

CITIZENS (WOOD COUNTY) GROUNDWATER GROUP MEETING

DATE: Monday, May 16, 2022
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Conference Room 114-Wood County Courthouse & Teleconference via WebEx

Present (In person or via WebEx): Bill Clendenning, Gordon Gottbeheut, Ben Jeffrey, Bill Leichtnam, Rhonda Carrell, Lisa Anderson, Dave Joosten, Ray Bossert, Kari Whitman, Bruce Dimick, Tamas Houlihan, Sue Smith, Gregg Wavrunek, Rachael Whitehair, Tim Wuebben

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Bill Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
2. **Public Comment:** None.
3. **Speakers – Ben Jeffrey, Wood County Environmental Health Officer & Lisa Anderson-Nelsonville Update**

Ben gave an overview of the duties and responsibilities of the Wood County Health Department. The department serves not only Wood County but also Adams and Juneau counties. Environmental Health Specialists duties include:

Code Enforcement, Inspections and Licensing

*Food Code – retail, restaurants

*Lodging Code – Hotels, camps, B & B's

*Body Art Code – Tattoo and piercing

*Mobile Home Community Code

*Tenant Landlord Code

*Pool code

*Admin Code 254

*Wood County Public Health Ordinance – Health Hazards

Human Health Hazards – 254.01 **(2)** “Human health hazard” means a substance, activity or condition that is known to have the potential to cause acute or chronic illness, to endanger life, to generate or spread infectious diseases, or otherwise injuriously to affect the health of the public.

- One of the most common health hazards observe by the health department is: The pollution of any well, groundwater aquifer, or body of water by sewage or industrial wastes, fertilizers, and toxic pesticides, or other substances harmful to human beings.

One of the roles of the state and local health departments is to:

*Help citizens find safe drinking water

*Provide well water test kits

*Advise citizens on test results

*Coordinate with other county departments, DNR & DATCP

*Attend town meetings to provide education as requested

The health department has a water lab where they can test for Bacteria & Nitrates. They do between 700 and 1000 tests annually.

Lisa Anderson gave an update on the Village of Nelsonville. She attended a Zoom meeting regarding the proposed modifications to the WPDES permit for Gordondale farms. The DNR is recommending that the farm do some monitoring around some land spreading fields around the village's re-charge zone.

The new Portage County Executive with the help of the Land & Water Conservationist wrote a resolution regarding well monitoring at Gordondale farms. “The resolution drafted by County Executive John Pavelski, who was elected in April, asked the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to pay for installing wastewater monitoring wells it seems poised to impose on Gordondale Farms this year, stating the regulations could put the farm out of business and lead to increased nitrate pollution.

Nelsonville residents and water quality scientists argued the resolution aimed to protect the farm, put blame for nitrate pollution on residential septic fields and dealt in "half-truths" about the science behind nitrate pollution."

4. **Correspondence/Updates/Handouts/Reports on Meetings Attended:**
 - a. Bill Leichtnam shared information from UW Stevens Point Dept. of Watershed Science and UW Extension, stating that nearly 5% of rural Wood County wells have nitrate levels over 10 parts per million. He wonders how many of those people know they have potential nitrate problems.
5. **"Action Items" proposed to CEED Committee by Wood County CGG:** None
 - a. Bill Clendenning feels the group should be talking about the ARPA funds that are available.
6. **Roundtable**
 - a. Gordon feels there should be more awareness of the dangers of drinking polluted water.
7. **Announcements by members / visitors (upcoming related events / meetings)**
 - a. Tamas stated UW Stevens Point is in the process of hiring for a water quality specialist position. This person will focus on water quality issues in the central sands region.
 - b. Gregg Wavrunek spoke briefly about the Healthy H2O Act. It would provide clean water help for private wells.
8. **Future Speakers:** Please contact Bill Leichtnam or Bruce Dimick with any suggestions for future speakers.
June-Open
9. **Agenda Items for next meeting:**
Agenda items should be submitted to Bill Leichtnam by the second Monday of the month.
10. **Next Meeting:** Meetings will be the third Monday of each month @ 2:00 p.m.

The next regular Citizens (Wood County) Groundwater Group meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 20th at 2:00 p.m. This will be an in person and virtual WebEx meeting.
11. **Adjourn Groundwater Group Meeting:**

Bill Leichtnam declared the meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.
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Notes by Victoria Wilson, Planning & Zoning Office