

Conservation/UW-EX Education Committee
Monday, January 15, 2024 Minutes
Oneida County Courthouse, County Board Room and Virtually by ZOOM

Committee Members: Chairman Jim Winkler, Collette Sorgel, Robb Jensen, Tommy Ryden, and Linnaea Newman.

Others Present: Michele Sadauskas, Karl Jennrich, Stephanie Boismenu, Amber Rehberg, Anne Williams, Dave Sorgel, and Jessica Young. Jonna Jewell and Beckie Gaskill on Zoom.

1. Call to order and Chairperson's Announcements:

Chairman Winkler called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. The meeting was properly posted and handicapped accessible and ADA compliant. The symbol /s/ represents a valid virtual attendee's signature.

Chairman Winkler announced that the Ag Representative position is open and will be discussed in more detail later. Contact has been made with the USDA by Chairman Winkler and Sadauskas with no response. John Engel made contact with USDA connections and has not received a response. A formal committee discussion will take place at the February CUW Committee Meeting.

2. Approve Agenda: A motion by Jensen/Sorgel to approve the January 15, 2024 Amended Agenda with the order of items at the Chair's discretion. All ayes; motion carried.

3. Approve Minutes: A motion by Newman/Jensen to approve the minutes of December 11, 2023 as presented. All ayes; motion carried.

4. Dates/Location of Future Meetings:

Monday, February 12, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. Oneida County Courthouse; County Board Room.

Monday, March 11, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. Oneida County Courthouse; County Board Room.

5. Public Comment: None.

6. Wakeboat Update:

There are no new updates regarding the wakeboat legislation at the state level. Sadauskas is unsure if anything will be accomplished this session, but will update the Committee when new information comes in.

Newman received correspondence from Representative Swearingen about the wakeboat issue. In the correspondence, Representative Swearingen noted that Senator Felzkowski and he were continuing to work on legislation regarding wakeboats and wakesurfing, and that it has been a challenge working with all the stakeholders on the issue. The bill changes every week, but they hope to come to an agreement soon on the distance from shores, as well as depth. They continue to work on defining the activity of wakesurfing and wakeboating. They are planning for amendments soon, but time is not on their side, as the legislative session is coming to a

close at the end of February. Newman believes the odds of getting something passed before February 29th is slim.

Chairman Winkler gave an update on the proposed ordinance regarding enhanced wakes from Newbold. The ordinance does not address wakeboats directly, but focuses on enhanced wakes. This method of addressing the issue takes all boats into consideration, as wakeboats are not the only ones that create artificially enhanced wakes that are harmful to the bottom of lakes and shorelines.

Boismenu stated that the majority of lakes in Newbold would be applicable to the ordinance, except Rainbow Flowage, but there would be an amendment to include Rainbow Flowage. Newbold's next step is sending the proposed ordinance to the DNR to review the language and receive approval.

Ryden spoke with Chad Baker, a small business owner from Minocqua, who stated people drive 20-30 feet from rafts in 17 foot runabouts throwing 2.5 to 3 foot waves offshore. Baker was hoping verbiage would be used to address all big wakes, regardless if they come from wakeboats or other types of boats. Ryden also noted that Baker felt the 500 foot rule was fair for wakes directed towards shore, but 300 feet would be sufficient for wakes directed away from shore.

Jensen commented that enforcing the ordinance would be difficult, the concept itself is good, but enforcing it may require hiring the sheriff's department.

Chairman Winkler mentioned that the mathematics done on hiring someone to sit at the boat landings would cost \$22,000 per summer.

Ryden mentioned that the majority of individuals that wakeboat or create enhanced wakes follow the rules and will self-police when they see other boats doing something wrong. There will be a few bad eggs, but the majority tend to do the right thing.

Ryden would like to know if there have been any erosion studies done on the Minocqua Chain of Lakes. Sadauskas stated that it would be difficult to parcel out what causes erosion due to the many variables that cannot be controlled, such as water level, boat traffic, stuff happening upland, traffic, people, density, shoreline development; the situation is dynamic in that area.

7. Yearly Approval of Out-of-County Travel:

LWCD requests Committee to approve a blanketed out-of-county travel expense that will allow staff and Committee members to travel for events and other reasons without needing monthly approval by the Committee, but instead will be approved by the department head. This request has been made in the last year or two and has been successful.

Jensen/Ryden made a motion to approve out-of-county travel for Land & Water Conservation Department staff members and Committee members, to be approved by the department head. All ayes; motion carried.

8. LWCD Up-Coming Events:

There will be two contests coming up, a local speaking contest on January 24th at ArtStart, and a poster contest. Sadauskas encouraged Committee members to attend if they were able to. Oneida County will also be hosting the area poster and speaking contest on February 6th, which will be held at the Oneida County Courthouse and will include a catered lunch.

The Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention will be April 10-12, 2024 in Stevens Point. Stephanie Boismenu will be doing a presentation. Chairman Winkler encouraged Committee members to attend if they had the ability to do so.

9. Lake District Reports:

A few have been filed, no further updates.

