

U.P. RC&D Council Meeting Minutes September 11, 2020

Board Members and Staff Participating in Meeting: All participated via teleconference call

Board Members Participating by Teleconference: Howard Haulotte-Delta County Citizen, Bill Rice-Dickinson CD, Jen Ricker-Feak-Iron Baraga CD, 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, Theresa Nelson-Delta County, Gretchen Janssen-Houghton County, Amber Butterfield-Dickinson CD, Barb Kramer-Dickinson County, Ron Zaleski-Gogebic County, Ashley Reitter-Schoolcraft CD

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:01 am (Eastern) by Chairperson Rice.

Approval of Agenda: Cassel recommended the addition of “projects” under Business, as he forgot to include it in the original agenda draft. A motion was made by Haulotte, supported by Leow to approve the agenda, with the addition. Motion passed.

Public Comments: n/a

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by German, supported by Haulotte to approve the minutes of the previous meeting of June 5, 2020 with no changes. Motion passed.

Financial Reports: The Executive Director (ED) presented the Balance Sheet as of August 27, 2020 and the Profit and Loss statements for the period January 1, 2014 through August 27, 2020 and for the January through August 27, 2020 period. The combined balance in all accounts as of August 27, 2020 was \$47,008.39. ED noted there were no unique or noteworthy deposits or expenses since the last board meeting. 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. He noted since the June board meeting, \$11,483.08 was spent, primarily on salaries. Cassel and Rutkowski both were on payroll, as random tasks come up, Rutkowski helps as needed. Cassel also noted a grant reimbursement has not been requested since before the June meeting, which is why the bank account is lower. He mentioned Rutkowski and himself were working on one to submit within the next month. A motion was made by German, supported by Ricker-Feak to place the financial reports on file. Motion passed.

Business:

- **County Dues Update:** Cassel updated the board that since the June meeting, he'd received dues from Iron and Dickinson Counties. Collectively, UPRCD has received a total of \$3,500.00 in annual county dues, which came from (10) counties. Missing counties included: Luce, Gogebic, Ontonagon, Schoolcraft, and Keweenaw. Cassel asked the board what protocols were in terms of thanking the counties for their contribution. He recommended sending a thank you note, signed by the board, to each county who contributed.
- **Rutkowski/Cassel transition update:**
 - Cassel provide an update to the board and partners regarding how the Executive Director transition has been going. He noted that he is, for the most part, all settled in and performing day to day UPRCD and grant tasks. Occasionally he and Rutkowski touch base on different items that are not routine or occur frequently, such as the workers compensation audit.
 - Additionally, Cassel wanted to update the entire board and county partners that he and his wife are expecting their first baby at the end of October. He has saved up sick and vacation time, and had the personnel committee approve his work schedule moving forward.
 - Another topic that was brought up was the board and county partners wanting to commemorate and celebrate Rutkowski's retirement. German recommended it be done, in person, at the December annual meeting in Sault Ste. Marie. Others hesitated because of lengthy distance and weather conditions in December. A general consensus was made to have a luncheon in Marquette at the Holiday Inn, sometime in October, at a date which works for Rutkowski and her husband. Cassel will reach out to her to discuss

and get a date. A commemorative plaque will be given to Darcy, which German will coordinate getting. Leow recommended purchasing some sort of useable gift to present to her as well. She will coordinate the gift. German made a motion for the board to approve \$250.00 to go towards the plaque and gift. 2nd by Leow. None opposed. Motion passed.

- **Pesticide Applicator Business License (PABL) update:** Cassel provided an update to the board and partners that the UPRCD now holds a PABL. This allows Cassel, and if applicable, any other employees down the road, to perform herbicide applications without having to contract it out. This allows for more internal work. He informed there is a re-occurring cost of \$100.00 per year. Additionally, the current insurance policy UPRCD carries covers up to \$5,000.00 of pesticide work to occur. So if Cassel stays within the threshold, no increase in insurance cost will occur. He wanted to explain the PABL, what it meant, and benefits to the board and county partners.
- **Expanding UPRCD's activities beyond invasive species:** Cassel discussed with the board and county partners his desire to continue to go after grants for invasive species, and phragmites management. The UPRCD has a great relationship with invasive species funders and partners, and momentum should continue across the UP. He also expressed the interest to expand UPRCD's activities into other natural resources projects, as they come about. He gave examples like watershed management, pollinator projects, and wildlife/fish habitat restoration. He informed the board and partners that UPRCD has been involved in all of these activities in the past, and he'd like to expand activities, as applicable. All projects are grant funded, so the right grant opportunity must come along. German stated that he's spoke with Cassel about this topic and recommends UPRCD get involved in Asian Carp work if available. Barb Kramer recommended looking into the Council's mission statement and devise a strategic plan with objectives and goals, for UPRCD to have structure when going after natural resource projects. Cassel agreed that it was a good idea, and a good task for winter. Theresa Nelson informed that a great way to get local and county support for these new natural resources projects would be to attend county commission meetings and reiterate what the UPRCD Council is, does, and what we're looking to expand upon.
- **Annual Meeting Planning:** After plenty of discussion had between board members and county partners about annual meeting locations, whether to include Rutkowski's celebration, etc., the general consensus was to have the meeting via Zoom or another video chat service on the scheduled date of December 4.

UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS AND PROJECT FUNDS

NAWCA Michigan Upper Peninsula Coastal Wetland Project III – Darcy completed

Received \$1 Million Match Commitment \$2.2 Million
Project Dates: June 26, 2014 to December 26, 2019 (Requested Extension to March 26, 2020)
Multiple Partners
Remaining funds **\$0.00**

USFS Hiawatha NF Agreement for Phragmites Management

Agreement Amount \$59,700 Match Commitment \$15,000
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 **\$32,995.66**

MISGP – Life After Phragmites: Wetland Restoration and Landowner Stewardship

Agreement Amount \$191,600 Match Commitment \$21,800
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 **\$112,784.36** – *(will change after approved re-categorization of phragmites activities SOGL-MISGP)*

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 **\$138,759.42** - *(will change after approved re-categorization of phragmites activities SOGL-MISGP)*

Partner Updates: Ron Zaleski informed the board and county partners of a Sept. 16th purple loosestrife pull they had scheduled in Wakefield. He also informed the Council there were several deaths within the Gogebic County administration, and George Peck is the new administrator.

Future Meeting Dates: December 4 – Annual Meeting- (video conference)

Adjournment: Motion was made by Haulotte, supported by Leow to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 am. Motion passed.