

MINUTES
 CONSERVATION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
 WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2022
 WOOD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ROOM #114, WISCONSIN RAPIDS WI

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

Staff Present:

Planning & Zoning Staff: Jason Grueneberg, Karoline Whitman, Adam DeKleyn, Paul Bernard
 Land & Water Conservation Staff: Shane Wucherpfennig, Lori Ruess
 UW Extension Staff: Jason Hausler

Others Present: Dist. #14 Supervisor Dennis Polach, Dist. #15 Supervisor Bill Clendenning, Dist. #16 Supervisor Lance Pliml, Ed Newton, Finance Director (WebEx), Ben Jeffrey, Environmental Health Supervisor, (WebEx), Mitchel Olson, Bug Tussel General Counsel (WebEx).

1. **Call to Order.** Chairperson Leichtnam called the CEED meeting to order at 9:00 am.
2. **Declaration of Quorum.** Chair Leichtnam declared a quorum.
3. **Chair's Remarks.** Chair Leichtnam added this item to the agenda because there are two new members on CEED and he would like each member to give a short biography, and why they were interested in serving on the CEED Committee. This item may not be on all future agendas.

Bill Leichtnam – Born on a farm 4 miles from Abbotsford. School Teacher in Nekoosa. Former student asked him to run for County Board. Bill is an environmentalist.

Dave LaFontaine – Retired Professional Civil Engineer. 30-year career with the Military. Interested in sewer, water, and conservation.

Laura Valenstein – Works in genetic sequencing. Served in the Military for 16 years. Was appointed to CEED.

Carmen Good - Retired dairy farmer. Serves on the FSA Committee. FSA representative for CEED.

Tom Buttke – Newly elected to County Board. Served on Wood County Board years ago. Retired Marshfield Alderperson. Appointed to CEED and feels he will fit in well.

Jake Hahn – Owner of Hahn's Transportation (school bus). Interested in Economic Development.

Chair Leichtnam added it is his goal is to shorten the length of the monthly CEED meetings, if possible. He talked to members of the Committee and appointed supervisors to work as liaison for each department that reports to CEED. Bill Leichtnam – Land Conservation, Jake Hahn – Extension, Dave LaFontaine – Planning & Zoning.

4. **Public Comment.** Bill Clendenning commented there is an agenda item on the May 6th Judicial & Legislative Committee agenda to terminate the Renewable & Sustainable Committee. He does not want that Committee terminated and would like to see it report to CEED through UWEX.
5. **Review Correspondence.** None
6. **Consent Agenda.** The Consent Agenda included the following Items: 1) minutes of the April 6, 2022 and April 25, 2022 CEED meetings, 2) bills from Planning & Zoning, Land & Water Conservation and UW Extension and 3) staff activity reports from Laura Huber, Matt Lippert, Allison

Jonjak, Hannah Wendels, Janell Wehr, Jackie Carattini, Rachael Whitehair, Shane Wucherpennig, Caleb Armstrong, Emily Salvinski, Lori Ruess, Rodney Mayer, Jason Grueneberg, Adam DeKleyn, Paul Bernard, Jeff Brewbaker, Scott Custer, Victoria Wilson.

- A. Minutes of April 6, 2022. No additions or corrections needed.
Minutes of April 25, 2021. No additions or corrections needed.
- B. Department Bills. No additions or corrections needed.
- C. Staff Activity Reports. No additions or corrections needed.

Motion by Dave LaFontaine to approve and accept the April 6, 2022 and April 25, 2022 CEED minutes, bills from Planning & Zoning, Land & Water Conservation and UW Extension, and staff activity reports as presented. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.

- 7. **Review items, if any, pulled from Consent Agenda.** None.
- 8. **Risk and Injury Report.** None.
- 9. **Land & Water Conservation Department.**

Shane handed out the LCC Guidance sheet and LWCD Acronym list.

