

**Draft**  
**Buffalo County Minutes**

**Committee/Board:** Land Conservation & Ag and Extension Committee

**Date of Meeting:** June 1, 2020

**Electronic and Hardcopy Filing Date** June 3, 2020

**Call to order:** Meeting called to order by Carrie Olson, Land Conservation Director at 7:01pm.

**Members present:** Dwight Ruff, Brad Schmidtkecht, Steve Nelson, John Sendelbach, Bill Bruegger and Dave Linse

**Others present:** Dennis Bork, Terry Kees, Wendy Olson, Lisa Kees, Todd Poeschel, and Roxane Weisenbeck

**Attending via video:** Annie Lisowski, Mary Wood, Marie Ritscher, Pat Malone and Carl Duley

**Public Comments regarding Agenda Items:** None

**Review/Discussion/Action – Election of Committee Chair:** Motion by Steve Nelson/Dave Linse to nominate Dwight Ruff for committee chair. Dwight Ruff nominated Brad Schmidtkecht seconded by John Sendelbach. Schmidtkecht declined the nomination. Motion was made to close the nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Dwight Ruff by Bruegger/Schmidtkecht. Motion carried. Dwight Ruff is the committee chair.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Election of Committee Vice Chair:** Motion to nominate Brad Schmidtkecht for vice chair made by Steve Nelson/Bill Bruegger. Motion was made to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Brad Schmidtkecht by Dave Linse/Steve Nelson. Motion carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Buffalo County Fair Association Representative:** The committee discussed if the representative should volunteer, be nominated or appointed. Steve Nelson volunteered to be the county board's representative to the Buffalo County Fair Association.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Minutes of the Previous Ag & Extension Education Committee Meeting:** Motion by Bill Bruegger, seconded by Steve Nelson to approve the minutes of the last Ag and Extension Education Committee meeting as corrected. Motion carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Minutes of the Previous Land Conservation Committee Meeting:** Motion by Linse, seconded by Schmidtkecht to approve the minutes of the previous Land Conservation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

**Review/Discussion – Buffalo County Return to Work Plan:** Pat Malone reviewed the “Return to the Office” plan prepared by the Extension Office and submitted to Ms. Hansen. Extension educators are also required to follow University guidelines. The office is currently open during regular courthouse hours. Roxane covers the office Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Carl provides coverage on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Land Conservation Department is following Buffalo County Policy by requesting visitors make appointments before coming to the courthouse. Field staff able to do work while maintaining distancing and avoid meeting in shops, homes. Disinfectant supplies are in each work truck. We have been requesting RSVP’s for bid site showings in order to limit number of contractors in attendance. Telecommuting has been successful and will continue to be used periodically.

**Review/Discussion – UW-Madison Division of Extension Overview and UW-Madison Division of Extension Report:** Malone and the educators highlighted the relationship between Extension and Buffalo County by discussing the 136 Contract. They also highlighted how Extension works in the county and the general programming themes educators work on. Specific efforts the educators have undertaken since the pandemic began were highlighted. Committee members are encouraged to read the annual report. The Annual Report and the PowerPoint presentation are on file.

**Review/Discussion – Buffalo County Fair Association’s Recommendation Regarding Buffalo County Fair Due to COVID-19:** The committee discussed concerns regarding being able to safely conduct the Fair given the pandemic. The county nurse shared that she didn’t feel it was possible to safely conduct the Fair given requirements for social distancing and hygiene. Representatives from the Buffalo County Fair Association shared their concerns about safety and financial impact. Lisowski shared the perspective from Extension and its limited ability to provide on-site educational assistance given our directives from the University. The committee recommended that based on the information discussed, that the Buffalo County Fair Association cancel the 2020 Buffalo County Fair. If the decision is made by the Fair Association to move forward with the Fair, the committee would support that decision.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Division of Extension Buffalo County 2021 Budget:** Malone provided a preliminary overview of the 2020 and 2021 budget. Current budget numbers look very good. Our budget line for salaries is coming in less than expected because of our current vacancy. Other larger items (mileage, supplies) are less than expected because mileage has been very limited, and supplies are lower as well.

