

**MINUTES OF THE COLUMBIA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE, EXTENSION, LAND & WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING
June 3, 2024**

The meeting of the Agriculture, Extension, Land & Water Conservation Committee was called to order by Vice-Chair Stevenson at 1:00 pm and was certified to be in compliance with the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.

Roll Call: Rich Bailey, Denise Brusveen, Brad Cook, John Stevenson

Excused Absence: Andrew Fischer

Others Present: Kurt Calkins, Kelly Maginnis, Dana Qualy-NRCS, Assistant Corp Counsel-Nathaniel Cullen, County Board Vice-Chairman Douglas Richmond, Chair Darren Schroeder, Jeff Hoffman, Olivia Kovacs, Sarah Millard, Becky Pfile, Molly Damm, Paul Becker, Lori Ripp, Herbert Hansen, Joe VanBerkel, Chris Bruni

1. **Adopt Agenda Including Legally Noticed Changes.** A motion to approve the agenda was made by Brusveen. Second by Cook. Motion carried.
2. **Approve Minutes of AELWCC May 2nd meeting** – A motion to approve minutes was made by Brusveen. Second by Bailey. Motion carried.
3. **Chair Updates:** No updates
4. **Citizen/Public Input – Columbia County Extension** – none.
5. **Columbia County Fair Presentation – Paul Becker** – Paul said it is the 173rd year for the Columbia County Fair. The Columbia County Fair Association appreciates the funding from Columbia County. A brochure with the schedule of events was handed out. There will now be daily disaster plan meetings at the fair with local emergency services and the fair board.
6. **Lodi Ag Fair – Lori Ripp** – Lori explained that fairs are for promoting ag education to the public with food being the original reason for fairs. The educational aspect at the fair is beneficial to all. Lodi Ag Fair appreciates funding received from Columbia County. A schedule of events was handed out.
7. **Operational Overview: Columbia County Extension**
 - a) Approve Expenditure Report – Motion to approve was made by Brusveen. Second by Cook. Motion carried.
 - b) Department Budgets, Compensatory Time, Out-of-County Travel – committee approval no longer required.
8. **Division of Extension Update – Area Director:**
 - a) Parents Forever: Columbia County courts requested restarting the program. The Marquette County Extension Educator will be utilized for educating. Columbia County Extension support staff will assist in providing Columbia County residents with registration and materials.
 - b) County Partnership Document Discussion: Background about the document was shared. The document was viewed on the monitor. Digital copies of the document will be sent to board members. Feedback on the document will be discussed at the next meeting.

Becky Pfile introduced Molly Damm, AmeriCorps. Molly explained her purpose is to build the 4-H program and will be working with the Portage Boys & Girls club in July and has two Ag breakout nights planned.

Olivia Kovacs gave a brief overview that she provides education for landowner management projects, government programs and women woodland owners. She is also overseeing 18 interns that are preparing for U.S. forest service positions.

**MINUTES OF THE COLUMBIA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE, EXTENSION, LAND & WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING
June 3, 2024**

Columbia County Extension meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm. Reconvened at 1:50 pm

9. **Citizen/Public Input – Columbia County LWCD** – none.

10. **Operational Overview: County Land and Water Conservation Department**

- a) Approve Expenditure Report – Cook had a question on the Link payments and how the process worked with multiple payments. Calkins explains the cost-sharing arrangement for NMP payments for farm owners and rented land. Calkins explains the Paradise Marsh burn expense. A motion to approve was made by Cook. Second by Brusveen. Motion carried.
- b) Department Budgets, Compensatory Time, Out-of-County Travel -
- c) Staff Report – Kurt R. Calkins, Director – Calkins reported he received a 2 weeks notice from Shaina Klosterman, Specialist. He discussed options for filling the position. It was agreed that Calkins would come back with proposals in July to consider regarding vacancy.

11. **Agency Reports – NRCS; FSA; APHIS; DNR –**

NRCS – Dana Qualy reports they will be getting a new technician, Ellen, and a new soil conservationist, Melissa Burmeister, who they hired on full-time from an intern position. She states EQIP sign-up ended May 17th, they will be ranking mid-June, primary focus is Great Lakes restoration initiative. The other applications will divert to 2024. She states CSP have 25 applications anticipated for approved funding, possibly more. The local workgroup meeting is either June 17th or June 20th.

