

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Kurtz at 1:31pm.

Motion to approve the agenda was made by, Steve Smolik and seconded by Sean Dolan. Motion Passed.

Board Members present: Steve Smolik, *Mitchell County Supervisor*, Don Shonka, *Buchanan County Supervisor*, John Kurtz, *City of Independence*, Kip Ladage, *Bremer County and Bremer County SWCD*, Orlan Love, *City of Quasqueton*, Randy Leach, *City of Fredericksburg*, Ron Lenth, *Bremer County SWCD*, Trevyn Cunningham, *Central City*, Dennis Goemaat, *Linn County*, David Lehman, *Bremer CCB*, Sheila Steffen, *City of Dunkerton*, Karmin McShane, *Linn SWCD*, Ray Armel, *Chickasaw County*, Kim Leichtman, *Chickasaw SWCD*, Sean Dolan, *Buchanan SWCD*, Bob Muchmore, *Buchanan SWCD*, Ray Armbrechts, *City of Frederickburg*, Ray Armel, *Chickasaw County*, Randy Miller, *Chickasaw SWCD*.

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*, Steve Hopkins, *Iowa DNR*, Daniel Jensen, *Shive-Hattery Engineering*, Luke Monat, *Shive-Hattery Engineering*, Caleb Ciavarelli, *Chickasaw CCB*.

Motion to approve the Minutes from November 17th, 2021 Meeting was made by Kip Ladage and seconded by Don Shonka. Motion Passed.

New Business

- **Introduction to Chickasaw County Parks- Chad Humpal, Chickasaw County Conservation Board**
Chickasaw County Conservation Board Director Chad Humpal welcomed the audience to Twin Ponds Nature Center and introduced his staff to the board. Chad was recently hired as the new Director for the Chickasaw CCB. He introduced the Chickasaw County parks and amenities they provide the County, as well as described his hopes to expand and enhance the natural areas they have.
- **Review of By-laws - John Kurtz**
John Kurtz, board chair summarized the boards discussion from the previous WMA meeting on the addition of a statement to the WMA bylaws that allows board members to attend and make motions online. A revised statement was drafted by Northeast Iowa RC&D, Upper Wapsi Watershed Coordinators and presented at the meeting. After board discussion on the importance and likelihood that virtual meetings will continue be a part of everyone's daily lives.

John Kurtz made the motion to approve the addition of the following statement to the Upper Wapsipinicon River WMA Bylaws:

Article VIII – Meetings, Section E.

“To ensure attendance by a majority of the board members at quarterly and organizational meetings, an electronic attendance opportunity will be established enabling interaction and communication among the representatives of the members. All established procedures must be followed by those members attending in person or electronically.”

Motion 2nd, by Randy Leach. Motion Passed.

- **IWA Project Construction Update-Daniel Jensen, Shive-Hattery**

Dan provided a construction update on the 28 projects implemented as a part of the IWA project. All 28 projects in the upper Wapsipinicon watershed have been graded, there are a couple of projects that will be seeded this spring to close out construction for the IWA project. Daniel also showed pictures of construction in the watershed. Pictures are attached with these minutes. Board members in attendance asked if construction utilized all project funds provided to the Upper Wapsi. Daniel and Project coordinators confirmed that the allocated money for the Upper Wapsi was spent or will be spent after planting this spring.

