

**Conservation/UW-EX Education Committee**  
**Monday, March 11, 2024 Minutes**  
**Oneida County Courthouse, County Board Room and Virtually by ZOOM**

**Committee Members:** Chairman Jim Winkler, Robb Jensen, Tommy Ryden, Collette Sorgel and Linnaea Newman.

**Others Present:** Michele Sadauskas, Karl Jennrich, Stephanie Boismenu, Joe Steinhage, Ted Rulseh, Eric Rempala, Beckie Gaskill, Jeff Verdoorn, Kathleen Cooper and Jessica Young. Jonna Jewell, Dan Butkus, Randy Marnocha, Petra Pietrzak, and Amber Rehberg on Zoom.

**1. Call to order and Chairperson's Announcements:**

Chairman Winkler called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. The meeting was properly posted and handicapped accessible and ADA compliant. The symbol /s/ represents a valid virtual attendee's signature.

Chairman Winkler would like the Committee to be aware that there are PFAS materials in the CUW Committee packets for review. If anyone is interested in participating in the online session, it will take place on Tuesday March 12, 2024 via Zoom.

**2. Approve Agenda:** A motion by Ryden/Sorgel to approve the March 11, 2024 Agenda with the order of items at the Chair's discretion. All ayes; motion carried.

**3. Approve Minutes:** A motion by Sorgel/Ryden to approve the minutes of February 12, 2024 as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

**4. Dates/Location of Future Meetings:**

Monday, April 8, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. Oneida County Courthouse; County Board Room.

**5. Public Comment:**

Kathleen Cooper (Pelican Township) addressed item #8. Cooper would like the CUW Committee to pursue the original resolution, the one presented before changes were made by the County Board. Cooper believes the changes made to the resolution would damage lakes and the shoreline habitat, in particular, loons' nests. Cooper believes that the burden of proof should be the responsibility of the wakeboard industry; they should provide evidence that wakeboats do not negatively affect the shoreline, and that they do not scour the bottoms of lakes, ruining the bio habitats of small plants and organisms. The changes made to the resolution are bad for the lakes and bad for people. Cooper would like the changes reversed and would like the Committee go back to the original resolution.

Eric Rempala, member of the Oneida County Clean Waters Action (OCCWA), addressed item #8. Rempala believes the Committee did a good job putting the initial resolution together, but he does not agree with the changes made by the County Board. Rempala urged the Committee to stick with their original thoughts in regard to the resolution, as the lower numbers provided on the altered resolution provide no protection. Rempala addressed item #7. Rempala stated the OCCWA will be taking part in one of the two online PFAS webinars hosted by the League of

Women Voters of Wisconsin. Rempala thanked the Committee for recognizing PFAS as an issue in Oneida County.

Joe Steinhage (Town of Newbold) addressed item #8. Steinhage thanked the Committee for changing the numbers from 300 feet from shoreline and 15 feet depth to 500 feet and 20 feet. Steinhage stated that these numbers are bare minimum, as more studies are coming out with numbers as high as 700 feet from shoreline and 30 feet depth. Steinhage believes the final draft of the resolution will be good.

## **6. Cost Share Update:**

### **a. Project #2024-01 Client Withdrawal – Forfeiture of Deposit.**

Sadauskas stated that there was a client withdrawal from the cost share program and she would like to present the forfeiture of deposit to the Committee. It was stated in documentation that if the landowner pulls out of the project after it has gone through the design process the landowner forfeits their deposit.

Randy Marnocha (Lake Nokomis) stated that the staff of LWCD were professional and friendly, and that the request being made does not reflect on them or the work they do. Marnocha received an estimate of \$25,000 from Oneida County to complete the project. Marnocha figured his out-of-pocket costs to be around \$15,000 with the \$10,000 grant. When it came time to bid on the project, only one contractor placed a bid with the cost being roughly \$31,000. This is a \$6,000 difference in cost from the initial estimate by Oneida County. Marnocha stated that he was not made aware that the grant would be considered taxable income until LWCD requested completed W-9 forms in December 2023. The additional expense of paying taxes on the \$10,000 grant would be \$3,000. The request for a completed W-9 came out after the design was already created. Marnocha stated that the amount of out-of-pocket expense for him increased by \$9,000 and is requesting a refund of half the original deposit, or \$500, due to the unforeseen rise in prices and lack of awareness that the grant would be considered taxable income.