12. **Introduction of Land & Water Conservation Department Summer Intern** – Calkins reports on Aidan's first project and that he will be helping with FPP inspections, 250 scheduled. Also, he will be working on the Spring Creek watershed doing status analysis. The friends of Okee Bay are working on this also. Aidan Matson introduced himself and gave some information on himself and experience.

13. **Ag Outreach Specialist Quarterly Update** – Casey gave his quarterly report on contacts, events attended, and upcoming event dates and development of the position.

14. **Harmony Grove Lake District Appointment Recommendations** – Herbert Hansen spoke for the Harmony Grove recommendation. He has served for 7 years, participated in dredging 6 years ago, and weed spraying. Stevenson had a question on the Lake WI Alliance and Harmony Grove and the difference. Calkins gave the history of these positions regarding supervisors willing to serve and in this case the supervisor in that area is not interested in serving and felt Mr. Hansen had the experience to serve since a citizen member can be the representative. Hansen states they meet 5 times a year. There was further discussion among committee members regarding taxes in that area determined by lake district members. Hansen weighed in on the voting position questions within the committee. Cook referred to Nate Cullen from Corporation Counsel concerning a citizen member serving and Cullen states this representation would be fine. Schroeder states he is fine with this recommendation since it doesn't affect us on county level. A motion to recommend Herbert Hansen to the Harmony Grove Lake District Appointment was made by Bailey. Second by Cook. Motion carried. This will be forwarded to Executive Committee meeting.

15. **Resolution in Support of National Trail Designation of Baraboo River** – Calkins introduces Joe VanBerkel and Chris Bruni. VanBerkel gave history on Baraboo River and asks for Columbia County support from the National Park Service recognizing Baraboo River as a National Water Trail. They are looking at a 10-year agreement with property landowners. Most areas along the river are community owned and have volunteers including veterans groups. Stevenson had a question about flooding issues with this river. VanBerkel states that is the nature of the river, since it adjoins with Wisconsin River and when Wisconsin River is full it will help for overflow. He states

**MINUTES OF THE COLUMBIA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE, EXTENSION, LAND & WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING
June 3, 2024**

they can remove some log jams to free up more waterflow, but that's it. Bruni states they can do more volunteer work if it becomes a National Water Trail. As a citizen group they don't have the funds, but working with counties they have had help with companies. They have had volunteer help on projects for the log jamming, which is a continuing effort. There are 120 miles they are looking at designating, out of a 140-foot stretch. They spoke about landings in the communities. A motion to approve the Resolution in Support of National Trail Designation of Baraboo River was made by Brusveen. Second by Cook. Motion carried.

16. Discuss Appointments of Representative and Alternate for SAA WI Land and Water

Organization – Calkins states the committee needs to officially designate a representative to the SAA (Southern Area Association) board, along with an alternate for this next committee term. He states they would need to be decide who to designate as the area representative and alternate. The Southern Area Association Land & Water bylaws recommend a staff member (Kurt) and a committee member. There was discussion if it needs to go through county board. A motion was made by Cook to nominate Fischer and Brusveen pending Fischer's approval for SAA Representative and Alternate. Second by Brusveen. Motion carried.

17. Report from May 23, 2024 SAA Meeting - Calkins states the SAA had numerous changes to the by-laws. He reports SAA represents 11 counties, and they rotate the Lead Coordinator position by the bylaws. The County Coordinator rotated every 2 years and then the secretary/treasurer would change so they voted on keeping the Treasurer position the same and not rotating it. Secretary will continue to be elected. Dane County is the new Treasurer position so they don't have to keep moving banks and paperwork. They changed the President and Vice-President may be a committee member or staff for either position. Melissa from Sauk County was elected president, and a couple county board supervisors serve on the State board. Calkins was elected Vice Chair. Dane County states they will offer a carbon sequestration capacity. Dues will remain the same this year. He states the Summer Tour will be at the Fall tour, on September 11th in Rock County. LWCC Trainings will be coming up for State organization.

A motion to adjourn was made by Stevenson. Second by Bailey. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Rich Bailey,
Agriculture, Extension, Land & Water
Conservation Committee Secretary

