

MINUTES  
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2020  
WOOD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ROOM #115, WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI

Members Present: Ken Curry, Robert Ashbeck, Mark Holbrook (arrived at 9:58am), Dave LaFontaine, Bill Leichtnam, Carmen Good

Staff Present:

Land & Water Conservation Staff: Shane Wucherpennig  
Planning & Zoning Staff: Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn  
Extension Staff: Karli Tomsyck, Nancy Turyk, Rachael Whitehair

Others Present: Doug Machon (Wood County Board Chair), Bill Clendenning (District #15), Dennis Polach (District #14), Jana Suriano

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.**  
No correspondence from Planning & Zoning.

Shane Wucherpennig reviewed two items. First, the countywide water testing program offered last summer received county funds to offer free water sampling to all county residents. The goal was to sample at least one private well in each section of every township. Land & Water Conservation set up at various town halls for pick-up and drop-off but only about 40% of wells have been tested so far. Shane would like to talk to Executive Committee about continuing testing for another year with the remaining appropriated money. Shane wanted to start with the CEED Committee and will formally bring the item to the February agenda. This is not a request for new money; it is just a continuation of testing with remaining funds. The CEED Committee is in favor so Shane will put this item on the agenda for February. Next, Shane reviewed; in May 2019 Land and Water Conservation brought two resolutions to the committee regarding a TRM grant. Documents were signed on May 1st and for some reason, the original signed resolutions are missing. Shane requested a set of signatures from Ken to move forward.

5. **Consent Agenda.** The Consent Agenda included the following items: 1) minutes of the December 4th, 2019 CEED meeting, 2) bills from Land & Water Conservation, Planning & Zoning and Extension and 3) staff activity reports from Shane Wucherpennig, Adam Groshek, Rod Mayer, Lori Ruess, Emily Salvinski, Adam DeKleyn, Paul Bernard, Jeff Brewbaker, Stevana Hamus, Kim Keech, Victoria Wilson, Laura Huber, Matt Lippert, Nancy Turyk, Jackie Carattini, Hannah Wendels, Janell Wehr and Rachael Whitehair.
  - 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 December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 CEED minutes, bills from Planning & Zoning, Land & Water Conservation and Extension, and staff activity reports as presented. Second by Bill Leichtnam Motion carried unanimously.*

6. **Risk and Injury Report.** None.
7. **Land & Water Conservation Department**

- a. Update on TRM 319 Grant for Mill Creek.

Shane Wucherpennig shared the 9-key plan was written and submitted in early 2019. It was approved by the state DNR and federal EPA. The next step was to apply for funds to get the project going. Shane

put the TRM grant together with the 9-key plan and when the preliminary 2020 budgets came out from DATCP, he heard tentatively that Land & Water Conservation received the 319 grant. Shane received a letter last week, which required his signature for the grant. The \$600,600.00 grant was officially received. If things go well with phosphorous reduction, Shane stated they will reapply in three years for additional funding. Shane noted the grant money is exclusively for Mill Creek and focusing on reducing phosphorous there. Supervisor LaFontaine asked if the grant requires matching funds from the county; Shane responded that it does not. Shane explained a portion of the money is allocated for administrative functions. Chair Curry questioned if the work can be done with current staff. Shane said no and will give further information under item C. Originally, 10% of the grant could be used for local assistant staffing funds. Department of Natural Resources is now considering up to 40% of the grant being used for administrative functions. Supervisor Ashbeck asked if the grant extends to Portage County. Shane noted Portage County did not apply for the grant. Although Mill Creek runs through multiple counties, the grant dollars are only for Wood. Discussion followed.

Shane noted there is a possibility for additional 9-key plans for areas like Hemlock Creek but staffing would not allow it right now. Chair Curry asked how we are notified when money is available. The understanding is the entity providing the funding will contact local officials.

b. Update on status of Conservation Specialist job posting.

Shane Wucherpfnig shared Emily Salvinski, Conservation Specialist, requested her position change from full time to half time. Emily's title will remain the same and she will work 40 hours per pay period, instead of 80. Her position will now be supported with grant dollars. Shane posted to replace her position at 100% full time. It was posted prior to the holidays with a deadline of 1/5/2020. 35 applications were received. 10 of which were deemed incomplete by the cyber recruiting site. Shane will work the remaining 25 down to 6 for initial interviews. Shane hopes to have someone on board in January. Land & Water Conservation staff will now total 5.5, instead of 5.

a. Report on December 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> County Conservationist meeting.

Shane Wucherpfnig attended both days and noted the sessions were worth attending. This year there was a session called "conservation roundtable discussions". This included seasoned County Conservationists and allowed the audience to ask questions and learn from their experiences. Shane was asked and agreed to be on the panel.

Shane noted Land and Water Association hosts County Conservationist meetings twice per year. Staff from the entire state attend including County Conservationists and County Board Supervisors.

