

**EAU CLAIRE COUNTY
LAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**MEETING MINUTES – MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2016
AGRICULTURE & RESOURCE CENTER – ALTOONA, WI**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ray Henning, Tami Schraufnagel, Robin Leary, Gary Gibson, Bruce Willett, Glory Adams, Dean Solie, Ron Erickson

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

STAFF PRESENT: Kelly Jacobs

OTHERS PRESENT: Lance Gurney (P & D), Jen Roetter (NRCS), Keith Krajewski (DNR)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 PM by Chair Leary.

2. Public Input Session

No public in attendance.

3. Approve Minutes

Motion by Gibson to approve the March 7, 2016 minutes as presented. Seconded by Henning. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. County Cost-Share Applications and Ledger Update

LCC reviewed.

5. Rain to Rivers Program Internal Audit

LCC members were provided with a response memo from Scott Rasmussen, Finance Director. Gurney presented on the Rain to Rivers internal audit process and thanked Jacobs for the great work completed. Gurney outlined several changes in the account structure including the following:

- The 207 account is currently a hybrid of several grant funded programs as separate subaccounts.
 - We are looking at each program having its own account lines.
 - Funds in the account are non-lapsing, but are currently held in the County's general fund after the end of the budget year.
 - These accounts are tracked using ALIO and will be visible on budget reports and financial statements.
 - Last three numbers at the end of the newly created revenue and expense lines for the Rain to Rivers program will end with the numbers "588" (for example, 16-207-15-43588-000-000) so they are easier to understand and correlate.
- The 800 account is already set up to maintain a carryover balance for the program
 - Established because this programs manages non-county funds and Eau Claire County is only acting as fiscal agent on behalf of Rain 2 Rivers
 - Nonlapsing balance account fund and carryover is credited & documented from year to year.
 - This account is not tracked on the chart of accounts or budget sheets.
 - End of year balance in 207 will be reconciled in one transaction and either a credit or debit will be made into the 800 account each year.
- The 100 accounts will no longer be used for the Rain to Rivers Program as those are lapsing accounts and relate to everyday county operating processes.

In the case of Rain to Rivers program fiscal management, Gurney suggests that sufficient documentation and through accounting is necessary to ensure proper tracking of funds and subsequent reporting to the Rain to Rivers (R2R) members. It is also good to know we have the accounts and dollar figures all verified in the event of any future transition of the R2R program to a new fiscal agent.

6. Land Stewardship Subcommittee Nominations

Jacobs indicated that the Land Stewardship Subcommittee will be making recommendations to LCC for subcommittee membership at one of their upcoming meetings and invited LCC to identify potential candidates for consideration if they wish. Discussion suggested that Paul Lokken may consider serving as well?

7. Agency Updates & Committee Member Reports

Keith Krajewski, WI DNR Forester for private lands in Eau Claire County

There is Managed Forest Law (MFL) legislation that would impact the program if signed by the Governor:

- Currently there is a 10 ac. minimum and that would move to a 20 ac. minimum size required for enrollment
- New entries into the program would have no building allowed, but small acreages would be able to be removed
- Currently the maximum size is 160 ac. and they are expanding that to a 320 acre maximum
- Calculate withdrawal only to the last 10 years. (currently they would have to look at paying back taxes all the way to the beginning of the contract)
- No leasing currently; but the legislation would allow for leasing
- Currently there is a yield tax on wood harvested at a rate of 5% timber value going to Towns – under the legislation that would no longer be there and instead would be returning to the Town a portion of the closed and open taxes collected.
- Mandatory harvests have always and will continue to be part of MFL.

Jen Roetter – USDA-NRCS District Conservationist

CSP: deadline is March 31st. So far there have been 11 new applications plus 15 renewals.

EQIP : signup closed March 4th with only one Eau Claire County applications funded. The September signup funds the most projects. The next EQIP signup “batching” date is September 2nd. The five projects that didn’t get funded in the last round will be automatically rolled into that signup for consideration. EQIP cover crops and streambank initiative deadline is June 10th.

RCPP: EQIP funds with Trout Unlimited in the Driftless area. May 10th deadline for new applications. There is also a Monarch initiative signup.

Cover crop tour – eight sites around the county; auto/driving; handed out brochures

CRP: HEL contracts for mainly cool season grass. SAFE proposal for monarchs. RC & D securing most of the native seed, but still need lupine seed for two landowners. 400-500 ac. Karner Blue acreage to seed this spring.

Other: Engineering currently being worked on. FSA signup – conservation plans and conservation compliance and complaints too; 18 people to complete the first part of June.

Education/Outreach – Bob Bosold; FFA Farm City Day April 22nd; Augusta Schools May 2,3 & 4; Soil health

Eau Claire County LCD & Committee reports

Eau Claire River Watershed meeting and status update. Elected official meeting coming up soon.

Lake Eau Claire – Gibson reported that the management strategy discussed and getting a lot of good positives, especially with dredging. County needs to be a big partner and DNR continues to also be really involved in it. Army Corps of Engineers helping with reconnectivity plan. There are concerns with the proposed handicap fishing pier – Bridge Creek would like to focus more on improving one of the existing boat landings because of the challenging spot currently be considered (no parking, high traffic, small space, steep slope). The location being discussed is currently a small public park that rarely gets used and would likely have permitting challenges.

Phosphorus Variance - Adams reported that the DNR was directed to create a variance process for phosphorus discharges in water bodies. EPA OK'd them, but now DNR is in the process of writing the statutes that would go along with it. Concerns are whether the costs are justified or is it prolonging/delaying the inevitable of having to complete upgrades at existing point source discharger facilities. Discussion on treatment plant contributing to dead zones in Green Bay. Counties will likely get money to help implement BMPs, but can't hire staff with the funds.

Soil & Water Stewardship Week: Could possibly do some kind of Slide Show. Also put posters on display in the County Board room. Lobby display for the week. Perhaps get some press as well?

Wellntel project installations likely happening soon.

Tree Sale distribution coming up on April 22.

LCC training scheduled for May 12 in Menomonie and members should contact Jacobs to get registered if they are interested in attending.

11. Next Meeting Date

Henning can't meet on Monday evenings if he gets on the City of Altoona Planning Commission and may not be able to attend future LCC meetings. There will be discussion at the next meeting to set the regular meeting schedule that will fit with member schedules. Discussion on others who may wish to apply for this committee as well.

Next meeting will be held on Monday, May 16, 2016 at 5:15 PM at the Ag & Resource Center in Altoona.

12. Adjourn

Leary adjourned the meeting at 6:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Jacobs, Land Conservation Manager