

## Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Don Shonka at 1:35pm.

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Chad Staton, and seconded by John Kurtz. Motion Passed.

Members present: Steven Smolik, *Mitchell County Supervisor*, Brian Keierleber, *Buchanan County Engineer*, Colleen Kinney, *Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department (IHSEMD)*, Randy Leach, *City of Fredericksburg*, Ray Armbiechts, *City of Fredericksburg*, Jerry Steven, *Howard County*, Steve Geerts, *Chickasaw County Supervisor*, Laura Jackson, *UNI Tallgrass Prairie Center*, Rick Wulfekuhle, *Buchanan Emergency Management*, Chris Eiby, *Delaware County SWCD*, Sheila Steffen, *City of Dunkerton*, David Lehman, *Bremer County*, Kate Giannini, *Iowa Flood Center*, Breanna Shea, *Iowa Flood Center*, Dan Cohen, *Buchanan County Conservation Board*, Ross Evelsizer, *Northeast Iowa RC&D*, Tori Nimrod, *Northeast Iowa RC&D*, Don Shonka, *Buchanan County Supervisor*, Chad Staton, *City of Quasqueton*, Calley Mueller, *Sumner Park and Rec*, David Nuss, *City of Sumner*, Hacer Karanuse, *UI Center for Evaluation and Assessment*, Rick Wilfekuhle, *Buchanan County Emergency Management*, Steve Konrady, *Iowa DNR*, John Kurtz, *City of Independence*, Duane Meihost, *City of Frederika*.

Motion to approve the minutes of the Thursday, November 14th, 2019 meeting was made by Duane Meihost, seconded by Steve Geerts.

### New Business

- **Watershed Planning Update: Northeast Iowa RC&D**

The Upper Wapsipinicon River Watershed Resiliency Plan was presented to the WMA Board during the November 2019 WMA meeting. The Plan includes a variety of detailed interactive elements such as maps and story maps that work to inform the audience about general watershed characteristics, historic flood events, potential locations for best management practices, and much more. Ross Evelsizer presented the updates to the Upper Wapsipinicon River Watershed Plan, requested by the WMA Board Members. Results of the WMA entity survey were added to the plan, so that the Upper Wapsi Resiliency Plan can be used by counties to apply for FEMA Hazard Mitigation funding. Northeast Iowa RC&D continues to work with Homeland Security and Emergency Management to get the plan approved by FEMA. Ross Evelsizer explained that the Northeast Iowa RC&D Planning Team has been working closely with Jim Marwedel from Iowa HSEMD to make sure that the Watershed Plan includes all the sections and language required by FEMA, so that sections of the Watershed Plan can be referenced in each County's Hazard Mitigation Plan in the Upper Wapsipinicon River Watershed.

Motion to approve the Upper Wapsipinicon River Resiliency Plan ([www.upperwapsi.org](http://www.upperwapsi.org)) was made by Chad Staton, and seconded by Steve Geerts.

- **IWA Project Implementation Update: Northeast Iowa RC&D**

Project Coordinator, Tori Nimrod presented an update on the implementation projects for the Upper Wapsi Watershed. To date, there are 33 planned projects located in the implementation area of the Upper

Wapsipinicon River Watershed. The highest number of projects are ponds, which make up 15 of the planned projects. The first bid was accepted in January and construction will begin on three projects as soon as conditions allow. Majority of planned project funds are allocated towards "on-road detention structures." Project Coordinator, Ross Evelsizer explained that Northeast Iowa RC&D have been working with Brian Keierleber, Buchanan county Engineer, to implement detention structures that use the road as the dam structure and temporary hold back water on the upstream lands. Project coordinators are currently working with landowners to implement these projects. On-road detention structures involve multiple landowners, who all have to agree with the project in order to proceed. Multiple landowners provide a bit of a challenge, but these structures have large flood reduction potential. On-road detention structures also require flood easements for areas temporarily inundated with water due to the structure. The easement provided to landowners includes a onetime payment typically based on a percentage of the fair market value of the property affected. Project coordinators will be meeting with Buchanan County Supervisors to determine the easement amount for these types of projects. See Attached hand out for more detailed information.

