

Ashland County Land Conservation Committee
September 29, 2020
Ashland County LWCD Office

DRAFT
Minutes

LCC Present: George Mika, Caryl Peck, John Wiener, Doreen Hanninen, Richard Pufall (County Board Chairman) Phone or ZOOM: Gerald Richardson, Joe Rose, Charlie Ortman

Others: Clark Schroeder (County Administrator), Joshua Rowley (Zoning), Dave Schultz, MaryJo Gingras

1. Call to order - Meeting called to order by George Mika at 9:00 am.
2. Introductions - NA
3. **Approval of Minutes- Motion to approve June 4, 2020 minutes by Ortman, second by Wiener. MC.**
4. Public Comments – None heard
5. Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association (WLWCA) Video
Gingras would like to use for 10 minutes of each meeting to provide a training webinar or video for LCC. Distributed list of options on WLWCA’s website. More than 100 webinars or videos are available. Requested feedback for topics. Ortman, Mika and Richardson liked the idea and supported idea of a short training at each meeting.
6. **Action:** Water Quality Monitoring Program Cooperative Agreements
Gingras provided background information about the agreements as provided in the meeting packet.
Motion to deny approval of water quality monitoring program cooperative agreements Ortman, second by Rose. MC. Rose provided background information about LaPointe and Treaty of 1854 regarding tribal land allotments in Penokee region. Opposed to working with LaPointe Iron Company.

Ortman voiced conflict involved with a public / private company partnership and unfair opportunity for private interests. “Not good governance for any public/private partnerships as it could create a conflict of interest for the county. We should not accept funding where a private entity could have a foot in the door towards any permitting process. Anything we do must balance, and not offer advantage to any one side or another. The monitoring needs to happen we just need to be careful of how we pay for it.”

Weiner supported Ortman’s comments, and that the proposed agreements are one-sided. Peck shared her understanding that we are proposing to monitor stream conditions and that the agreement does not indicate support for mining. She stated that it is a neutral agreement. Hanninen commented that she does not notice any language in the agreement that binds the county to any future permits. She supports Peck that it is a neutral agreement.

Role call vote on motion: Richardson- yes, Peck- no, Pufall- no, Weiner- yes, Ortman- yes, Hanninen- no, Mika- yes, Rose- yes.
7. **Action:** Resolution for WDNR Grant for Marengo River Streamflow Gaging Station
Motion to put the resolution on the floor by Hanninen, second by Rose. MC. Question about cost to the county. Gingras explained grant will cover 75% of installation cost and county in-kind staff will cover the remaining. No financial cost to county for installation. In future years, the county will need to seek funding to maintain the gage. The U.S. Geological Survey is looking into how to cover those future costs. Mika called for those in favor-all; none opposed.

8. **Action:** 2021 Wildlife Damage Program Budget

Dave Schultz reviewed the 2021 Wildlife Damage Budget. **Motion to approve 2021 Wildlife Damage Program budget by Ortman, second by Richardson. MC.**

9. 2021 Land and Water Conservation Department Budget review

Gingras provided review of the budget submitted to the county in August. Budget will be approved by the County Board on October 6, 2020. Departments were asked for no increases in 2021. No raises in 2021 due to budget shortfall. The administrator removed travel for departments next year since most trainings and conferences will be virtual. Proposed 2021 department budget expenses increased \$122,648 from \$486,618 to an estimated \$609,266. Proposed 2021 revenue increased \$144,718 from \$415,123 to \$559,841. However, an additional grant of \$49,500 was submitted after the budget, and a second grant for \$350,000 is being submitted in October.

Gingras pointed out that the budget has more than doubled since 2018. The department is generating considerable revenue for the county. This lowers the operating cost to the county for this department. She shared that this type of aggressive grant writing is being done without additional staff and will not be sustainable for the long-term. At some point when the large grants are not available, the department will have to go back to average operating cost and she does not want to be penalized when there is an ask to return back to the average operating cost.

10. **Action:** 2020 Wildlife Damage Program Budget Amendment

Dave Schultz stated that wildlife damage abatement materials increased by \$8,000 this year and requires an amendment for the state. The total budget will increase from \$27,615 to \$35,615.

Motion to increase the 2020 Wildlife Damage Abatement Claims Program Budget by \$8,000 for abatement projects by Richardson, second by Ortman. MC. Ortman asked if this will cost the county. Schultz replied no, that it is 100% reimbursed by the state.

11. **Action:** 2020 Wildlife Damage Deer Donation Program

Schultz stated that Ashland has participated in the deer donation program for 20 years. Participation requires formal Land Conservation Committee approval. **Motion to participate in the 2020 Deer Donation Program Ortman, second by Richardson. MC.**

12. Agency Reports – None provided

13. LWCD Staff Reports

Scott Caven, Aquatic Invasive Species – provided written report.

Dave Schultz, Wildlife Damage – updated LCC on program; provided written report.

Mike Pero, Conservation Technician –provided written report.

MaryJo Gingras, County Conservationist – updated LCC on participation in WI Workgroup on Climate Change with WLWCA and 5 County Conservationists, Tree & Shrub Sale, FEMA grant and Act 157, Nutrient Management planning and the Farmland Preservation Program; provided written report.

14. Other Business: Weiner asked about status of Hudson Bay Dam. Zoning Administrator Joshua Rowley provided update on determination of ownership. The county is not the owner nor responsible for repairs. Ownership and authority will be determined by the WI DNR.

15. Next Meeting Date: November 12, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

16. Adjourned at 11:03 a.m. by George Mika.