- A. Update on Conservation Engineering Technician Position. Shane Wucherpennig shared the Conservation Engineering Technician position was originally posted in February. Due to the lack of qualified applicants, the application deadline date was extended. Currently received approximately 10 applications and interviewed one candidate in person and one virtual. Will hold second interviews. Could be the end of the month before the position is filled.
- B. Letter of Support for the CSGCC Proposed USGS Grant for a Groundwater Model. Shane Wucherpennig and Bill Leichtnam gave a brief background on the Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGCC) for the new members on CEED. The CSGCC was formed four years ago. Nine counties in the Central Sands region formed the collative. Currently six counties are active – Juneau, Adams, Wood, Waushara, Portage and Marathon. Hired Dr. Carla Romano, Research Associate at Wisconsin Geological & Natural History Survey, to compile data on nitrates and neonicotinoids contamination in groundwater. The GAP Analysis was so successful that they are looking at applying for another grant. The CSGCC meets monthly, but there is some talk about going to quarterly meeting.

Chair Leichtnam signed the letter supporting the proposed USGS grant for a groundwater model, adding he is committing Wood County to meetings and educating County staff.

- C. Discuss AGC MOU. Shane Wucherpennig shared the Armenia Growers Coalition (AGC) was formed by three large-scale farms in the northern Juneau County area to provide free well testing and reverse osmosis systems to people who have elevated levels of nitrates in their wells in the towns of Armenia and Port Edwards. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Wisconsin DNR, Juneau County, Wood County and the AGC is in place through the end of 2022. The counties and DNR have some concerns, as the AGC has not lived up to the MOU. Working with Corporation Counsel on a letter asking for a renegotiated MOU with enforcement mechanisms.
- D. Committee Reports
 - i. Citizens Groundwater Group meeting. Chair Leichtnam reported briefly on the April 18th Citizens Groundwater Group meeting. Speakers were Adam Voskuil and Andrea Gelatt, Staff Attorney and Senior Staff Attorney at Midwest Environmental Advocates. He referred to a February 14 press release; “New Report Finds Water Pollution Would Likely Worsen...” and the Citizen’s Groundwater Group meeting minutes.

The Citizens Groundwater Group meets the third Monday of each month at 2:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 16. This will be an in person and virtual WebEx meeting.

- ii. Health Committee report. Ben Jeffrey mentioned Chair Leichtnam and Shane Wucherpennig covered mostly everything on the AGC earlier in the meeting. The AGC MOU meeting was held on April 21. There is a Towns meeting in Necedah tonight at 6:30 pm, at the Necedah Town Hall.
- iii. Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGWCC) Committee Report. Chair Leichtnam shared it is quite impressive that a smaller County – Waushara County (through ARPA funds) has enough money to do an 80/20 cost-share to help approximately 80 homeowners with reverse osmosis (RO) systems. Marquette County used \$30,000 from ARPA for water testing. Would like to see Wood County apply some ARPA money towards water testing.
- iv. Golden Sands RC&D report. Chair Leichtnam shared that CEED needs to appoint a member from the Committee as a Golden Sands RC&D Representative. He added, he served as the representative the last term and is willing to continue.

Motion by Tom Buttke to appoint Bill Leichtnam to serve as the Golden Sand RC&D Representative from CEED. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.

10. **Private Sewage.** Nothing to report; very thorough report in CEED packet.

11. **Land Records.** Nothing to report; very thorough report in CEED packet.

12. **County Surveyor.** Nothing to report; very thorough report in CEED packet.

13. **Planning**

- A. Staff Introduction. Jason Grueneberg welcomed the two new CEED members and added they are welcome to stop in the Planning and Zoning Office anytime. He introduced his newest staff member, Karoline Whitman, Program Assistant. All Planning and Zoning Staff members introduced themselves and briefly explained what they do.

14. **Economic Development.**

- A. North Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission Update. Jason Grueneberg shared Wood County has been a paying member of the NCWRPC for the past three years. He explained there are three representatives from Wood County; one appointed by the County, one by the County and Governor, and appointed by just the Governor.

Current projects include:

- Wood County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.
- Meeting this week on housing study/housing stock in Wood County.

Would like to get Economic Development Grant application outs by mid-June. Will discuss at June CEED meeting.

- B. Broadband Grant and Speed Test update. Jason Grueneberg gave a brief update on the Broadband Grant and Speed Testing. The purpose of speed testing is to locate broadband deficiencies in Wood County rural areas. When taking the speed test, location and speed will be logged. People without current access in their homes can call the Planning & Zoning office or use a family member or friend's computer to take the test. Tests can be taken numerous times. It should be noted if someone currently has a low-cost internet plan; the speed test could show low broadband speed.