- **IWA Project Coordinator Update - Ross and Tori:**

Project Coordinator Tori Nimrod, reiterated that the IWA project ends on June 30th, 2022, and that all implementation projects and other IWA project deliverables will be completed by that time. Thanks to entity contributions Northeast Iowa RC&D will continue to provide coordination efforts for the Upper Wapsi WMA. One duty of the project coordinator is to apply for project funding and support WMA entities with projects. Ross and Tori explained the Water Infrastructure Funding grant opportunity. This funding source is looking for shovel ready implementation projects that improve water quality and reduce flooding. Coordinators are currently working with Jason Auel, Iowa DNR in Bremer county around Sweet Marsh to develop an application for a variety of wetland restoration projects. They are also working with the City of Fredericksburg to mitigate some of their flooding issues. Ross re-iterated to board members present the importance of having a project lined up and some sort of preliminary engineering completed. Funding sources lately have been looking for projects that can be completed quickly. Kip Ladage, exclaimed the lack of resources that rural counties and cities have to pay for preliminary engineer drawings. It is an ongoing issue for entities in the Upper Wapsi, but any small cost up-front may be worth it in the end. Don Shonka mentioned the Malone Creek Plan developed by students from the University of Iowa, it may have a project opportunity in it for this funding source or another future funding source. The City of Sumner is finishing up a detention pond project they are in need of additional funding to complete the project.

Project coordinators also asked for input on the type of field day board members were interested in having to showcase the IWA constructed projects. Board members present brought up a few ideas and items they thought should be included. Items presented are listed below

- Invite the public
- Invite legislators
- Showcase a variety of project types
- Develop a self-driving tour
- Develop a virtual tour with descriptions of each project and videos of landowners, engineers and others talking about the projects
- Tour in the summer when projects have green vegetation and are filled with water
- IFC and ISU extension is available to help coordinate

Project Coordinators are working with other WMA coordinators in the state to develop a short flier/handout for legislators to utilize. The flier summarized the benefits and needs of WMA's around the state. Outlines their importance to water quality improvement and flood reduction efforts, and the financial benefit to the state. The flier also requests funding in the amount of \$100,000 for each HUC 8 watershed in the state (approx. 56 HUC 8 watersheds) for employment of a watershed coordinator who is actively working in the watershed to fulfill the goals and strategies of their WMA. The goal is to get the flier completed and submitted to legislators during this legislative session. Project coordinators also explained that if it doesn't get in this legislative session, that the compiled information is available and ready to be used in the future.

Lastly, Project Coordinators asked the board if they would like them to send out donation requests to member entities for FY23. Coordinators were unsure since a previous letter was just sent requesting funds for FY22. Board members suggested that a letter should be sent ASAP for FY23 since budget periods for most entities is ending shortly. In the future Project Coordinators will send the letter in November/December requesting donation funds. John Kurtz explained that the City of Independence

has implemented a Stormwater Utility Fee that collects a source of revenue for stormwater improvement and it is where their contribution to the WMA comes from. The City of Sumner has also implemented a stormwater Utility fee.

- **University of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment – Valerie Decker**

Valerie Decker from the University of Iowa Center for Evaluation and Assessment presented results of the surveys collected throughout the IWA project from board members. Results from the upper Wapsi showed representation from 10 WMA board members. The surveys collected information on the perspectives WMA board members had on the IWA project. The Upper Wapsi WMA board was overall satisfied with the IWA project and the accomplishments of the WMA. They thought implementation was a major success of the project. Additional information on the results of the survey are attached as a part of Valerie's presentation.

- **Public Comment/ Other Partner Updates:**

- Steve Hopkins: IDNR is working on putting together a grant application for stream/river signage along County Roads. The grant will provide an award between \$5,000-\$10,000 for signs along roads and bridges, and will list the name of the Stream and river watershed it belongs too.
- Kate Giannini, Iowa Flood Center: Kate explained a few events going on in the near future to attendees at the WMA meeting.
 - The IFC will be hosting a IWA Celebration **June 14th**. The morning will consist of a meeting with project partners, while the afternoon will be a tour of implemented projects in the Middle Cedar Watershed around Vinton. The tour will be open to the public. Lunch will be provided.
 - Iowa Water Conference has been postponed to September 28th-29th in Dubuque, Iowa
 - Iowa Flood Center Legislative Breakfast – April 5th, 7-9am at the State Capitol

- **Next Meeting Date:**

Meeting will be scheduled for early April.