Sadauskas estimated that roughly 45 hours of staff time has been committed to this project and that would be equivalent to a couple thousand dollars in costs.

Sorgel would like to know if it's possible to get another bid or if there is a possibility of negotiating the original bid down closer to the estimate range given. Sadauskas stated there were three potential contractors available to bid, but only one bid was entered, and that might be due to some of the challenges surrounding that particular project. Sadauskas stated having even three contractors present to bid was surprising and does not foresee any possibility of finding more contractors to place bids.

Ryden would like to know if there is a way to get the contractor to reduce the bid price down to the original quote. Sadauskas stated that LWCD does the coordinating of the

contract, but price negotiations are generally done by the contractor and the client, and the client would need to be the one to set that in motion.

Sadauskas stated that a 1099 does convey income; however, a reimbursement check cannot be issued without having the W-9 form from the landowners. Sadauskas suggested the landowner discuss tax concerns with their tax professional. Marnocha stated that a retired tax professional told him that the grant would be considered taxable income. Marnocha suggested that these issues be brought to the landowner's attention before the project goes into the design phase. Marnocha stated they relied on Oneida County and the estimate given to them, and certain factors should have been considered when creating that estimate.

Sadauskas commented that an estimate must be put into the contract, and those estimates are based off of projects from the previous year. Sadauskas mentioned that the process has changed for future projects and landowners will be made aware of the W-9 and other factors prior to the design process moving forward.

Ryden stated that a refund of \$500 from the deposit seems fair due to the bid price coming in much higher than the estimate given.

Jensen feels it is unreasonable for LWCD to be the one to give the estimate on these projects. He believes that in the future the landowner should receive estimates from contractors prior to entering into a cost share project with Oneida County. Jensen believes the \$500 request is reasonable.

Sorgel stated that not getting the project done is affecting the goals of shoreline restorations, which is why she suggested getting the project re-quoted or re-bid.

Jensen/Ryden made a motion to reduce the \$1,000 down to \$500. All ayes; motion carried.

## **7. PFAs Update:**

There are no major updates other than the Zoom session on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.

Chair Winkler feels like attending would be good education for all Committee members.

Jensen mentioned that nothing else is coming out of the legislature in 2024 on this topic. The \$125 million did not get approved.

Chair Winkler stated that the authorizing agency, the DNR, gives grant approval for sledge to be put on agriculture land as a benefit to agriculture; but there are no studies being done that focus on what is in the sledge and what the effects of its application might be. Chair Winkler suggested writing a letter, or bringing to the Committee the possibility of writing a resolution, to ask the state to have the DNR communicate better internally within its organization.

## **8. Enhanced Wake Update:**

### **a. Final Draft Resolution.**

The final draft of the resolution was included in the Committee packets, and the Committee can make further changes if needed.

Sadauskas pointed out that the changes made by the Committee previously are reflected on lines 27 and 30, where the issue is now being referred to as enhanced/excessive. Lines 41 and 42 were left open last month due to not discussing the 300 and 15 feet changes. The Greenfire study that came out last month stated 600 feet from shoreline and 20 feet in depth; which is why Sadauskas opted to change the resolution to state 500 feet and 20 feet, which may be reviewed and discussed further by the Committee.

Jensen pointed out that lines 40-42 state that the local authority is given power to adjust the numbers as they see best, which makes him not as worried about stating the shoreline and depth measurements since local controls will be in place.

If the Board of Supervisors approve the resolution, it will be sent off to the state as an advisory resolution.

Chair Winkler would prefer to set a minimum of 500 feet from shoreline and 20 feet depth, even if the resolution suggests local control. He believes that the resolution should not be too restrictive; the goal is to have something that will pass at the County Board level. It is important that the resolution includes local authority control.

Ryden agreed with Chair Winkler that depth should be 20 feet and that local control is the best option for each town; however, putting 500 feet will get some pushback from the County Board.

Jensen believes that the minimums do not truly matter because the resolution suggests local control.

