

**RUSK COUNTY LAND & WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

“Not Committee Approved”

DATE: September 12, 2017

ROLL CALL: A. RATHSACK, R. GIERKE, L. LIEFFRING, A. NICHOLSON, G. SWOVERLAND, J. BILLER

OTHERS PRESENT: J. KRELL, C. TESKY, P. RICHTER, S. ZESIGER

Open Session: Meeting called to order @ 8:00 AM by Alan Rathsack

Minutes: Biller/Gierke motion to approve minutes from July 11, 2017. Motion carried.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 @ 8:00 A.M in the Small Conference Room

Payment Approval Report: Gierke/Biller motion to approve payment approval report. Motion carried.

Wildlife Damage Claim Program: Zesiger handed out an updated enrollees list. There are currently 24 enrollees. Mostly bear trapping. He has 35 traps out and most are in northern Rusk County. Only 4 traps are monitored electronically. Having more monitored would reduce wasted trips for farmers and staff. Cost is \$600 to install plus additional monthly data fees. There hasn't been much corn damage yet because there is a lot of food for them in the woods. This could change rapidly depending on the weather. Zesiger is also doing some beaver work for timber companies and railroad. The wolf activity in Rusk County is quiet. 15 hounds have been killed statewide. Down from last year.

NRCS Report: Richter reported they just finished up 27 CSP contracts between Barron and Rusk County. This acreage is the 2nd highest in the state. Much of it in Rusk County is forest land. Staff is also working on renewing 5-year contracts. EQIP signup is ongoing but there is an Oct 20 deadline that eligibility needs to be up to date. EQIP has funds available for storm damage forest clean up. Rusk County leads the state with wetland restoration/reserve easements with 39. Five more applications have come in recently. The program pays property owners to “plug up” old drainage ditches and revert land back to wetland. Government pays for restoration and pays a one-time easement which is >\$1000/ acre. Property owner still owns the land. There is no word on additional staffing. Still 20% short on staffing in NW area.

Farm Service Agency: Nicholson reported that they haven't had a county meeting for a while. At the last one, they discussed storm damage and what programs might be available to assist property owners. The problem with the grants is that while money is available, if the property owners already started cleaning up at all they are not eligible. There is fencing repair assistance available as well. Crop reporting has been completed. The Dairy Margin Protection Program sign-up is beginning now.

Land Conservation Report – J. Krell: Seven projects are shovel ready but property owners are not ready to commit to construction for one reason or another. Krell worked with DNR on investigating a potential waste storage violation. The property has been sold in an auction but hasn't yet changed hands. Krell met with a representative from a hog agri-business in Minnesota

who is looking at locating a facility in Rusk County. They haven't purchased any land but were just inquiring about regulations.

Land Conservation and Development Department: Tesky reported that she has been working on 2018 budgets. Staff are preparing a remonumentation project for areas along the Chippewa and Flambeau Rivers. The Land Information Council will be meeting at the end of the month to discuss the Register of Deed's new scanning program which hasn't been working well. They will be looking at alternatives and the costs.

Animal Waste Storage Applications: Staff have designed waste storage for Merle Martin and Nelson Stutzman has had an engineer design one. Both are mostly ready to go, but there are no applications to bring to the committee right now. They don't like to pour concrete after October 15. Swoverland/Lieffring motion to authorize Krell to approve construction for these projects if the applications come in and meet standards. Motion carried. Final approvals can be brought to the committee in November.

Farmland Preservation Plan: The plan is complete. Krell had emailed the DRAFT Rusk County Farmland Preservation Plan to the committee members last week. Corporation Counsel and DATCP are currently reviewing it. The plan doesn't impose restrictions. It is voluntary. Tax credits are available based on different levels of the Working Lands program. Some programs require town/county to adopt farmland preservation zoning. Some programs do not require this. NR151 must be met (or follow a schedule of compliance) for all farmers that sign-up for the program. Lieffring/Gierke motion to send the plan to County Board after proper reviews are completed. Motion carried.

2018 Budget: Tesky went over the budget. Krell reported that the Joint Finance Committee had approved an additional \$900,000 in staffing grants so the state aid may go up. Swoverland/Lieffring motion to forward the 2018 Budget to Finance. Motion carried.

Out of County Travel: NW area meeting on September 28 in Hayward for Krell. Swoverland/Gierke motion to approve Out of County travel. Motion carried.

Adjourn: Lieffring/Gierke motion to adjourn at 9:06 AM. Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by CeCe Tesky