RC&D); B.J. O'Connor-Schevers (Outagamie); Gerry Zastrow (Portage). Tommy Enright (Wisconsin Farmers Union); Diane Hanson (Marathon); Paul Pisellini (Adams); Bob Walker (Member-at-Large); Scott Wilhorn (Juneau) attended online. Linda O'Donnell was also present.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by President Hernandez at 11:03 a.m.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Everyone introduced themselves.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Two corrections we made to the July 2020 minutes: (1) in the list of attendees, Hugh O'Connell should be changed to Hugh O'Donnell; (2) in the groundwater legislation section, Kristina should be changed to Katrina. Motion made by Rosenthal, seconded by Barden, to accept the minutes of the July 2020 meeting as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The treasurer's report for July and August 2020 was passed around. Hilgart indicated that dispersals and receipts were standard. Two extra expenditures were for the Employment Practices Liability insurance that was approved at the July 2020 meeting and \$1,500 for attorney fees. Motion made by Barden, seconded by Evans, to accept and file the treasurer's report. Motion carried unanimously.

**P&F Committee Appointments:** Hernandez announced his recommendations for other openings on the Personnel/Finance Committee: Al Barden, Diane Hanson, Shane Wuchpfenning, and Gerry Zastrow. Motion by O'Donnell, seconded by Evans, to approve these appointments. Motion carried unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Wisconsin RC&D Update:** Benes indicated that no in-person state meetings have been held since January 2020. A meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. on October 20, 2020, at the Matsche Center in Birnamwood. Attendance can be in-person or online.

**Groundwater Legislation:** Leichtnam reported that he recently spoke with Representative Katrina Shankland and River Alliance's Alison Werner. The 13 pending water bills left hanging

when the legislature adjourned due to Covid-19 are basically dead, so the process will have to start all over when the new legislature meets in January 2021. A report about well testing in Grant, Iowa, and Lafayette Counties found fecal matter in 21 of the 35 wells tested. The source of the contamination has not been determined.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**By-Laws:** Suggestions were previously made by the lawyer and by Evans. Benes explained the difference between the two options. These were sent out along with the other information about this meeting. After some discussion, a motion made by Clendenning, seconded by Barden, to table these issues until the November 2020 meeting. Motion carried with one “nay” vote.

**Conflict of Interest Policy:** Benes explained the two different versions. The main difference was the expanded information on fiduciary duty in the one that was recommended by Evans. These were sent out along with the other information about this meeting. Motion made by Beastrom, seconded by Clendenning, to approve the version with the expanded fiduciary information. Motion carried unanimously.

**Alternate Council Members:** Benes indicated that there are openings for alternative representatives for Juneau, Monroe, and Outagamie Counties. He has contacted the LCCs in those counties and asked that alternatives be appointed. These conversations got him thinking that Golden Sands should expand its membership by inviting others in the member counties to come to the meetings. A draft invitation is available today for review titled “Golden Sands RC&D Seeks New Council Members”. There was then some discussion about inviting area nonprofits, with similar missions, to become members. Motion by Barden, seconded by Clendenning, to appoint a committee to look into this issue. Motion carried unanimously. Barden, Beastrom, Clendenning, and Evans volunteered for this committee.

**COVID-19 and Future Meeting Locations:** Benes said that the staff has been considering how to make online attendance less confusing. It is anticipated that the November 2020 meeting will be both in-person and online, but a place has not yet been set and it is unlikely to be nice enough to meet outside. He will check options in Portage County. Leichtnam and Clendenning indicated that Wood County has a large room with WebX already set up that may be available. They will look into that option.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Personnel/Finance Committee Report:** Evans reported on today’s meeting. Most of the expenditures have been payroll and project-related. There was a slight increase in the endowment fund for the quarter that ended on June 30, 2020. The next endowment report will cover until the end of September 2020. Two extra expenditures were for the Employment Practices Liability Insurance, that was approved at the July 2020 meeting, and \$1,500 for attorney fees. Names are being changed on the bank account to reflect the change in officers that was voted on at the July 2020 meeting. There will also need to be a change on the assigned name for the credit card account. A new three year contract for a fifth soil conservationist

position, in Juneau County, has been signed with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The job announcement has been posted. There is one more year remaining on the contract for the other four positions. Once the contracts are completed, all five positions will be combined under one contract. Although payment for three more years is guaranteed, if there is money left at the end of that period, the positions can be extended up to five years. For Employee Practices Liability Insurance, Benes obtained a quote from Cincinnati Insurance and wondered if he should move forward once the current Beehive Policy expires. After discussion, a consensus was reached that further exploration about group health insurance, for full-time employees, was appropriate and that employees should be polled about their desire for such insurance in place of the current stipend. Anthem Insurance remains the best option for accidental death, dismemberment, life, etc. Two new speakerphones, with enhanced speaker qualities, were purchased for online meetings and presentations. Suggestions were previously made by the lawyer and by Evans for revisions to the By-Laws and Conflict of Interest Policy. Benes described the online ThinkHR Handbook as a system that would contain suggested language for rule changes and possible answers for various human resources issues. Benes finished contacting Golden Sand's LCC committees. Outagamie County asked that their contact be delayed until spring 2021. Tentative arrangements are in November for Adams, Juneau, and Monroe Counties but it is possible these will also be delayed if the Covid-19 issues continue.