Sadauskas stated that local control is best, but a minimum does still need to be set at 500 feet.

Newman stated that the minimum at this point is 500 feet, anything less than that would eliminate fish nurseries and loons' nests and safe boating. The resolution is an advisory piece, it does not set law, and it reflects the thoughts of Oneida County.

Chair Winkler thinks it is important to share the standards of Oneida County with the state.

Sorgel and Sadauskas believes the numbers are reasonable, that it reflects what many other towns and states are doing.

Ryden stated that advising 500 feet from shore is based on the waves reaching shore, and not on the erosion of the shorelines. Ryden has a problem with the resolution because it is only targeting enhanced boats created to make wakes, but fails to include non-enhanced boats that throw enhanced/excessive wakes with no modifications. There is no definition of what excessive/enhanced entails, making it subjective in a resolution that is advisory by nature. Ryden believes the resolution should focus on local control and not too much on distance from shore and depth, as those factors will be decided by the town authorities using local control.

Chair Winkler stated that the county has no control over the lakes, that the towns hold that authority. This resolution is being done solely as an advisory and it is better to be restrictive with it.

Jensen commented on lines 35-38 and suggested moving the minimum distances from shoreline and depth in a sentence after line 38, leaving 40-41 solely about local control.

Ryden stated that there will be pushback from towns if the minimum is any higher than 300 feet. Anything higher than that may cause congestion at some lakes, and people will not be happy about that. It is very important to get something to the state very soon because the minimum now is 100 feet from shore and no depth minimum.

Jensen mentioned there will be no changes to that in 2024.

Ryden stated that Minocqua would like to see 300 feet on that resolution.

Jensen/Newman made a motion to amend the resolution line 38 after the word "and" and state minimums of at least 500 feet from the shore and to prohibit enhanced wake creation in water shallower than at least 20 feet in depth. All ayes; motion carried.

Sadauskas asked Ryden his thoughts on moving to 400 feet and if that would work better for Minocqua. Ryden stated Minocqua wants 300 feet, but they might agree with 400 feet.

Jensen asked why the resolution was sent back. Newman stated it was due to the Committee not having the research available to back up the original numbers.

Chair Winkler feels comfortable with 500 feet as the minimum because it is supported by all the literature at this time.

Chair Winkler took a vote, all in favor of the resolution as amended; all ayes.

## **9. Lake District Reports:**

None submitted.

## **10. Committee Transition – (LWCD & UWEX):**

Chair Winkler believes there will be a resolution to have a single county Human Services Committee in the future, which may not allow much time for Veterans Services during the meetings. Chair Winkler suggested combining Veterans Services and UWEX as a committee that meets bi-monthly, and to have LWCD combine with the Planning & Development Committee that meets twice a month.

Jensen believes it would be challenging to put LWCD with Planning & Zoning due to how heavy the agendas can be. He suggested combining LWCD with Forestry & Outdoor Recreation instead, as they complement one another better.

Jennrich agreed with Jensen that Planning & Development is not a great combination for LWCD, unless there was a separate meeting dedicated to LWCD. He believes Forestry & Outdoor Recreation overlaps well with LWCD.

Chair Winkler stated that a Human Services Committee would take up a large amount of time in a meeting due to the transitional phase. Chair Winkler spoke to both Tammy Javenkoski from Veterans Services and Amber Rehberg from UWEX, each saying they did not need to meet as often as they do and that a bi-monthly meeting would be better for those departments.

Ryden stated putting LWCD with Planning & Zoning would be brutal time-wise. Chair Winkler mentioned that the meetings could be separated, with one for LWCD and one for Planning & Zoning. Jensen believes restructuring is a good idea, as it can help departments learn from one another. He believes it is a good idea to discuss it.

## **11. LWCD Office Reports:**

- a. Budget Actual.
- b. Invoices Paid.

Committee acknowledged and received items 11a and 11b.

