

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

“Not Committee Approved”

DATE: November 14, 2017

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

OTHERS PRESENT: J. KRELL, C. TESKY, M. KOEHLER, S. ZESIGER

Open Session: Meeting called to order @ 8:01 AM by Alan Rathsack

Minutes: Biller/Gierke motion to approve minutes from September 12, 2017. Motion carried.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 9, 2018 @ 8:00 A.M

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 26 enrollees. He is wrapping up appraisals today. He has trapped 77 bears in Rusk County. This number is up significantly from last year. Surrounding counties are down. Zesiger passed around the 2018 Wildlife Damage budget, which was signed by the chair. 2017 crop price proposals were considered. Alfalfa Hay \$131.69/ton, Corn, Field \$3.04/bushel, Soybeans \$8.87/bushel, Corn Silage (stored feed) \$36.88/ton. Biller/Gierke motion to approve the prices. Motion carried. Gierke/Biller motion to set the end date for crop removal of December 31, 2017 in order to qualify for claims. Motion carried.

NRCS Report: Koehler has received 10 EQIP applications. Richter received 50 applications in Barron County. They are in the process of reviewing them to place into high priority. Koehler reported that they will be able to begin making payments on older Conservation Stewardship Program contracts immediately. Newer ones will be able to be paid starting soon. He has been talking with some property owners about getting in the Wetland Reserve Program. He has 5 signed applications and may be getting another. WI DNR and Army Corps joined NRCS staff to look at the sites. There was discussion about the success of the some of the recent WRP sites.

Farm Service Agency: Nicholson reported that the fall acreage reporting is going on right now. This is for fall seeded crops. November 20 is the deadline for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program sign-up. Ballots are out for the county committee. The ballot deadline is December 4. The Dairy Margin Protection Program sign-up ends December 15.

Land Conservation Report – J. Krell: The local Speaking and Poster Contest will be January 24 in the evening at LEC. Krell reported that he will again be doing the environmental after-school program with 2nd to 5th graders. This will be December 4-14. Three projects have been completed – a watering facility, waste storage abandonment and cattle walkway – it is hopeful that one additional waste storage abandonment will get done yet this year. Projects in design for 2018 include several new waste storage pits and a barnyard. Also, there is abandonment of a waste storage pit and two high capacity wells slated for the old NW Mink Ranch. Krell provided a presentation on the Farmland Preservation Plan to the County unit of the Towns Association

on October 19. There has also been discussion about having an Invasive Species Coordinator hired for a multi-county consortium, Price, Rusk and Taylor. This discussion is just in the beginning stages.

Land Conservation and Development Department: Tesky handed out the updated budget worksheets for 2017. All budgets are looking good for expenses/revenues. There was a new remonumentation project awarded recently and new proposals will be coming up. The county is working hard to get these projects completed while the state is providing funding.

Work Schedule – Tesky explained the change in hours to accommodate the public. The office is open 7 AM to 5PM Monday through Friday and staff are working 4-10 hour days and rotating days off so each division is covered. Lieffring/Gierke motion to approve new work schedule. Motion carried.

Animal Waste Storage Applications: No new applications came in. Krell discussed changes to NRCS Standard 313 - Waste Storage Facilities. The County will need to update their ordinance to coincide with the changes. Krell will review and bring changes to the committee.

Farmland Preservation Plan: Tesky updated the committee on Public Hearing requirements. The committee signed the resolution that will go to County Board on December 19.

2018 Budget: There is \$14,000 of SEG –Cost Sharing Funds that the county was unable to use. If we don't use it, we lose it. Transferring qualifies as "using" it. Rathack approved the transfer of those funds to La Crosse County.

Out of County Travel: Waste Storage Standard Update in Eau Claire on Nov. 2, Upper Chippewa Invasive Species Coordinator discussion in Medford on Nov 6, NW Area meeting in Hayward on Nov 29, County Conservationist Meeting in Wisconsin Rapids on Nov 30-Dec 1, Public Outreach meeting in Stevens Point on December 20. Lieffring/Gierke motion to approve Out of County travel. Motion carried.

Adjourn: Lieffring/Gierke motion to adjourn at 8:55 AM. Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by CeCe Tesky