

## MINUTES

### CONSERVATION, EDUCATION, & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 5, 2025  
**TIME:** 9:00 AM  
**PLACE:** Courthouse – Conference Rm #302

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bill Leichtnam, Tom Buttke, Tim Hovendick, Wayne Schulz (WebEx), Russ Perlock

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Trent Miner, County Clerk; See attached sign-in list

1. Chairman Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and declared a quorum present.
2. There was no public comment.
3. Under correspondence, Planning & Zoning Director Grueneberg reminded the group of the Vesper Housing Project Open House coming up on March 25<sup>th</sup>.
4. The minutes of the February 5, 2025, meeting were presented. Motion by Buttke/Hovendick to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Motion by Hovendick/Perlock to approve the vouchers, monthly department reports and committee reports. Motion carried unanimously.
6. Melinda Osterberg from the WI Economic Development Board reviewed the various grants available for economic development and highlighted the Wisconsin Rapids Shopko building and the Vesper Housing Project as examples of what those grant funds can accomplish.
7. Kyle Kearns from the City of Wisconsin Rapids requested the release of REDI Funds for funding a preliminary housing assessment in the Triangle Block in downtown Wisconsin Rapids. This assessment would be done by the same firm that did the Weinbrenner Shoe building assessment in Marshfield. Motion by Buttke/Hovendick to approve the release of \$7,200 of REDI funds to fund this assessment. Motion carried unanimously.
8. Extension Director Solin reported that the new Area Extension Director has been hired and will be starting next week. Interviews are being conducted for the Human Development & Relationships Educator.
9. County Conservationist Wucherpfennig reviewed the Ag Producer member of the committee and recommended that George Gilbertson be appointed as this member to the CEED Committee. Motion by Schulz/Buttke to recommend the appointment of George Gilbertson to the county board chair as the Ag Producer member of CEED. Motion carried unanimously.
10. Wucherpfennig presented a bid opening for a rip rap project along the Wisconsin River, south of Nekoosa. The estimate for this project was \$100,000 and is a 70/30 cost share with the landowner. One bid was received from Becker Trucking for \$113,165.22. Motion by Leichtnam/Hovendick to reject the bid and rebid the project. Motion carried unanimously.

11. Kendra Wilhelm, Conservation Specialist with LWCD, discussed the upcoming Central Wisconsin Farm Profitability Seminar happening in April at Midstate Technical College in Wisconsin Rapids. Committee members were invited to attend and will need to pre-register.
12. Wucherpennig reviewed the status of the two ongoing violations within the department.
13. Wucherpennig reviewed the initiatives his department is undertaking with the allocated ARPA Funding, and the status of them. More information on specifics will be forthcoming.
14. GIS Specialist Bernard reviewed the upcoming aerial photo project of the county that will be completed in 2025. While a grant from the state paid for a portion of this project, additional county funds will be needed and could be applied for in the 2026 CIP. Motion by Buttke/Schulz to approve the CIP request of \$61,406.99 and forward it to the Finance Dept. Motion carried unanimously.
15. County Planner Arndt presented a resolution amending the Town of Lincoln Zoning. There is no conflict with any county zoning. Motion by Buttke/Perlock to approve the resolution and forward onto the county board for their consideration. Motion carried unanimously.
16. A representative from the Saratoga Town Hall restoration project was present and updated the committee on the current status of the project. This was an approved economic development grant application from 2024. Motion by Buttke/Hovendick to approve the release of \$35,000 of economic development grant funds to the Saratoga Town Hall restoration project. Motion carried unanimously.
17. Grueneberg and Rombalski requested REDI Grant funds to sponsor the statewide Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC) conference that will be held June 16th to 18th in Wisconsin Rapids. This was a competitive process to be able to host this event, which could bring in over 200 participants. Motion by Hovendick/Buttke to release \$10,000 in REDI funds to sponsor the event. Motion carried unanimously.
18. Schulz and Hovendick attended the annual meeting of the Friends of Mill Creek and requested per diem for attendance. Motion by Leichtnam/Buttke to approve the per diem expense for them. Motion carried unanimously.
19. The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 9:00 AM.
20. Chairman Leichtnam declared the meeting adjourned at 11:11 AM.

Minutes taken by Trent Miner, County Clerk, and are in draft form until approved at the next meeting.

