

MINUTES  
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2020  
WOOD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ROOM #114, WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI

Members Present: Ken Curry, Robert Ashbeck, Jake Hahn, Dave LaFontaine, Bill Leichtnam

Staff Present:

Land & Water Conservation Staff: Shane Wucherpennig

Planning & Zoning Staff: Jason Grueneberg

Extension Staff: Jason Hausler, Karli Tomsyck (via WebEx), Nancy Turyk (via WebEx), Hannah Wendels (via WebEx)

Others Present: Dist. #14 Supervisor Dennis Polach, Dist. #15 Supervisor Bill Clendenning, Dist. # 16 Supervisor Lance Pliml (via WebEx), Scott Larson (via WebEx), Josh Miller (via WebEx)

1. **Call meeting to order.** Chairperson Curry called the CEED meeting to order at 9:00am.
2. **Declaration of Quorum.** Chairperson Curry declared a quorum.
3. **Public Comments (*brief comments/statement regarding committee business*)**  
None.
4. **Review Correspondence.**  
None.
5. **Consent Agenda.** The Consent Agenda included the following items: 1) minutes of the June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 CEED meeting, 2) bills from Land & Water Conservation, Planning & Zoning and Extension and 3) staff activity reports from Laura Huber, Matt Lippert, Nancy Turyk, Allison Jonjak, Jackie Carattini, Hannah Wendels, Kelly Hammond, Rachael Whitehair, Adam Groshek, Caleb Armstrong, Dave Christensen, Emily Salvinski, Lori Ruess, Rod Mayer, Shane Wucherpennig, Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn, Paul Bernard, Jeff Brewbaker, Kim Keech and Victoria Wilson.
  - 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.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve and accept the June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 CEED minutes, bills from Planning & Zoning, Land & Water Conservation and Extension, and staff activity reports as presented. Second by Bill Leichtnam.*

*Chair Curry requested office operation updates from each department.*

- *Land & Water Conservation is open and fully staffed. Riverblock has reopened with health screening at the entrance.*
- *Planning & Zoning office is open full time. Two staff members are in the office. Jason is trying to keep staff separated and does not want to fully staff since confirmed cases continue to increase in Wood County.*
- *Extension's office is now open on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Additional staff integration is to come with staggered shifts. Staff continue to provide remote programming and are always available via phone or email.*

*Motion carried unanimously.*

6. **Risk and Injury Report.** None.
7. **Land & Water Conservation Department**
  - a. 2021 Budget  
Shane Wucherpennig noted typically the County Board Chair sends out a budget letter and finance provides some direction. Land & Water Conservation has done a lot of budget groundwork for staff and

salary items, but there seems to be a shortness in guidance and what levels need to be met. Shane feels Land and Water will be in good shape in terms of the 2021 budget.

Chair Curry speculates more guidance for the 2021 budget will come out in the next week. Discussion followed.

a. Review Livestock Facility Siting Article in Wisconsin County Association Magazine

Supervisor Ashbeck requested this article from the June 2020 edition be shared during the meeting. He is concerned about the standards set in the Central Sands area and feels more should have been done.

Shane Wucherpfennig provided a brief overview of the article and context from Land & Water Conservation. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Leichtnam expressed disappointment that the approach seems to be reactive, rather than proactive. He also mentioned it is important to note the article is written from a legal perspective.

Following lengthy discussion, it was determined that the Land and Water Conservation Department Head look at this for a future agenda topic and come back to the committee with a proposal. This will be moved to a future agenda item.

b. Committee Reports

i. **Citizen's Groundwater Committee meeting.**

Supervisor Leichtnam shared they attempted a virtual meeting two months ago. There was not enough interest so last month's meeting was cancelled.

ii. **Health Committee report.**

Shane Wucherpfennig shared the Health Department's nitrate lab is now open and running.

i. **Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGWCC) committee report.**

Supervisor Leichtnam shared the committee met virtually on May 29th. It was very successful and more people attended than expected. Nancy Turyk (Extension Wood County) and Nathan Sandwick (Extension Portage County) facilitated the breakout rooms for attendees and work groups.

Moving forward, there will likely be quarterly virtual meetings for the CSGWCC committee. Bill noted John Exo, Doug Reinemann and Patrick Robinson are names that will become familiar to the committee and County Board. They have been putting a lot of effort into nitrates and will be presenting at a coming County Board meeting. They will be sharing new tools they're developing to help with nitrate reduction. Discussion followed.