**Forestry/Agriculture/Wildlife Committee Report:** Benes indicated that the old Woods and Wildlife Grant has finished. The new one is broader in scope, covering demonstration forests, various workshops, forestry education, recruiting new landowners, etc. and will go for three years. Benes expects to hear back about a US Forest Service Habitat Restoration Grant next week. A mapping blitz for the Central Wisconsin Invasives Partnership (CWIP) is finishing up and is concentrating on Japanese knotweed, teasels, and wild parsnip. CWIP will hold a Multi-Session Forest Invasives Webinar on September 26, 2020, that will focus on identification and mapping. There are two upcoming meetings for the Northeast Wisconsin Invasive Species Coalition (NEWISC). A meeting focusing on forming and developing the group will be held on October 19, 2020, and a meeting focusing on current and future grant projects will be held on November 9, 2020. This year has been a busy year for tree shelters, with a total of 21 orders and an average of \$260/order. About \$900 in revenue was made. The Neighborhood Gardens project is coming to close as we are getting closer to the end of the growing season. Grazing plans are still being written and some pasture walks have occurred. Fundraising is ongoing for the next Little Plover River Appreciation Day. The online Waupaca County Conservation Field Day (WCCFD) is set for September 25, 2020. The rest of the Hamerstrom books were sold to Clean Green Action.

**Water Committee Report:** Evans outlined today's meeting. Leichtnam reported the information he outlined earlier in the regular business meeting. Hamerla indicated that the pandemic has made getting AIS volunteers, whose time is usually used for work on the AIS grants, difficult and may not reach the required level. Hamerla and Cisar were able to do more field work than usual this year because of the situation. The current AIS regional grant will expire around the end of 2021. Due to the upcoming change in the WDNR Surface Water Grants, regional AIS funding through a regional grant will no longer be available. Any new grant is expected to concentrate more on coordinating and less on field work. He will be

participating in a waterfall outreach event at Mead Wildlife Center on September 26, 2020, with the assistance of six UWSP student volunteers. This year's LTE positions may last until October because of the pandemic conditions. He expects that he and Cisar will be working on reimbursement papers in October and November 2020. Cisar has been checking Marquette County lakes since starry stonewort was found in one lake in that county this summer. Thorstenson was working with Buckatabon Lake in Vilas County this summer on rearing the weevils that attack Eurasian Watermilfoil. In August 2020, 293 weevils were released into the lake. The lake plans to continue the project for two more years with an increased number of growing tanks. She also provided weevils from various lakes for a project at Montana State that is looking into genetic diversity. In Waushara County, an 18 month pending citation for manure runoff was finally concluded recently, with the judge ordering that the cattle be removed and sold. Some were sold at auction, some to local farmers, and some went to slaughterhouses. This concludes about 10 years of manure runoff into Waushara County roads and waters. Any funds from the dispersal will go to pay the county for the various procedures involved in this case and to an outstanding loan of the farmer. The county has postponed its planned drone flyover shore inventory until spring 2021. Waushara County is participating in the multi-county Central Sands Groundwater Collaborative. A grant application is being submitted for \$70,000 by October 1, 2020, for gap analysis and development of short and long-term strategies. Nancy Turyk, of Wood County, will coordinate. Private well testing throughout Taylor County continues. Recent well test results revealed 20% had fecal coliform, one had e-coli, and two had high nitrates. Stream monitoring has been ongoing for five years. The Taylor County Farmland Preservation Plan is being updated. The Friendship Lake District is still in litigation about the price it paid for taking over the dam which has needed, and still needs, expensive repairs. Members voted to increase the mil rate district property owners pay to fund repairs not covered by a loan application for \$380,000, which was also approved by the membership. The Water Resources Specialist in Adams County has taken another job somewhere else. Natural lakes and streams in Adams County continue to experience high water. Earlier this week, the Petenwell-Castle Rock Stewards and the Consolidated Musky Club coordinated a memorial fish stocking of 550 muskies, in Petenwell Lake, in honor of a long-time Petenwell & Castle Rock (PACRS) board member and a long-time member of the Musky Club.

### **NEW PROJECTS:**

There are two new gold sheets from the Waters Committee.

- 1) The first project is for Hamerla, Cisar, and Plonsky to do aquatic invasive species (AIS) work for Juneau and Columbia Counties, starting January 1, 2021. Funds would come from a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Lake Monitoring and Protection Grant for a total of \$26,559.39. The Land Conservation Departments of both counties will also assist. The application, which is due on November 1, 2020, will also need a resolution passed by the full council. Motion by Clendenning, seconded by Evans, to approve the project and the resolution. Motion carried unanimously.
- 2) The second gold sheet is a contract with Clear Lake for diving and boat operation to remove Eurasian Watermilfoil from the lake, which started on July 20, 2020, for \$1,909.75.

There are two new gold sheets from the Forestry Committee.

3) NRCS co-employment contract for soil conservationists. Total funding for five years is \$1,457,062 or about \$364,265.50 annually.

4) A project to set up a second demonstration forest in Waupaca County at the Oz Natural Area and Center for Biodiversity Education. A \$2000 grant was received from the Waupaca Area Community Foundation. This project started September 1, 2020.

Motion by Evans, seconded by Barden, to approve projects (2) to (4). Motion carried unanimously.

**STAFF/PROJECT UPDATES:** Staff reports were sent out before the meeting. Printed copies were also available at the meeting.

**AGENCY/PARTNER REPORTS:** None.

**OTHER REPORTS:**

**Credit Card:** Benes indicated that the original plan was to have Hilgart be the new authorizing person on the credit card. However, further investigation indicated that the named person must be an officer, president, treasurer, director, or owner, so a staff member cannot be named. Treasurer Beaström has agreed to be the named person.

**Thanks:** O'Donnell thanked the council for the recognition and the cupcakes, which read "Thank you, Hugh and Al". He received another round of applause.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion made by Barden, seconded by Clendenning, to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 12:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reesa Evans  
Recording Secretary