

MINUTES
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, April 2, 2025
TIME: 9:00 AM
PLACE: Courthouse – County Board Room #302

Members Present: Bill Leichtnam, Tom Buttke, Wayne Schulz, Russ Perlock, Tim Hovendick (via Webex)

Others Present: See attached sign-in list

1. Chairman Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. and declared a quorum present.
2. Tom Buttke commented that he endorses the well water testing that is being done in Wood County.
3. The minutes of March 5, 2025, were presented. Motion by Buttke/Perlock to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Motion by Schulz/Buttke to approve the vouchers, monthly department reports and committee reports. Motion carried unanimously.
5. FoodWise Educator Hannah Wendels-Scott gave the committee an update on the River Riders and Marshfield Bike Share programs and requested the release of budgeted Economic Development funds in the amount of \$3,000. Motion by Buttke/Perlock to release the funds as requested. Motion carried unanimously.
6. Public Works Director Rick Schmidt and Alderman Larry Krubsack provided an update on the Jim Freeman Boat Launch project and requested the release of budgeted Economic Development funds in the amount of \$18,875. Motion by Schulz/Hovendick to release the funds as requested. Motion carried unanimously.
7. County Surveyor Kevin Boyer updated the committee on the complaint he filed with the Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors Ethics and Standards committee regarding a surveyor that does work in Wood County. Boyer summarized the March 1st report he received back from the committee and shared that after meeting with the surveyor and Wood County Corporation Counsel, he is confident that the surveyor in question will improve his work going forward.
8. Boyer reviewed the current contract for maintenance of Public Land Survey System (PLSS) coordinates that Wood County has with Badger-Land Surveying. Motion by Buttke/Schulz to renew the current contract for a two-year term. Motion carried unanimously.
9. Extension area Director Patrick Gatterman introduced himself and provided a brief overview of his background.
10. Gatterman updated the committee on the Human Development & Relationships Educator position. An offer has been extended and accepted. The new hire is scheduled to start on Monday April 21, 2025.
11. County Conservationist Wucherpennig presented the low bid for the Lewis stream bank project. Motion by Buttke/Schulz to approve the low bid from Weichelt of \$108,242.25. Motion carried unanimously.
12. Wucherpennig presented the low bid for the Cutler permanent grazing project. Motion by Buttke/Perlock to approve the low bid from Cutler of \$18,643.94. Motion carried unanimously.

13. Wucherpfennig spoke about the WI Land & Water Budget priorities and the request for increased base funding for Land & Water Conservation staff. Motion by Schulz/Hovendick to approve the resolution to increase base funding for LWCD to \$20.2 million annually. Motion carried unanimously.
14. Wucherpfennig, along with Administrative Specialist Barb Peeters, and Conservation Specialist Kendra Wilhelm, shared information on the current ARPA funded private well water testing that they are providing free to landowners in identified "hot spots" in Wood County. The response has been good with an increased percentage of landowners returning the test kits.
15. Wucherpfennig asked the committee for direction on Wood County Land & Water Conservation using ARPA dollars for the Mill Creek Watershed, outside of county boundaries. Wood County partners with Portage County in reducing phosphorous, nitrogen and sediments in the Mill Creek Watershed. Wood County has been awarded \$1.2 million dollars in grants and has been the financial custodian, whereas Portage County has not made the effort to apply for those grants. The consensus of the committee was to proceed with using ARPA dollars to continue partnering with Portage County on contaminant reductions in the watershed.
16. Wilhelm shared a flyer for the upcoming Central WI Invasive Species Summit on May 20, 2025. Please contact LWCD to register for the summit by May 13, 2025.
17. Wucherpfennig updated the committee on the ongoing Hoffman Dairy violation. Hoffman Dairy has been sold. At the time of the sale, the \$51,000 in forfeitures due, were paid to Wood County. There are no new developments on the Earth Inc. violation.
18. Wucherpfennig reminded the committee about the Central WI Farm Profitability Expo that is scheduled on April 30, 2025, at Mid-State Technical College in Wisconsin Rapids.
19. Planning & Zoning Director Jason Grueneberg shared the date of this year's CEED tour that will take place on Friday September 12, 2025.
20. Grueneberg and Educator Kayla Rombalski shared pictures and a recap of the Villas of Vesper ribbon cutting that took place on March 25, 2025. The event was well attended.
21. Grueneberg went over the benefits of membership with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission. The committee chair agreed the membership is invaluable.
22. Lengthy discussion took place regarding the Economic Development grant process and criteria. Discussion of the process and criteria will be ongoing at upcoming CEED meetings.
23. Rombalski gave a brief history of the Pittsville Community Economic Analysis and the Thrive Rural grant. The analysis and grant resulted in Pittsville moving forward with building a new community center and non-profit that will advance the Pittsville area for years to come.
24. Grueneberg advised the committee that the Wood County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) will be shut down and moved to a regional model in an effort to put the under-utilized \$22 million dollars of federal funding to use through regional programs that are already in place.
25. Grueneberg spoke about the Department of Revenue Innovation grants for communities with a population less than 5,000, and whether Wood County is utilizing those funds. Grueneberg and Rombalski intend to sit down and determine if they can assist any small communities in Wood County in applying for these funds. The grant applications are due April 30, 2025.
26. Rombalski requested a release of up to \$500 in REDI funding for an upcoming Founders Network event in the City of Marshfield. Motion by Schulz/Buttke to release funds not to exceed \$250 to Gabrielle Falkey for the sponsorship of an upcoming Founders Network event on April 10, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

27. Leichtnam and Perlock requested a per diem and mileage for attending the ribbon cutting at Villas of Vesper. Motion by Buttke/Schulz to approve the per diem and mileage as requested. Motion carried unanimously.

28. Chairman Leichtnam declared the meeting adjourned at 11:59 AM.

Minutes taken by Victoria Wilson, Planning & Zoning and are in draft form until approved at the next meeting.

**Conservation, Education, & Economic Development Committee
April 2, 2025**

NAME	REPRESENTING
Larry Kowalski	NEKOOSA
RICK SCHMIDT	NEKOOSA
Bill O'Leary	WCB # 15
Wayne Smith	WCB # 1
Russ Perlock	WCB # 4
DENNIS POLACH	WCB - # 14
SCOTT BREHM	WCB # 9
Kendra Wilhelm	LWCD
Barb Peeters	LWCD
Victoria Wilson	P&Z
Jason Grueneberg	P&Z
Bill Leichtnam	WCB # 19
Kayla Rombalski	UW Ext
Patrick Gatterman	UW Ext
Hannah Wendels Scott	UW Ext
Kevin Boyer	Surveyor
Via Webex	
Trent Miner	Clerk
Jim Hovendick	WCB # 5
Julie Mancl	P&Z
Emily Arndt	P&Z
Shane Wucherpfennig	LWCD
Lance Pliml	WCB chair