On December 13th, there was a session called "speed round table". This gave every county from Marquette to Wood 2 or 3 minutes to talk about good things going on in their county. Water was the main topic of discussion. Shane noted that almost every county represented is also battling many of the same issues as Wood County.

b. Committee Reports

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

Supervisor Leichtnam shared the December meeting was focused on preparing for the Groundwater Panel Discussion.

The Citizen's Groundwater Committee meets on the third Monday of the month at Riverblock in Room 206. The next meeting will be on January 20th.

Supervisor Leichtnam felt the panel discussion was a highly successful event. Wisconsin Rapids Community Media recorded the program. Discussion followed.

Supervisor LaFontaine asked if there will be a report from the group. Supervisor Leichtnam was told by Senator Testin and Katrina Shankland that the recommendations will be released in Madison at 12:00pm on January 8th.

Supervisor Leichtnam will have Kim Keech send the link to all members of the Citizens Groundwater Group and County Board Supervisors. It can be viewed at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTJpg8dH\\_vo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTJpg8dH_vo)

ii. **Health Committee report.**

There is nothing new to report at this time.

iii. **Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGCC) committee report.**

Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGCC) now includes six counties surrounding Wood. It is formed of County Conservationists and County Board Supervisors to collaborate between county lines. Nancy Turyk stated during the last meeting they decided what type of formalized structure they should have, which was necessitated by county resolutions.

A Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary will be elected during the January 27th meeting. Nancy believes they plan to retain structure with three working groups: communication, technical and supervisors. Nancy has been facilitating the technical workgroup and anticipates continuing on with that. Nancy involved Nathan Sandwick, Portage County, who will help facilitate the communication workgroup.

Shane Wucherpennig forwarded a request for funding to do a study in the Central Sands region with the six counties involved. A letter from Katrina Shankland, drafted in December, went out to every county collaborator about funding proposals. Shane believes more will be known when recommendations are released today.

Shane noted every county involved with CSGCC is at a different level of geospatial technology and study work so it is important to combine all that information together first and then evaluate where information is lacking. Discussion followed.

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

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

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

**11. Planning**

a. Review/Action on Town of Grand Rapids Zoning Map Amendment.

Adam DeKleyn presented a zoning amendment for the Town of Grand Rapids. The request was received in December. Any town zoning amendments require County Board approval. The existing zoning on the property is agricultural. The request is to rezone the parcel into residential zoning classification. It is a 1.25 acre lot. It is a smaller parcel and there is a residential single family home on the parcel. Any parcel in the town of Grand Rapids that is smaller than 5 acres in size cannot be zoned agricultural. The Town of Grand Rapids Plan Commission unanimously recommended approval of the rezone on December 9, 2019. Subsequently, the Town Board held a public hearing and unanimously approved the rezone on December 10, 2019. The final step is approval by County Board.

After review of the information the Town of Grand Rapids submitted to Planning & Zoning, Adam confirmed they followed proper zoning processes as outline by state statute. Adam recommends approving the zoning amendment.

Supervisor Ashbeck expressed concern about the 5-acre minimum and whether they are going to take all agricultural zoning away from this area. Supervisor Holbrook agreed and stated we are not making

agricultural land anymore. Adam addressed the point that with town zoning, authority is somewhat limited. Some are pursuing residential properties and some are not.

*Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve Town of Grand Rapids Zoning Map amendment as presented. Second by Bill Leichtnam.*

*Ayes – Kenneth Curry, Mark Holbrook, Dave LaFontaine, Bill Leichtnam  
Nay – Robert Ashbeck*

*Supervisor Ashbeck expressed concern because of the encroachment on agricultural land.*

*Motion carried.*

## **12. Economic Development**

### **a. Discuss next Economic Development meeting.**

Jason Grueneberg shared the past year there have been two monthly CEED committee meetings – the regularly scheduled meeting and the Economic Development focused meeting held after County Board. The December Economic Development meeting was foregone and Jason would like to discuss whether there will be a January meeting. Following discussion, it was determined there are likely conflicts after the January and February County Board meetings. Jason noted if there is a light agenda on February 5th, Economic Development could be discussed during the regular meeting.

### **b. Update on the Regional Economic Development Innovation Initiative.**

The first Regional Economic Development Innovation Initiative workshop was held on December 18-19, 2019 at UW-Stevens Point at Marshfield. Jason Grueneberg noted it was well attended by the steering committee and a few other supervisors. The one and a half day workshop included introductions, icebreakers and deciding what themes would be addressed during the REDI process. Two themes were identified: economic development and quality of life. Two groups were created to address the themes. The groups worked together to identify objectives and strategies related to the themes.