**8. Private Sewage.** Nothing to report.

**9. Land Records.** Nothing to report.

**10. County Surveyor.** Nothing to report.

**11. Planning**

**12. Economic Development**

a. Update from the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MACCI) and consider release of 2020 economic development grant funds.

Chair Curry requested to move this item up on the agenda. Committee approved.

Scott Larson presented an update from Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MACCI) on key metrics, workforce talent initiatives, business attraction/marketing, business retention/expansion, business creation, COVID related economic development actions and other related economic development actions.

Chair Curry asked for a comparison of where businesses are at now versus January. Scott noted there is variation since some businesses were deemed essential and did well through the Safer at Home order. The businesses impacted the most were those subject to a partial or full shutdown. Scott also shared MACCI is seeing a lot of activity with their job board. Unemployment was at 3% prior to COVID, went up to 20% during COVID, and is now currently at 12%.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve release of 2020 economic development grant funds to Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the amount of \$19,500.00. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.*

b. Discuss 2021 Economic Development Budget and the 2021 grant program for economic development projects and organizations

Jason Grueneberg shared he wanted to discuss and decide if there will be a grant program for 2021. His hope is that a similar grant program to 2020 can be established for 2021 and focus efforts on economic recovery.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to request the first cut of the budget for 2021 proposed economic development be \$275,000.00. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.*

Jason reviewed potential projects. He would like to see money used toward economic development but there is a question of where it's needed most right now. Discussion followed.

Supervisor LaFontaine suggested asking the weekly Economic Development roundtable group for feedback on what needs are. He would like to know what the needs are throughout the area and County and what the group sees as the highest priority. This should help determine from a County Board standpoint what assistance they need to provide throughout the county.

c. Update on the Rural Economic Development Innovation Initiative

Jason Grueneberg shared an update on REDI and noted economic development issues have been changing since the beginning of the year. They would like to get the steering committee back together. The next meeting will be held virtually in July. Purdue will help facilitate the meeting. The goal is to have the document ready by September.

Nancy Turyk shared she has been meeting with the Purdue group and Extension staff who are providing support. They meet monthly to discuss what is happening. Nancy noted some of the REDI projects that have been completed are already receiving funding. For example, the broadband initiative just received about one million dollars to move forward. Nancy also noted the sooner the plan is completed, the longer we will have for Purdue and Extension to help with implementation. The July REDI meeting will be held on the 22nd.

d. General Economic Development Update

Jason Grueneberg noted the focus right now is keeping the weekly round table/economic recovery meetings going. There are currently two meetings per week.

Regular Economic Development meetings on Thursdays last about an hour and discuss how COVID is impacting community, government and businesses. Jason has looked to the Marshfield and Wisconsin Rapids Chambers as "boots on the ground" and provide reports on what is happening with businesses. The Health Department has been a staple in providing a weekly report. Having a unified approach with the Health Department and businesses has been very positive.

Jason noted supervisors are welcome to attend the meetings.

e. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Update

Jason Grueneberg shared they need to start thinking about projects for next year and emphasized the importance of asking. County level and community level projects, etc. are things that should be discussed for 2021.

Discussion followed regarding commission memberships.

### 13. Extension

a. General Office Update

Jason Hausler provided the following updates:

- Extension's physical office space is now open on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Staff are always available during normal business hours via phone and email.
- The Horticulture Coordinator position was on hold due to a hiring freeze but Extension can now start to initiate new hires. As the budget is discussed, Jason is cautiously optimistic the position can be filled but is holding off on posting the position until 2021 budget guidelines are released.
- Extension is in the planning process with the budget. The budget is in line with cost savings for 2021.
- Jason mentioned during the June CEED meeting, with state being on furloughs, some cost savings will be returned back to the County. Contractual services for 2020 will be decreased.
- The state is projecting a 2% cost of living adjusted on contracted fees for 2021 from \$41,500.00 to \$42,300.00. The projection for 2021 will be lower than 2020 because of recalculation of salaries and benefits.
- The Clean Sweep grant was awarded from DATCP. Clean Sweep will occur toward the end of August 2020. It is set to be held in Marshfield.
- Nancy Turyk and Jackie Carattini are serving on the Community Impact sub team in response to Verso closing. Extension will continue to play a role in these efforts and conversations because of the community and statewide impact.

