

U.P. RC&D Council Meeting Minutes - June 09, 2021

Board Members and Staff Participating in Meeting: All participated via ZOOM video conference

Executive Board Members Participating by Teleconference: Howard Haulotte-Delta County Citizen, Bill Rice-Dickinson CD, Erin Daines - MSUE, Jim German-Chippewa County, Renee Leow – Marquette County Citizen, Nick Cassel-UP RC&D Council staff

Others Participating in Person or by Teleconference: Bernie Lang-Menominee County, Amber Butterfield-Dickinson CD, Barb Kramer-Dickinson County, Ashley Reitter-Schoolcraft CD, Theresa Nelson – Delta County, Gretchen Janssen – Houghton County

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am (EDT) by Chairperson Rice.

Approval of Agenda: Cassel requested the addition of three items to the agenda. He suggested adding 1) “Workers Comp. Audit” to the business line item “UPRC 990”, 2) under “Current project updates”, he suggested adding a line item for the new “DNR Fisheries Habitat Grant”, and 3) “Pollinator Grant”. A motion was made by German, supported by Leow to approve the agenda as presented with the additions suggested by Cassel. Motion passed.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Haulotte, supported by German to approve the minutes of the previous meeting of March 5, 2021 with no changes. Motion passed.

Public Comments: n/a – However a discussion prior to the start of the meeting occurred, which may be applicable. German discussed how Chippewa County will be rescinding its emergency order effective July 1st. Kramer and Nelson added that Dickinson and Delta Counties had already done so, and it’s nice to have things opening back up, after all of the COVID-19 impacts.

Financial Reports: The Executive Director (ED) presented the Balance Sheet as of May 26, 2021 and the Profit and Loss statements for the period January 1, 2014 through May 26, 2021 and for the January 1 through May 26, 2021 period. The combined balance in all accounts as of May 26, 2021 was \$50,163.83. ED reviewed several noteworthy expenses to the UP Council account, including a \$127.19 for antivirus software, and \$74.19 for Microsoft Office software, \$1000.00 for the UPRCD commercial liability insurance, and \$585.00 for Gloria LaPointe CPA to complete the UPRCD 990. Cassel reviewed the multi-year P&L which provides a more accurate picture of income and expenditures for many of the grant-funded projects which are multi-year in nature. The ED reminded the board he was following and providing the documentation that Darcy Rutkowski had done, prior to him, and inquired if this was sufficient, or would they like more, less, or in a different format. Leow insisted it represented the finances well, and to keep the financial report the same. A motion was made by German, supported by Haulotte to place the financial reports on file. Motion passed.

Business:

- **County dues update:** The ED informed the Executive Board and all partners that UPRCD had received requested County dues from 9 of the 15 Counties, equating to \$3,150. Cassel will send a reminder to those Counties who have not contributed, however some Counties replied that they will not be providing County dues, as they’ve had budget cuts. Reitter and Nelson both mentioned they will inquire with their appropriate Counties at their next meeting.
- **UPRC 990 & Workers Comp. Audit:** Cassel informed the board he worked with Gloria LaPointe, CPA, on carrying out the annual 990 tax return, and it has been completed and submitted. Her fee has not changed from past years, and it costs the Council \$585.00. Cassel also informed the board he had been working on the annual workers compensation audit for the insurance company. The audit has switched over this year to requiring all numbers and information to be entered online. This helped streamline the process. Cassel mentioned the thing that takes the longest is the waiting from other groups UPRCD hired as sub-contractors, to provide him with Certificates of Workers Compensation from their insurance company. He completed it and successfully submitted on Friday June 6th.
- **New GLRI CWMA proposal:** Cassel informed the Council he’d been working on a new proposal for the GLRI CWMA opportunity. He gave a brief background on the unstable funding and situation for the Hiawatha National Forest, with several contributing factors being the change of staff there. He was told that currently, there was no plans

for there to be money available to do Phragmites work across the Forest, and that this opportunity would be the perfect avenue. The project would be for \$50,000.00, last two years, and the majority of the award would be distributed to local CD's, CISMAs, and contractors to perform the "boots on the ground" work of mapping and treating invasive Phragmites across the Hiawatha National Forest. He also let the board know that the USFS fully supported this project already. Cassel requested approval to submit the grant proposal on its due date of July 8. Leow made a motion to submit the grant proposal, which was supported by German. Motion passed unanimously.

UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS AND PROJECT FUNDS

USFS Hiawatha NF Agreement for Phragmites Management

Agreement Amount \$59,700 Match Commitment \$15,000 - *met*
Project Dates: April 4, 2017 to December 31, 2020 (Requested extension to September 30, 2021)
Partners – Hiawatha NF and UP Phragmites Coalition Partners
Remaining funds **\$4,045.10**

MISGP – Life After Phragmites: Wetland Restoration and Landowner Stewardship

Agreement Amount \$191,600 Match Commitment \$21,800 - *met*
Project Dates: March 2019 to March 31, 2021 (Received extension to March 31, 2022 due to COVID)
Partners – Marquette, Alger, Dickinson, and Chippewa Luce Mackinac Conservation Districts and their associated CISMAs
Remaining funds **\$40,735.76**

NFWF SOGL – Life After Phragmites: Wetland Restoration & Landowner Stewardship in Michigan's UP and Northeastern Wisconsin

Agreement Amount \$150,000 Match Commitment \$150,000 (reduced to \$66,035.26 due to COVID)
Project Dates: August 2019 to December 31, 2021
Partners - Marquette, Alger, Dickinson, & Chippewa Luce Mackinac CDs, GLIFWC, WIDNR, Marinette Co.
Remaining funds **\$135,085.99** – *will be requesting 1 year extension*

MISGP – Upper Peninsula European frog-bit detection initiative

Agreement Amount \$239,100 Match Commitment \$37,400
Project Dates: April 30, 2021 to April 30, 2023
Partners – Dickinson, Iron/Baraga, Marquette, Chippewa/Luce/Mackinac Conservation Districts, Michigan Tech and their associated CISMAs
Remaining funds **\$239,100**

DNR FHG – Tahquamenon River road stream crossing inventory update

Agreement Amount \$62,400 Match Commitment \$6,900
Project Dates: June/July 2021 to October 31, 2022
Partners – DNR Fisheries and Forest Resources Divisions, USFS, Bay Mills Indian Community, LSSU, Chippewa/Luce Road Commissions
Remaining funds **\$62,400**

* Cassel wanted to inform the Council that the following Tuesday, June 15 was the announcement date for the submitted pollinator grant "Wildflower demonstration gardens initiative", submitted to the Graymont Community Economic and Development Fund in May. The project is to provide 5 townships with wildflower gardens, while improving esthetics and habitat. The project award would be for \$27,683.00 for 2021-2022. Partners involved include Northern Natives Erosion Control, LLC., and the following townships: Pentland, Hudson, Henricks, Trout Lake, and Garfield.

Partner Updates: Janssen informed the Council that there is a new recycling opportunity in Houghton County at the transfer station, offering recycling to residents for \$5/bag. Daines reminded the Council that MSUE has an entomologist on staff should UPRCD get more involved in pollinator projects, and Elliot Nelson that covers Chippewa County, and he deals with birds and Sea Grant projects. She also wanted to follow up with MSUE on the expanded partnerships between UPRCD and MSUE. Daines and Cassel will have a conversation in the coming weeks.

Future Meeting Dates: September 10, December 3 – Nelson asked if any future meetings will be in person. The Executive Board will discuss the future of how meetings are held, prior to the next one. Reitter asked if in person meetings are held, will there be a call-in option. Chairperson Rice confirms, and says there has always been that option, and moving forward UPRCD will continue to have the call-in option.

Adjournment: Motion was made by Leow, supported by Daines to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 am. Motion passed.