

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Don Shonka at 1:34pm.

Motion to approve the agenda was made by, Dennis Goemaat and seconded by Steve Smolik. Motion Passed.

Board Members present: Steve Smolik, *Mitchell County Supervisor*, Don Shonka, *Buchanan County Supervisor*, John Kurtz, *City of Independence*, Duane Meihost, *City of Frederika*, Kip Ladage, *Bremer County and Bremer County SWCD*, Chris Eibey, *Delaware County SWCD*, Orlan Love, *City of Quasqueton*, Randy Leach, *City of Fredericksburg*, Ron Lenth, *Bremer County SWCD*, Matt Kuhn, *Chickasaw County*, Trevyn Cunningham, *Central City*, Dennis Goemaat, *Linn County*, David Lehman, *Bremer CCB*.

Others Present: Kate Giannini, *Iowa Flood Center*, Ross Evelsizer, *Northeast Iowa RC&D*, Tori Nimrod, *Northeast Iowa RC&D*, Valerie Decker, *Univ. of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment*. Chad Humpal, *Chickasaw CCB*, Brian Keierleber, *Buchanan County Engineer*, Rick Wulfkuhle, *Buchanan County Emergency Manager*, Dan Cohen, *Buchanan County CCB*, Josh Balk, *Iowa DNR*.

Motion to approve the Minutes from August 24th, 2021 Meeting was made by John Kurtz and seconded by Matthew Kuhn. Motion Passed.

New Business

- **Buchanan County Parks- Dan Cohen, Buchanan County Conservation Board Director**
Buchanan County Conservation Board Director, Dan Cohen opened the meeting by showing several videos of Buchanan County Parks. The videos outlined several parks in the county and emphasized the activities visitors can do and the natural landscape they provide.

Cohen also explained the development of the Fontana Park Master Plan, which outlines several phases for implementation and expansion of the park. Cohen explained that the planning phase involved multiple gatherings with the board and an additional Fontana Park Planning Committee. An engineering firm put together drawings and plan concepts together. Now that they have the master plan they can now seek out a variety of funding sources for implementation. The first phase is the creation of a new bison enclosure and prairie with new park access road and trail system. This portion of the plan is currently being implemented at the park. Implementation of phase one was possible due to partnership with Buchanan County Secondary Roads, grant funds and other donations received by the CCB.

- **Review of Upper Wapsipinicon River WMA Bylaws – Don Shonka**

The Upper Wapsi WMA Board members in attendance reviewed the existing bylaws for the WMA to see if there were any changes or updates needed. The board expressed concerns with not regularly having a quorum during quarterly meetings and the potential need for reducing the amount of board members needed to constitute as a quorum. This topic will be re-evaluated in the future if there continues to be an issue with attendance. The board also discussed the need for a statement in the bylaws that accepts virtual attendance by WMA board members. A statement will be drafted by Upper Wapsi Coordinators Ross Evelsizer and Tori Nimrod for discussion at the next quarterly WMA meeting in February.

- **Upper Wapsi WMA Executive Committee Elections – Don Shonka**

Don Shonka expressed his resignation from the Upper Wapsipinicon River WMA Board after 7 years of service. Don indicated that he will still be involved with the Upper Wapsi WMA and that he will continue to represent the Upper Wapsi WMA board at the State WMA Board meetings. John Kurts, Vice Chair was nominated by multiple WMA board members in attendances to serve as the new Board Chair, Kurts accepted the nomination. Other changes to the Executive Committee are listed below:

Board Chair: John Kurtz, *City of Independence*

Vice Chair: Kip Ladage, *Bremer County SWCD and Bremer County*

Treasurer/Secretary: Duane Meihost, *City of Frederika*

At-large: Don Shonka, *Buchanan County*, Matt Kuhn, *Chickasaw County*, Chris Eiby, *Delaware County SWCD*, Orlan Love, *City of Quasqueton*.

Motion to approve the new Executive Committee was made by Dennis Goemaat. Seconded by John Kurtz.

Motion passed.

- **Watershed Coordinator Update: Tori Nimrod and Ross Evelsizer, Northeast Iowa RC&D**

Tori Nimrod with Northeast Iowa RC&D explained that 27 out of the 28 IWA flood reduction projects, will be completed this fall. The remaining Cedar Rock Oxbow Project has been extended to May 2022 to allow the contractor to complete grading of the Oxbow. The Oxbow project will be one of the largest oxbow restorations in Iowa. It will be a great asset for Cedar Rock Park as it provides an additional ecosystem and learning opportunity for students and residents who visit the area. IWA Project dollars are expected to be expended once all construction projects are completed.

The Board discussed the need for a field day in the spring. Kate Giannini from the Iowa Flood Center, explained there are currently no plans for a state-wide field day of all IWA projects, therefore she recommended that the Wapsi WMA should conduct their own. The Iowa Flood Center would serve as a partner and help in any way they can. Project Coordinators Ross and Tori explained they would work on facilitating the field day for spring 2022, when vegetation on the projects begins to establish. Project Coordinators also explained that the RC&D has capabilities to use a drone to capture each practice and put together a virtual tour of the projects. A virtual tour would be able to reach a wider audience via social media and it could also be posted on the Upper Wapsi WMA website.

The Upper Wapsi WMA is up to \$14,000 in member contributions, which is just shy of the goal amount of \$18,000.

- **Grant Opportunities and Preliminary Project Planning-Ross and Tori:**

Upper Wapsi Coordinator Ross Evelsizer with Northeast Iowa RC&D explained that there have been a couple of grant opportunities that have come up with very short timelines. It has been difficult to put together a project for the Wapsi Watershed with such little time to prepare. Evelsizer explained that the WMA is in need of specific project ideas. Ideas the coordinators can have on radar for when grant funding becomes available, they can pursue with an application. Similar to Dan Cohen's Fontana Park Master Plan, additional planning by each member entity for projects they are interested in would be very helpful for coordinators. Some board members suggested having a brainstorming session to make a list of potential projects in the watershed. A few project ideas were brought to the boards attention:

- Interpretation at IWA project sites, streams, and river sites. Such as Kiosks
- Malone Creek Watershed Project-University of Iowa student plan
- Independence inundation area

- Oxbow reconstruction/restoration along Upper Wapsi River corridor

Ross emphasized that each WMA member serves as a representative of their entity, so that any project idea or need that correlates with the goals of the Upper Wapsi WMA could be brought to the Coordinators attention. Northeast Iowa RC&D has vast experience with helping partners find funding through grants and other means.

- **Partner Updates**

- IFC is starting to run models to determine the flood reduction benefits the implemented projects have at the HUC 12 watershed scale. They will also be measuring the nitrogen and phosphorus reductions in the watershed as well. Their analysis and report should be complete by the next Upper Wapsi WMA meeting in February.
- Valarie Decker with the University of Iowa Centers for Evaluation and Assessment, will be conducting the second part of the final WMA board member survey. She asked that board members please be aware by checking your email, and asked that board members participate in the final survey. She emphasized that their results from the surveys about board member's experiences go directly to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Decker will present final survey results during the next Upper Wapsi WMA meeting.
-

- **Next Meeting Date**

February 2022

Meeting adjourned at 3:26pm. Motion made to adjourn by Matthew Kuhn, seconded by John Kurtz. Motion Passed