

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

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

**Date of Meeting:** August 3, 2020

**Electronic and Hardcopy Filing Date:** August 4, 2020

**Call to order:** Meeting called to order by Dwight Ruff, Chair, at 6:03 p.m.

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

**Others present:** Carrie Olson, Tim Wucherer, Pat Malone

**Attending via video:** Kristin Foehringer, Mary Wood, and Annie Lisowski

**Public Comments regarding Agenda Items:** None

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

**Review/Discussion – LCC Roles and Responsibilities:** Carrie Olson presented information relative to the roles of the Land Conservation Committee (LCC) Supervisors and the relationship with Land Conservation Department staff. Committee members inquired and Olson explained that the LCC is required to include one (1) representative from the FSA committee, at least two (2) representatives from the Ag & Extension Committee, and also may include other county board or citizen members. LCD staff, Tim Wucherer and Kristin Foehringer, reported on their specific conservation program roles and highlighted their whole farm approach for fieldwork inspections.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Beaver Creek Reserve and Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Grant:** Olson presented information regarding WDNR rule changes and a revised grant program available to counties for AIS control work. She discussed a proposal to collaborate with Beaver Creek Reserve, along with multiple counties to accomplish work goals, including purple loosestrife biocontrol, wetland invasive species outreach & education, and aquatic invasive control in trout streams. Schmidtkecht inquired and Olson answered there would be no matching requirement and no fiscal impact for the county to participate in the grant. Committee members asked Olson to review this proposal with Administrative Coordinator to determine next steps for approval. Schmidtkecht made a motion to approve Buffalo County participation in the DNR grant and enter into a cooperative agreement with Beaver Creek Reserve to act as the county agent, pending appropriate approvals, seconded by Bruegger. Motion carried.

**Review/Discussion/Action – 2021 Land Conservation & Non-Metallic Mining Budget:**

Olson presented the proposed 2021 budgets. The budget request for mileage, supplies, and equipment is similar to previous years' requests. The non-metallic mining budget is funded through annual dues, with no request for county levy. The land conservation budget is largely funded by state grants, with a request for 1/3 of the annual expenditures funded by county levy. Nelson made a motion to approve and forward the 2021 budget to Finance Committee, seconded by Schmidtknecht. Motion carried.

**Review– Monthly Vouchers/Invoices:** The June-July Voucher was presented which included purchase of Trimble GPS equipment for surveying, paid by available budget funding.

**Land Conservation County Conservationist Report:** Olson shared the following:

- Rose Valley pond restoration has been completed; fish stocking by the DNR is currently on-hold due to state reopening policy.
- In cooperation with UW-Extension, Land Conservation received a grant from Mississippi State University for conservation farming practice work with agricultural producers in the Lower Trempealeau River Watershed to reduce nutrient loading in the Mississippi River.
- Cost-share funding for nutrient management planning is being utilized and funds are available for soil sampling and plan writing.
- Assisted County Highway Department with hydrology data for proper culvert sizing.
- Successful summer season for conservation project installation, including: 1 CCC dam, 3 grade stabilization dams, 1 barnyard transfer pit, 1 feed storage pad, and a large farm relocation project.

*@ 7:00 LCD left and UW-Extension presented—*

**Summary of Department Educational Activities:** Malone shared the educators' summary report for the period of April 1 through July 31, 2020. She noted this is a new format to help streamline presentations to the committee and to provide an overview of the key work done by educators. There is also a section that includes work specially done in response to Covid-19. The report is on file in the Extension Office.

- Highlights include the plot work that Duley is conducting on alternative crops. These include barley, hops, winter rye, and industrial hemp among others. He also shared the work he did as part of a team to deliver farm tractor safety training. It included virtual as well as hands-on training.
- Wood is focusing much of her work with Moving Forward Reentry Program. This effort is done between Buffalo, Pepin, and Dunn Counties. She secured two grants, one for \$90,000 and one for \$14,000 to continue to develop this effort.
- She also teaches workshops and participates in a state level team that works with incarcerated and justice-involved parents and caregivers and children birth to 9. The goal is to support parent-child connections as well as building literacy rich home environments. This has a number of positive impacts.

- Lisowski is continuing her efforts with Teen Court. She and Ritscher provided training to peer panelists and conducted hearings via Zoom. This effort was the first in the state and one of the first in the country to go on-line.
- She has also implemented a STEAM@Home program. This offers youth materials for science experiments and art activities that promote math learning and practice critical thinking.
- Since the 4-H educators in the region couldn't have their regular summer camp program they created "4-H Camp Kinnissippewa in a Bag."

**Review/Discussion/Action ~ Division of Extension Buffalo County 2021 Budget**

**Preparation:** Malone presented the proposed 2021 budget. At the time of the meeting she had not yet received the changes to the county staff's salary and benefits. She will add that when it is available. She reduced the anticipated revenue. However, the salaries and fringe due to the University was decreased. The total general budget is \$194,720, which is a \$3000 decrease from last year, although the tax levy reflects an increase because the revenue was reduced.

**MOTION:** Schmidtknecht/Bruegger to accept the budget as proposed with the changes that will be made with adding in wages and benefits for Weisenbeck and to forward all the budget materials to the Finance Committee. CARRIED.

**Review/Discussion/Action ~ Extension 4-H Associate Position:** Malone and Lisowski discussed where Extension currently is at regarding the Extension Associate position. We were just about to offer it to a candidate when the Dean shut down any hiring. Over that period of time, we have been working with the Dean and his team to get permission to move forward. Over this time frame, the formula for calculating the benefits for a fully county funded position changed. As a result, we do not have enough money to hire someone as the position is currently structured. This extra support is critical to maintaining the 4-H program and supporting the community youth development work of Lisowski. We kept much of the funding in the proposed 2021 budget. We are working hard to find a solution that solves our challenges and is fiscally responsible. We will keep the committee informed.

**Review/Discussion/Action – Determine Next Committee Meeting:** October 5, 6:00 p.m. Extension will be first on the agenda.

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

**Adjournment:** Motion by Bruegger, seconded by Sendelbach to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Submitted by:  
Patricia Malone,  
Area Extension Director

Carrie Olson  
County Conservationist