b. 2019 Annual Report

Jason Hausler shared copies of the 2019 Annual Report with committee members. Wendy Young worked with staff to create the document. Jason shared the following 2019 highlights:

- Agriculture - Allison Jonjak was hired as the state's first Cranberry Specialist. She is based in Wisconsin Rapids.
- Agriculture – training for youth making career choices, as also mentioned by Scott Larson. Matt Lippert has been working on this as well as many other initiatives including focus on financial stress, farm safety training and mental health awareness. Farm Technology Day grants have helped with partnerships to extend Extension's reach.
- Community Development – Nancy Turyk worked on achieving SolSmart designation (along with Doug Machon), Solar Energy Project at Nepco Lake, Clean Sweep, Economic Development and Strategic Planning.
- Health & Well-Being – nearly 1,700 contacts were made through FoodWise, with 419 being direct educational contacts.
- Human Development & Relationships – 52 individuals completed Rent Smart training done by Jackie Carattini and developed knowledge and skills essential for a successful renting experience. Carattini also partnered with various agencies including Financial Stability Coalition of South Wood and Adams Counties, Ho-Chunk head Start Program and Boys & Girls Club of the Wisconsin Rapids Area to promote financial education to over 600 Wood County youth.
- Natural Resources – Rachael Whitehair was hired as the Regional Natural Resource Educator. She participated in the UWSP-Wausau Career Expo. Rachael recently created a video about Farmers of Mill Creek.
- Positive Youth Development – Laura Huber has worked on programs such as Project GEN Connect and summer camp. For 2020, the summer "Camp in a Box" program has over 400

families with over 1000 children participating. 4-H also partnered with Hewitt's Meats for a meat processing contest.

c. Extension's Work Related to Renewables

Supervisor Hahn wanted to make the CEED committee aware that Nancy has been doing quite a bit of work for the Renewable and Sustainability committee.

Nancy shared a brief overview of how her time is currently allocated. She has about 30% capacity available to help the County implement the energy plan. About 40-60% time is needed to implement the plan based on R&S meeting discussion.

Chair Curry noted how Nancy's time is allocated is up to the department head. If the R&S committee would be okay with an adjusted timeline, Jason Hausler would support Nancy's involvement. Jason also noted local government support is part of the Community Development Educator job description.

d. Educational Presentation – Hannah Wendels

Hannah Wendels is the FoodWise Nutrition Educator for Extension and started in November 2019. Her role includes teaching nutrition lessons at three elementary schools in Wood County and an adult education series at SWEPS. Due to COVID-19, some lessons have moved to an online format and she has been working on virtual lessons for the elementary schools for fall.

Hannah shared the following programming highlights:

- In April/May, FoodWise, 4-H and Family Living collaborated with Boys & Girls Club of the Wisconsin Rapids Area to offer educational activity kits for families with children under 18 once per week for five weeks. Activities went out every Friday, reaching over 200 families in Wood County.
- In late June, Hannah facilitated and represented Extension and FoodWise in a cross-state discussion on virtual education. States included Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska and Wisconsin. Hannah was chosen because of her early experience with virtual education in February 2020 when FoodWise piloted an online parent education series via Zoom.
- Also in late June, Hannah co-taught a parent education series with a colleague in Portage County. They partnered with the Women Infant and Children (WIC) program and had a group of six parents join on Mondays for one hour for 3 weeks. The series focused on taking pressure off feeding your children at home and beginning basics of MyPlate. A third series of the class is being planned and a Facebook group is being utilized to connect parents from the online classes to further their education and maintain connections with each other and the educators.
- Hannah began working with the Wood County Health Department at the beginning of the summer. Her work in public health and Extension align very closely. She works with local farmers, vendors, businesses and organizations to build the Wisconsin Rapids Downtown Farmers market and promote/educate residents on buying locally grown food and supporting the community.

**14. Schedule next regular committee meeting.**

The next regular CEED meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 5, 2020 at 9:00am at Wood County Courthouse in Conference Room #114.

**15. Agenda items for next meeting**

*Agenda items are due by July 29<sup>th</sup>.*

- Continuing Report on Economic Development - Verso

**16. Schedule any additional meetings if necessary.** None.

**17. Adjourn.** Chair Curry declared the meeting adjourned at 12:07pm.