

U.P. RC&D Council Meeting Minutes December 04, 2020

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, Teri Grout-Alger 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, Amber Butterfield-Dickinson CD, Barb Kramer-Dickinson County, Ashley Reitter-Schoolcraft CD

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am (Eastern) by Chairperson Rice.

Approval of Agenda: A motion was made by Haulotte, supported by Grout to approve the agenda as presented. 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 September 11, 2020 with no changes. Motion passed.

Financial Reports: The Executive Director (ED) presented the Balance Sheet as of November 25, 2020 and the Profit and Loss statements for the period January 1, 2014 through November 25, 2020 and for the January through November 25, 2020 period. The combined balance in all accounts as of November 25, 2020 was \$23,691.81. 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 the accounts were lower, as there were more expenses towards UPRCD and Phragmites grants and no revenue. Due to the busy Phragmites season, followed by Cassel's leave of absence for family, in addition to end of year reporting and writing a new grant proposal, he has not submitted a reimbursement request since August. He notes that there are at least two that need to be submitted that will bring in over \$45,000.00 and UPRCD numbers will significantly increase. A motion was made by Grout, supported by German to place the financial reports on file. Motion passed.

Business:

- **Board Election:** The terms of three current board members, Bill Rice, Jim German, and Renee Leow expire. Each board member was contacted previous to the meeting, and confirmed they wish to run again. German and Rice is willing to stand for election for another 3-year term. Leow was set to run for a 1-year term. Council board members and partners requested Cassel to review the UPRCD by-laws regarding term lengths and number of board members, which states board members will complete a 3-year term and be limited to 7, 9, or 11 members. Leow agreed to stand for election for a 3-year term. Grout made a motion to nominate that slate of candidates, and the motion was supported by Haulotte. Motion passed unanimously. Board members and the expiration dates of their terms are:
 - Expiring at the Annual Meeting in December 2021: Howard Haulotte and Teri Grout
 - Expiring at the Annual Meeting in December 2022: Jen Ricker and Erin Carter
- **Set 2021 Meeting Dates:**
 - Meeting dates for 2021 were set for March 5, June 4, September 10, and December 3. All to be held at 10:00am Eastern.
- **New European frog-bit MISGP proposal:** Cassel informed the Council he'd been working on a new proposal for the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program (UPRC) to collaborate with all 5 UP CISMAs to perform surveys for European frog-bit across the region. UPRCD would act as the fiduciary and project lead, while sub-awarding grant dollars to the CISMAs to perform the work. The estimated award amount would be \$247,514.00, with \$37,940.00 being provided through local match, with a project total of \$285,454.00. Cassel requested approval to submit the grant proposal on its due date of December 11. Leow made a motion to submit the grant proposal, which was supported by Grout. Motion passed unanimously.

- **New GLRI/DNR Phragmites grant opportunity:** Cassel discussed with the board and county partners a new opportunity that arose after a discussion with Christina Baugher of the DNR. Her and Darcy had been in discussion about expanding the UP phragmites efforts beyond the Lake Michigan shoreline. A grant opportunity arose through the EPA GLRI to submit a pre-proposal to work with UP CISMAs to survey and manage phragmites within the Lake Superior watershed. It was chosen by EPA GLRI staff to provide further information, but not a full proposal at this point. This project would be substantial and large, with an approximate budget of \$400,000-600,000. UPRCD would hire a full-time employee to manage and work with CISMAs, while the remaining funding would be sub awarded to the CISMAs to perform survey and treatments. After the frustrating stops and starts of grant funding this summer due to COVID-19, most CISMAs are overloaded with work and funding for FY21, which would make taking on another project be near impossible. Cassel and Baugher decided, if possible, to delay submitting until next year, for FY22. Cassel informed the Council that this project could have ties and applicable similarities to the project that Alger CD, UPRCD, and CLMCD submitted in 2016. Grout offered to help in any way she could should this project move forward.
- **UPRCO audit discussion:** Cassel informed the Council and county partners that while seeking additional funding sources beyond invasive species, he discovered there was great watershed work to get involved with utilizing Non-point source funding from EGLE. After looking more into this, he discovered UPRCD did not qualify to apply because of a lack of a successful financial audit. He wondered what other grant opportunities require this and would it worth be spending the upfront cost of an audit (anywhere from \$2,500-\$6,000) in order to open opportunities to acquire \$400,000 grants. No decisions were to be made, but just to have a discussion with board members. Grout and Leow informed the Council of the CPA companies they used and approximate costs. Reitter let Cassel know if he were to pursue and audit, to make sure it is prior to tax season, as the price is usually less. Should Cassel seek more information, he will investigate and include the board.

UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS AND PROJECT FUNDS

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 **\$17,513.76**

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 **\$97,118.92** – have not reimbursed CDs for 3rd Quarter yet

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 **\$143,958.84** – only work has been admin and WRISC Wisconsin phragmites treatments. Will primarily be spent down in 2021.

Partner Updates: Teri Grout informed the Council that Alger CD is collaborating with multiple CISMAs (KISMA and Lake to Lake CISMA) to submit a Japanese Knotweed proposal for MISGP which would look at various treatment options and efficiencies to provide better insight to overall management strategies.

Future Meeting Dates: March 5, 2021

Adjournment: Motion was made by Haulotte, supported by Leow to adjourn the meeting at 11:01am. Motion passed.