Currently working with IT to clean-up the entry page and working on marketing. The goal is to have 10% participation of households in Wood County.

- C. Consideration of Initial Resolution Approving Revenue Bond Financing for Bug Tussel 1, LLC. Information with respect to job impact of the project will be available at the time of consideration of the Resolution. Jason Grueneberg handed out a copy of the resolution to provide approval of an Initial Resolution of Wood County to participate with other counties in a conduit bond for Revenue Bond Financing for Bug Tussel 1, LLC.

- Jason explained the construction/implementation of towers in Wood County by Bug Tussel was a success. Wood County has a \$1,000,000 obligation for that grant.
- Current 2022 grant application is to connect towers to fiber “middle mile”. Fiber to 2,100 households and 113 businesses.
- Jason reviewed the map attached to the resolution packet and explained the route.
- End goal is fiber to every home.
- This resolution is for Wood County to participate in a \$240,000,000 conduit bond in which Wood County’s bond amount is not to exceed \$11,000,000.
- He explained the bonding process. Bonds are for 30 years – Bug Tussel is responsible to pay back to Wood County.
- The County will benefit with tower use for emergency access and some strands of fiber for County use.

Lengthy discussion followed. Questions asked included:

- Resolution $\frac{3}{4}$ vote versus majority.
- Risk involved.
- How this would affect Wood County’s bond rating.

Motion by Jake Hahn to approve the resolution for Wood County’s participation in the conduit bond for Revenue Bond Financing for Bug Tussel 1, LLC with “majority votes” required. Second by Laura Valenstein. Motion carried unanimously.

15. Extension

- A. General Office Update. Jason Hausler introduced himself to the new members and gave a brief general office update.

- Community Area Network – working with IT
- Wood County Annual Report in the CEED packet. Will present to the County Board on June 21.
- Educators reports on pages 11-14 in CEED packet.
- Invited CEED to stop in anytime and talk to staff.
- Will give Robust Extension 101 presentation at June CEED meeting.
- 2022 Clean Sweep – Saturday, September 10th – Marshfield.
- Thanked Ben Jeffrey for working on the 2023 Clean Sweep application.
- Extension was awarded \$2,000,000 for expanding Ag Network.
 - Three positions focusing on water quality. One dedicated to Central Sands area working with producers; other two statewide.

Chair Leichtnam would like contact info when the Central Sands area person is hired.

- B. Introduction – Jasmine Carbajal, 4-H Associate Educator. Jasmine Carbajal was at training in Marshfield and was not able to attend the CEED meeting.

- C. Staffing Update – Community Development Educator. Jason Hausler shared the Community Development Educator position has been posted, re-posted, and recruited and still no qualified candidates. He reviewed the current job description with the CEED and asked if the benchmarks in the position description were still a priority to focus on. Discussion followed with the following comments.

- There is a need for some capacity to help with Economic Development.
- Implementation of County REDI Plan Work Force does not have to be specifically called out. Not specific to Economic Development, but facilitation.
- Job description rather vague, needs to be clarified.
- Compensation could be an issue with not being able to attract a qualified applicant.

Following discussion, the decision was made by consensus to instruct Jason to move forward with filling the position.

D. Educator Presentation – Allison Jonjak, Cranberry Outreach Specialist. This presentation was postponed.

16. **Requests for Per Diem for Meeting Attendants.** Dave LaFontaine and Bill Leichtnam requested per diem for a meeting they attended on April 18.

Motion by Tom Buttke to approve per diem for Dave LaFontaine and Bill Leichtnam for attending the April 18th meeting. Second by Jake Hahn. Motion carried unanimously.

17. **Schedule Next Regular Committee Meeting.** The next regular CEED meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2022 at 9:00 am, at the Wood County Courthouse, Room #114

18. **Agenda items for next meeting.** *Agenda items are due Wednesday, May 25.*

- a. Presentation on CSGWCC
- b. Discuss County Economic Development Grant
- c. Update on Bug Tussel 1, LLC
- d. Robust Extension 101 presentation

19. **Schedule any additional meeting if necessary.** Brief meeting prior to County Board. Jason Grueneberg will reserve room if this meeting is necessary.

20. **Adjourn.**

Motion by Tom Buttke to adjourn at 11:59 a.m. Second by Dave LaFontaine. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes by Lori Ruess, Land & Water Conservation Department