

Draft
Buffalo County Minutes

Committee/Board: Land Conservation & Ag and Extension Committee

Date of Meeting: December 7, 2020

Electronic and Hardcopy Filing Date: December --, 2020

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

Members present: Dwight Ruff, Brad Schmidtknecht, Steve Nelson, John Sendelbach, Bill Bruegger. Dave Linse appeared via Zoom.

Others present for all or parts of the meeting: Kristin Foehringer, Tim Wucherer, Joe Krumrie, Pat Malone, Scott Mueller

Attending via video: Carl Duley, Mary Wood, and Annie Lisowski

Public Comments regarding Agenda Items: None

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Minutes of the November 2, 2020 Land Conservation & Ag and Extension Committee Meeting: A motion was made by Mr. Bruegger, seconded by Mr. Schmidtknecht to approve the minutes of the last Land Conservation and Ag & Extension Education Committee meeting from November 2 as presented. Motion carried.

Land Conservation:

Review/Discussion ~ Scott Mueller, NRCS Assistant State Engineer will present on the PL566 program: Mr. Miller met with the committee to discuss the current status of Buffalo County's PL 566 watershed structures. Mr. Miller provided the committee members with a powerpoint presentation and informational handouts.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ State Multi-Discharger Variance Program (MDV) and purchase of a roller/crimper with MDV funds to rent to landowners: Kristin Foehringer provided a brief overview of the MDV program and the funds available for qualified equipment purchases and staff time. Carl Duley informed the committee of the uses and results associated with purchasing a roller crimper available for rent to landowners in the county. No action was made on the purchase of a roller/crimper. Mr. Schmidtknecht suggested the discussion be tabled until the committee is presented with a photo of the proposed equipment, a budget, and timeline.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Baloun Trust Bluff Prairie Application Review/Approval: A motion was made by Mr. Nelson, seconded by Mr. Sendelbach to accept the Bluff Prairie Restoration application with CapX funding match of up to \$5,000, as presented. Motion Carried.

Review/Discussion ~ Update on Conservation Technician Position: Ms. Foehringer informed the committee that the six individuals were interviewed for the Conservation Technician position on November 13th, and the hiring committee selected Joe Krumrie for the position. Mr. Krumrie accepted the offer and began working for the Land Conservation Department on December 1st. Mr. Krumrie introduced himself to the committee and informed them of his past experiences working for DNR and NHC in Buffalo County.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Timeline and Working Group for Buffalo County Land and Water Resource Management Plan: Ms. Foehringer presented the timeline for development of the 2022-2032 Buffalo County Land and Water Resource Management Plan. She explained that the county conservationists work closely with their committee chair and potentially an advisory committee to development the revised plan, to be presented to the WI Land and Water Conservation Board for final approval. The committee requested regular updates on the status of the revisions and steps towards completion. Mr. Nelson provided an update on the Buffalo County Outdoor Recreation Plan committee meeting, and described the integration between the Outdoor Recreation Plan and the Land and Water Resource Management Plan.

Agency Reports ~ USDA-NRCS/FSA: FSA representative, Mr. Linse, informed the committee of his retirement at the end of the year and the planned appointment of a new FSA-representative. An NRCS-representative was not in attendance.

Chairperson Report: Chair Ruff informed the committee of his visit to the South Nelson PL-566 structure with NRCS and DATCP engineers and describe the potential need for future work on that structure.

Conservationist Report: Ms. Foehringer informed the committee of the completion of all contracted cost-share projects for 2020, with no need to file funding extensions through DATCP. She stated that the cost-share ranking process for 2021 projects was completed, and project estimates would be generated prior to awarding contracts to landowners. She stated that the Tell Farms DNR-funded project was completed, and the county is awaiting As-Built documentation from the engineer to begin the funding reimbursement process. Mr. Nelson informed the committee of the proposed land sale between Xcel energy and DNR on parcels located adjacent to the Tiffany Bottoms State Natural Area, and described the need for potential County Board action.

Ag & Extension:

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Sign 2021 136 Contract between University of Wisconsin Madison, Division of Extension and Buffalo County: The committee signed the 136 contract with the University as presented by Ms. Malone. The contract had been approved by the full board at the November board meeting.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Update on Program Assistant Position: Ms. Malone updated the committee on the program assistant position. It has been officially posted and is being promoted on social media and other employment sites. The anticipated closing date is December 15th. Chair Ruff will work with Ms. Malone and Ms. Lisowski on final interviews.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Computer Purchase Approval: Ms. Malone presented a request to purchase a new laptop computer. The original laptop had been purchased earlier in the year for the program assistant. With covid and remote working, it is being used by Ms. Weisenbeck. We need another laptop to accommodate both remote work and the new program assistant. The cost of the computer will be covered by non-lapsing funds in the Extension department. One half of the cost will be covered by the Teen Court account, ¼ by the Divorce/Better Beginning account, and ¼ by the Farm Safety account. Motion by Mr. Sendelbach, second by Mr. Schmidtknecht to recommend the purchase be approved and send the request forward. Carried.

Educator Report: The educators shared highlights from their reports. The report is on file in the Extension office.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Determine next committee meeting date: A tentative meeting date was set for January 4 at 6 p.m. A February meeting date was set for February 1 at 6 pm. Malone and Foehringer will let the committee know if the January meeting will occur.

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

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned by Chair Ruff at 7:55 p.m.

Submitted by:

Kristin Foehringer
Land Conservationist

Patricia Malone,
Area Extension Director