- **Future of the Upper Wapsipinicon River WMA Project Coordinator**

Project Coordinator, Ross Evelsizer started a discussion about how the WMA board would like to continue after the completion of the IWA project. Evelsizer summarized what other watersheds like the Middle Cedar and Turkey River WMAs are doing to keep their watershed groups going. The Turkey River WMA requests each WMA Member entity donates \$250 towards their Project Coordinator to perform duties such as, coordinate WMA meetings, apply for outside funding and update the WMA website. The Middle Cedar WMA is exploring different funding strategies that include population within the watershed and the population vulnerable to flooding within each entity. Multiple board members suggested that Northeast Iowa RC&D continue watershed coordination after the IWA project completion. Project Coordinators Nimrod and Evelsizer are going to put together examples of funding strategies to present to the WMA Board at the next WMA meeting.

- **Community Flood Resilience Action Plan for the City of Quasky**

Northeast Iowa RC&D, Tori Nimrod, updated the WMA board on the Flood Resilience Action Planning with the City of Quasqueton. After meeting with Mayor Chad Staton and a couple of councilmen, a population of 20 homes were highlighted as experiencing the most flooding within the community. A survey was developed to collect information from these highlighted Quasky residents. The goal of the survey was to collect information about specific flood experiences, how much it costs residents, and if the city, county and state have done enough in their community to mitigate flooding. Surveys were hand delivered to 20 homes and 50% of surveys were completed. Results from the survey showed that residents in this area of Quasky are continuously affected by flooding, and have spent thousands of dollars repairing and improving their homes to mitigate future flood events. Even with these improvements, residents are still affected by the recurring cost associated with flooding such as cleaning up debris off their land and cleaning the inside of their homes. Results also showed a miss communication between residents and city and county officials about what has been done to protect the residents of Quasky from flooding. Future steps for the RC&D are to facilitate public meetings to hear more from residents and discuss what the city has done in the past to limit the effects of flooding in the community.

- **2020 Water Sampling Season Discussion**

Project Coordinator, Tori Nimrod brought the 2020 water sampling season up for discussion to the board. She expressed that she has not heard word from Martin St. Clair at Coe College about 2019 sampling results, or if Coe is interested in continuing their analysis with the Upper Wapsi Watershed. The WMA board members in attendance expressed that they would like to continue their water sampling effort. Project Coordinator, Tori

Nimrod, agreed to continue coordinating the sampling efforts. Nimrod will be in contact with volunteers once she makes contact with Martin St. Clair from Coe College.

- **Partner Updates**

Iowa Flood Center: Kate Giannini, *Iowa Flood Center* presented updates from other IWA watersheds in the state. She explained that the Middle Cedar, Upper Iowa, and the English River Watersheds have all broken ground on projects this fall and many more are scheduled to break ground as soon as conditions allow. A total of 26 million dollars have been allocated through the IWA project towards flood reduction practices throughout the State. Breanna Shea, *Iowa Flood Center* reminded WMA members about the uses of the [Iowa Flood Information System \(IFIS\)](#) web platform. She explained that IFIS is a valuable tool for viewing real-time stream levels, flood alerts and forecasts, weather conditions, flood maps and more. With flood season approaching, along with similar snowfall and soil moisture levels to 2019, it is an important tool for communities and counties.

Kate and Breanna also outlined some upcoming events, listed below:

March 25, 2020 – [Iowa Flood Center Legislative Breakfast](#) | State Capitol, Des Moines, IA

April 8-9, 2020 – [Iowa Water Conference](#) | Ames, IA

July 26-29, 2020 – [Soil & Water Conservation Society Annual Conference](#) | Des Moines, IA

August 14-16, 2020 – [The Big Splash!](#) | Iowa City, IA

August 17-19, 2020 – [8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Flood Management](#) | Iowa City, IA

- **Next Meeting Date**

Next meeting to be announced for May 2020

Meeting adjourned at 2:57pm. Motion to adjourned by Chad Staton, seconded by John Kurtz.