No guidance for 2021 has been provided yet. The flat fee for educators in 2021 will be \$42,330 for each full time equivalent. This is a 2% increase from 2019. The Dean is maintaining the first educator discount of \$10,000 for 2021. This was not expected but he realizes the financial challenges counties are facing because of the pandemic. We are not sure what the expenses will be for our support staff. We would like to maintain the Extension 4-H Associate Position. It is part of the strategic planning to support Extension that we worked through with the previous committee. It will allow us to maintain a strong 4-H program and continue to strengthen our leadership education and prevention work that is being done by our educators.

Motion by Bill Bruegger, second by Brad Schmidtknecht to table budget discussion. Motion carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Resolution to Support and Extend Funding of Bluff Prairie Restoration Projects:** Olson presented a resolution to support continued investment in Bluff Prairie restoration projects utilizing CAPX2020 funding. An original 2015 resolution has expired with an unspent balance of \$27,812 remaining due to federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners grant matching, therefore reducing the county CAPX2020 amount expended. The resolution requests extending the program an additional 5 years and supporting allocation of an additional \$25,000 CAPX2020 funds to continue the project. A question was asked about bluff prairies and Chair Ruff explained the importance of this rare ecosystem located in the driftless area.

Brad Schmidtknecht made a motion to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by David Linse. Motion carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Resolution to Support and Extend Funding of Trout Stream Restoration Projects:** Olson presented a resolution to support continued investment in Trout Stream restoration projects utilizing CAPX2020 funding. An original 2014 resolution has expired with an unspent balance of \$39,526 remaining due to federal NRCS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners grant matching, therefore reducing the county CAPX2020 amount expended. The resolution proposes extending the project an additional 5 years and support spending an additional \$25,000 to continue the project. Committee inquired about public access. Olson explained streambank easements are secured as part of each restoration project for public access during the trout season only.

Motion by Bill Bruegger, seconded by Brad Schmidtknecht to approve the resolution as presented. All in favor. Carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Approval of Cost Containment Procedures:** This policy outlines bidding and bill payment procedures for any county cost-share project. An updated cost-containment document was drafted with minor changes to improve an existing 2018 policy. The proposed changes are necessary to match recently updated County Purchase Policy and eliminates Committee review of routine cost-share project contractor bills.

John Sendelbach made a motion to approve cost containment procedures as presented, seconded by Steve Nelson. Motion carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Approval of Bluff Prairie Restoration Application:** Conservation CapX2020 bluff prairie restoration project application was submitted for Pete Greenheck Trust property. Total project costs for 3-5 acre restoration were estimated to be \$10,000 with the county share of the project \$3,000.00.

Motion by Steve Nelson, seconded by Brad Schmidtknecht to approve the Bluff Prairie Application as presented. All in favor. Carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Approval of Conservation Cost-Share Invoices:** The January-February Cost Share Project Report was presented which included three (3) Conservation Cost-Share Invoices, six (6) Bluff Prairie Restoration Project Approvals, and one (1) Trout Stream Restoration Project Approval. Discussion was held on specific projects.

Motion by David Linse, seconded by Bill Bruegger to approve the Conservation Project Report as presented. All in favor. Carried.

**Distribution of Land Conservation Committee Handbook:** Olson distributed the new committee handbook which was organized by Wisconsin Land + Water Conservation Association, a non-profit organization that we pay annual dues for trainings and general advocacy for our continued state staffing and conservation funding projects. Olson described roles and history of the committee structure.

**Land Conservation County Conservationist Report:** Olson shared the 2019 Annual Department report highlighting accomplishments and future goals include funding practices at a whole farm conservation approach, rather than focusing on sediment source point control only.

**Chairperson Report** None.

County Board Chair Bork inquired about new committee structure. David Linse voiced concern with the joint meeting structure, since his role as FSA representative is limited to Land Conservation only.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Determine Regular Committee Meeting Schedule:** The regular meeting schedule was determined to be the first Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. We intend on meeting 6 times each year: Feb, March, May, July, October, December (may vary).

**Public comments not regarding Agenda items** – There were no public comments.

**Adjournment:** Motion by Bill Bruegger, seconded by John Sendelbach to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Submitted by:  
Patricia Malone,  
Area Extension Director

Carrie Olson  
County Conservationist