Jason noted there will be a meeting with the steering committee to determine strategies to complete objectives. They are looking to expand the steering committee, which is currently around 21-22 people. The core group will meet this week to recap what transpired at the workshop and talk about the next meeting logistics. All steering committee meetings are publicly posted for anyone to attend.

Purdue University and UW-Madison attended at the REDI workshop. Since they are nearer than Purdue, UW will be doing a lot of the work with the Wood County REDI group.

Jason shared they hope to have a strategy complete by April. The county team will work to draft the plan and articulate information from the workshops. Supervisor Holbrook asked how and who gauges quality of life issues. Nancy noted everything is framed around economic development. Sue Kunferman attended the workshop for the Health Department to discuss some aspects of quality of life. Supervisor Holbrook also asked if there are union members associated with this effort. He noted quality of life is impacted by quality of work and wants to know who is representing those needs. Lengthy discussion followed.

Chair Curry reviewed strategic planning points from the REDI workshop and noted it will be important to have someone supervising the process. Jason added a lot of the implementation will not fall on county staff, but on a variety of people. Following discussion, Nancy Turyk noted all supervisors who are representing the public are welcome to join the REDI conversations.

Supervisor LaFontaine stated as a member of CEED and observer to the process, he was impressed with the diversity of people who participated in the REDI workshop. He noted the county was well served by those selected to participate.

Jason anticipates updates will be sent to the full County Board so they know who is on the steering committee and advised members to look for workshop information by mid-February. All workshops will be publicly noticed – anyone interested is welcome to attend. Discussion followed.

Jason provided a brief update on what he is working on with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission. He is currently establishing a 2020 work plan that identifies projects that the RPC will complete. In addition, Economic Development Administration (EDA) projects are being identified to be included in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). When the projects are included in the CEDS, they will become eligible for EDA funding opportunities in the future.

### 13. Extension

a. March County Board Presentation – UW-Madison Staff

UW-Madison, via the Division of Extension and College of Ag and Life Sciences, has created a new water quality specialist position, which is held by John Exo. Chair Curry noted John will be attending the January County Board meeting to listen to Kevin Masarik's presentation. John is also willing to come to a County Board meeting to introduce himself and his position.

Supervisor Leichtnam shared copies of a letter from Doug Reinemann with the committee. A resolution from the CEED Committee went before County Board in April 2019 regarding the importance of nitrogen reduction and prompted the letter from Doug and the UW-Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences explaining what they plan to do. Discussion followed.

*Motion by Bill Leichtnam to invite John Exo and Doug Reinemann for a presentation at the March 17<sup>th</sup> County Board meeting and invite the Portage County Executive and County Board Chair to the meeting. Second by Dave LaFontaine Motion carried unanimously.*

b. Educational Presentation – Nancy Turyk

Nancy Turyk shared an update on the Wood County Strategic Plan. It has been ongoing the past year and was initiated by a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee. Nancy and Vice Chair Rozar had laid out a proposal of the steps they would take to garner information from County Board Supervisors and department heads regarding the strategic planning process. The purpose behind developing a strategic plan is to provide a common vision that staff, stakeholders and elected officials understand and are operating under. This process identifies the most pertinent strategic goals a county may have.

Nancy explained a common vision within the county is important among staff members. Three rounds of surveys went out to County Board Supervisors asking about core values and what they see as the mission for the county. They have also worked with department heads to identify strategic goals for their areas.

Nancy noted there is a draft version of the county vision and mission statements, as well as strategic plan components.

Supervisor Rozar and Nancy recently expanded their team to include department heads who volunteered to assist with the writing of the plan so there is a broader perspective in the final document. The team includes Jason Grueneberg, Sue Kunferman, Kim McGrath and Brandon Vruwink.

Nancy explained the next steps will be to meet with department heads again for input when a draft is ready. It will then go to Executive Committee for their comments. Then there will be a combined

meeting at the end of a County Board Meeting for department heads and County Board Supervisors to talk about any details and suggestions. The plan would then be sent to County Board for approval.

The strategic plan has six categories: Communication, Economic Vitality, Financial Resources, Health and Safety, Human Resources, Infrastructure. Narratives to describe each category and provide context for the strategies will be identified.

Supervisor Ashbeck asked if the plan will be communicated to town boards in rural areas. Nancy responded that she would be happy to present to towns associations or village boards. Supervisor Holbrook suggested sending a hard copy of the approved plan with an invitation to present on specifics. Chair Curry agreed the municipalities should be aware of the direction we are trying to head.

Nancy is hopeful the plan will be approved by March.

Discussion followed.

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

The next regular CEED meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 9:00am at Wood County Courthouse in Conference Room #115.

**15. Agenda items for next meeting**

None

**16. Schedule any additional meetings if necessary**

**17. Adjourn.** Chair Curry declared the meeting adjourned at 11:37am.

*Minutes by Karli Tomsyck, UW-Madison Division of Extension - Wood County*