## **12. LWCD items to include on next agenda:**

- Concluding Statements on the Resolution
- PFAS Update & Discussion

## **13. Public Comment:**

Eric Rempala (Town of Cassian) addressed item #7. Rempala stated that Oneida County is already a leader of the discussion, being only the second county to address the problem. Rempala stated that when the DNR certified these sites for spreading, it was before they knew what PFAS was. Landowners were requesting it to be spread on their lands because it super enhanced growth on those lands. The NRB has yet to set a number on PFAS for groundwater. The DNR did not test sledge because it was not a requirement. The state legislature makes the rules of whether it is to be tested, and the DNR is tasked with following what the legislature tells them to do. Rempala addressed item #8. What the state is trying to do with the legislation is try to make it to where the towns cannot be more protected, they have no issue with towns or counties being less protected. It is stating you cannot be more protected than the minimums set. Rempala suggested setting it at 500 feet and 20 feet, and if Minocqua wants to go less protective that might be a possibility. Rempala did not hear anyone disagree with 500 feet at Minocqua meetings he had been to. Rempala addressed item #10. He would not like to see LWCD combine Planning & Development Committee due to too much power in limited hands.

Kathleen Cooper (Pelican Township) addressed item #8. The EPA potential standard is 4 parts per trillion (ppt). The State of Wisconsin is 70 ppt, which is way above what the EPA has set. At the Stella meeting it was addressed that if a well measured less than 200 ppt, a filtration system could be used to filter out the PFAS with carbon. The filtration system could cost approximately \$4,000 - \$5,000. If a well tested over 200 ppt, a new well would need to be dug, but it is not currently known how deep PFAS goes. A new well could cost \$25,000. Cooper addressed item #7. Cooper pointed out that 500 ft. and 20 ft. are minimum standards, meaning local control could go above those numbers, but could not go below.

#### **14. Area 4 Extension Director Update – A. Rehberg**

a. UWEX Status Update:

The Committee should have received information from the Wisconsin Counties Association regarding the 175<sup>th</sup> Northwoods Forum held on May 7<sup>th</sup> in Lac du Flambeau. Rehberg and Young are on the planning committee, which is shaping up to be a great educational day. There are three areas of interest: local community infrastructure and economy, enhancing natural resources, and quality of life. Rural EMS will be there to discuss some of the projects they have been doing in the Northwoods. Rehberg encouraged the Committee to attend, there will be a lot of great education and an opportunity to see how UW-Madison is working in the Northwoods. There will also be an opportunity to connect with resources and leverage anything the county may need. Attendance is only open to those in the rural Northwoods.

Rhineland City Council requested ethics training; Rehberg is working with the local government to organize and coordinate those trainings.

b. Staffing & Communication Plan:

Staff attended the Up North Community Expo at the Hodag Dome on March 7<sup>th</sup>. This was an opportunity for staff to share educational programming and resources. The Forest County Digital Navigator was in attendance, educating the local community on

topics regarding broadband, access to technology, and how to utilize technology. This was a great opportunity to be more visible within the community and to share resources and education with the community.

c. Nicolet Facilities Update:

Rehberg has reached out to Nicolet and they were not able to provide any new updates. Rehberg will continue to communicate to the Committee any updates or changes.

**15. Youth in Governance Update. Possible Action on Resolution to Full County Board.**

Following the last Extension Committee Meeting, staff met with Diana Harris to continuing brainstorming and planning for a Youth in Governance Program. Additional ideas were explored, possibly looking at ways to build capacity and collaboration in the community and to expand opportunity for more youth..

Diana Harris is in the process of having follow-up conversations with other County Board members. Sharon Krause has reached out to RHS and LUHS. The hope is to begin recruiting in spring/fall of 2024. Considering this year as a pilot.

Chair Winkler stated that the resolution needs to go before the County Board before recruitment starts in fall.

Jensen remarked that the County Board should review it no later than August. There is no County Board meeting in July and the budget process starts in August. Chair Winkler suggested having the resolution ready by June 2024.

**16. UWEX Office Reports:**

- a. Budget Actual
- b. Invoices Paid

Committee acknowledged and received agenda items 16a & 16b, as presented.

**17. UWEX Items to include on next agenda:**

- Overview of Youth in Governance with more details.
- FoodWise Presentation: Food Insecurity

**18. Public Comment:**

None.

**19. Adjournment:** Chairman Winkler adjourned meeting at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jessica Young, Recording Secretary