

U.P. RC&D Council Special Meeting Minutes – July 18, 2023

Executive Board Members Participating Virtually: Bill Rice-Dickinson CD, Erin Daines - MSUE, Jen Ricker-Feak – Iron Baraga CD, Mike McCarthy – Chippewa Luce Mackinac CD, Ashley Reitter-Schoolcraft CD, Amber Butterfield – Dickinson CD, Renee Leow – Marquette County Citizen, Tiffany Escherich – Bay Mills Indian Community, Nick Cassel - UP RC&D Council staff

Others Participating Virtually: n/a

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am (EDT) by Chairperson Rice.

Approval of Agenda: n/a

Public Comments: n/a

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: n/a

Business: MOU between UPRCD and MSUE

- **Meeting synopsis** – Rice gave a brief synopsis of the reason for the special meeting begin called to order, as it pertains to the MOU renewal between the UP RC&D Council and Michigan State University Extension.
- **Salary** – Rice lead into the first topic for discussion and that was the 60/40 position split. Rice noted it was initially thought the split only pertained to the salary of position, where UPRCD would be responsible for 60% and MSUE would provide 40% and fringe. Cassel provided a thorough explanation of the overall breakdown of what a position consisted of, and that this case fell right in line, based on the info provided to him by MSUE fiscal officer, Bob Krusky. Rice just wanted to make note of this misunderstanding. In an effort to clear any misunderstandings in the future, and for the MOU renewal, Cassel insisted that the finances be clear and broken down with each party’s fiscal responsibility noted. All agreed to move forward with this addition to the MOU.
 - Rice also informed the group at large that the UPRCD Personnel Committee will plan to meet prior to the end of the calendar year to work on a new work agreement for Cassel, and with it, devise the method that will be used to calculate his supplemental income (provided by UPRCD only) to make up the salary difference between UPRCD and MSUE. A doodle poll will be sent out in the fall to schedule the meeting.
- **Communication** – Overall communication was discussed and suggested areas for improvement. In particular, the need to communicate what the partnership looks like to other partners and the public. A comment was made at a previous meeting that there were comments made that “MSUE had absorbed UPRCD”. Cassel and Daines are pursuing strategies to correct this and develop PR material for distribution when ready. Ricker-Feak recommended distributing this to Rachael Guth of MDARD once complete, and she can assist distribution to all UP Conservation Districts. Daines reassured the rest of the board that UPRCD was never nor will be ever at risk of losing its own stand-alone identity, and that the goal of MSUE is not to “take over or absorb”. The overall goal of the partnership, from MSUE’s perspective, is to increase its conservation and partnership footprint across the UP.
 - Another communication topic that was discussed was the avenue that MSUE provides info to the board. Comments were made that it appeared communication was light during the first year, and what could be done to increase info being relayed to the board. Suggestions were given and keeping the quarterly board meeting agenda line item of “MSUE Updates” provides ample information. Daines will inquire with other MSUE personnel prior to UPRCD board meetings, and bring any and all applicable information to each quarterly meeting.

Cassel noted that he will consolidate the notes for discussion in preparation for a discussion meeting between the UPRCD board and MSUE’s Dave Ivan and Josh Gunn, scheduled for August 23, 2023 at 10:00am (EDT).

Adjournment: Motion was made by Leow, supported by Daines to adjourn the meeting at 11:22am. Motion passed.