10. LWCD Office Reports:

- a. Budget Actual – *(December)*
- b. Invoices Paid

Committee acknowledged and received items 10a and 10b.

11. Choose North Central Land & Water Conservation (NCLWCA) Representative for Feb. 6th Winter Meeting:

At this time, there is no NCLWCA Representative. A representative for Oneida County needs to be present for the winter meeting. Jim Winkler agreed to be the representative for only the Feb. 6 Meeting. A 2024 NCLWCA representative will be chosen after county spring elections.

Jensen/Sorgel made a motion to appoint Jim Winkler as the North Central Land & Water Conservation Representative for Oneida County at the February 6th winter meeting. All ayes; motion carried.

12. LWCD items to include on next agenda:

Ag Representative Position and Enhanced Wake Update.

Newman requested that the wakeboat updates be referred to as enhanced wakes for the sake of accuracy, which was agreed on by the Committee.

13. Public Comment: None.

14. Area 4 Extension Director Update – A. Rehberg

a. UWEX Status Update:

Extension is partnering with the state to build out broadband; there are five specialists focusing on broadband. Brittany Beyer is one of those specialists, focusing on procurement (securing resources and funds), and will be working out of the Oneida County Extension Office as her home base. This is a great opportunity for Oneida County, as the physical proximity to Beyer allows for greater access to resources that Oneida County can utilize in their planning. The broadband team also includes John Maxwell, who will be working on the plans for broadband, and Jessica Beckendorf, who is working on partnerships.

Rehberg is working with Mary Rideout to facilitate a supervisor meeting in January. The group has not met for a while and this is an opportunity to facilitate a start to regular meetings.

Rehberg is also working with Mary Rideout to assist with a Strategic Planning Process for an association comprised of human service directors across the state.

b. Staffing & Communication Plan:

Extension continues to build on their communication plan; they are working to get Extension articles out. A new Horticulture Educator in Iron County will be sharing news articles with the Lakeland Times. The Health and Well Being Educator, Laurel, will begin writing articles for the ADRC Newsletter. The 4-H Educator, Anne, writes for Forest County and will be sharing those articles with Oneida County. Extension plans to share these articles with multiple sources as they become available. Extension will be attending some upcoming community events, such as the Up North Expo in Rhinelander in March, in order to grow awareness of Extension services and upcoming programming opportunities.

c. Nicolet and Other Collaborations:

Rehberg met with Nicolet last week, they are doing a facilities study and they met with their renters/partners to see what the space needs are in the community. They are working to build up community engagement and would like more ways to utilize their open spaces. Nicolet would like to know if other entities might consider or would like to utilize available spaces.

Sorgel suggested using open space at Nicolet for community housing. Jensen suggested that Nicolet might reach out to the School District of Rhinelander to collaborate on educational programming using open space on the Nicolet campus.

Shared spaces may create opportunities to collaborate with external entities. There may be other groups like Extension that might find it useful to be at Nicolet Campus and build new partnerships and or expand on current partnerships.

15. Update on LEGO Robotics & Learn to Sew Program – A. Williams

Williams gave the Committee an update on two 4-H Programs: LEGO Robotics and Sewing.

The 4-H LEGO Robotics “Explorers” Club had eight participants, registration was maxed out at that number due to it being a pilot program. LEGO Robotics was for youth ages 7-10, including homeschool/public/private school students. Oneida County 4-H partnered with First LEGO League, a non-profit organization, to make this program a possibility.

The LEGO Robotics program was created for youth in grades 7-10 due to it being a critical age when focusing on these types of topics. There are robotics clubs available at the middle school and the high school, but for youth coming into those grade levels it might be intimidating to join a club like this without any prior knowledge or experience. The LEGO Robotics program sparks the interest of youth preparing to go into middle school, allowing for an introduction to robotics in a fun way that also provides skill building, such as team work and communication skills. The program will be offered again in the future for those youth who were waitlisted.

Williams would like to expand the program so that volunteers would facilitate the program with training and support from her. This would allow the program to run more frequently throughout the year. Looking to the future, 4-H will look for ways to recruit and train volunteers.

The Learn to Sew program was three sessions created for youth in grades 3-12, homeschool/public/private. A total of five participants registered and attended the program. Participants learned the basics of sewing machines, about different types of fabrics and how to use them in sewing projects, ironing skills, and the history of sewing machines. The first project was a fabric coaster, the second project was a tote bag, and the third project was an apron. Participants learned and honed life skills, such as self-motivation, marketing, self-discipline, healthy lifestyle choices, and problem-solving. At the end of the third session participants did not want to stop working on projects, there is interest in the Minocqua area to continue the program and grow it.

16. UWEX Office Reports:

- a. Budget Actual
- b. Invoices Paid

Committee acknowledged and received agenda items 16a & 16b, as presented.

17. UWEX Items to include on next agenda:

Youth in Governance Update from Sharon Krause and Nicolet Facilities Update.

18. Public Comment: None.

19. Adjournment: Chairman Winkler adjourned meeting at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jessica Young, Recording Secretary