

U.P. RC&D Council Meeting Minutes – March 21, 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, Teri Grout-Rock River Township Supervisor, Renee Leow – Marquette County Citizen, Nick Cassel & Sydney Hank-UP RC&D Council staff

Others Participating Virtually: Barb Kramer – Dickinson County, Gretchen Janssen – Houghton County, Jeff Carlson – Menominee County

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am (EDT) by Chairperson Rice.

Approval of Agenda: A motion was made by Leow, supported by Grout to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed.

Public Comments: Barb Kramer inquired about access to UPRCD meeting minutes, and if possible, they could be sent to all County Commissioners. Cassel informed the group that agendas and meeting minutes use to be posted to our website for all to access. However, with the new website, this has not been re-instated. Cassel and Hank will ensure that previous agendas and minutes will be posted to the UPRCD website: www.uprcd.org.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Butterfield, supported by Grout to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on December 19, 2022 with no changes. Motion passed.

Financial Reports: The Executive Director (ED) presented the Balance Sheet as of March 16, 2023 and the Profit and Loss statements for the period January 1, 2018 through March 16, 2023, a quarterly Profit and Loss statement from January 1, 2023 through March 16, 2023 and for the January 1 through March 16, 2023 period. The combined balance in all accounts as of March 16, 2023 was \$59,362.45. The ED reviewed several purchases made during the previous quarter including those for ACH monthly fees, and operation costs such as phone and rent. An additional item that was noted was the \$14,112.15 expense being the first contribution to MSUE for the 60/40 joint position. The ED reminded the board these dollars are the un-restricted monies not tied to any grant. He then referenced two documents 1) ACH documentation and 2) Scans of all receipts for purchases made with the un-restricted dollars. This documentation is provided to the Executive Board per the approved bylaws. A motion was made by Leow, supported by Grout to place the financial reports on file. Motion carried.

Business:

- **Potential UPRCD office upgrade opportunity:** Cassel informed the board that recently, a larger 3 room suite with a full meeting room became available right next door to the current UPRCD suite, in the Arlington Plaza, in which Cassel inquired about. The landlord said the monthly cost was \$600 + electric. UPRCD currently pays \$275 per month. However, the landlord said there was some wiggle room if interest was there. Cassel made mention one possible way of upgrading to a larger suite would be if MSUE would be able to contribute a portion of the rent. Justification being that UPRCD is slowly growing with its expanding grants and MSUE partnership, more room would be nice (with windows), but the meeting room would be the big difference. Having an designated location to have meetings for UPRCD and MSUE would benefit all parties, thus not having to constantly lean on LSSU's CFRE building, or a local restaurant. Daines commented that she was looking into this option based on annual budgets, and if a possibility does exist, Rice recommended a special meeting occur to discuss further.
- **County Dues – request status, increase request amount?** Cassel informed the board that the 2023 County Dues request was on the final stages of being updated and would likely be sent out to all 15 Counties in April at some point. He also made mention that the request has remained the same \$350 annually for well over a decade and asked the board to potentially discuss raising the dollar figure, based on obvious justification. Numerous members of the meeting including Janssen and Carlson mentioned they would see no problem with an increase. However, Rice recommended a further discussion be had and reviewed during winter months. Ricker-Feak and Grout recommended tailoring a letter to each County estimating how much of UPRCD dollars are spent in each County. Kramer recommended a list of grants and dollars be developed and associate where it's being spent.

- **UPRC/MSUE collaboration/Personnel Committee Updates:** Daines provided an update on the UPRCD/MSUE collaborative partnership position. Rice informed the Personnel Committee met to discuss Cassel's supplemental salary contribution, as he took an unexpected pay cut when UPRCD partnered with MSUE. Rice also discussed the need for board members to engage in reviewing the UPRCD/MSUE MOU agreement, which is set to renew/expire in June 2023. An overall goal is UPRCD board member to meet to discuss, followed by a meeting MSUE staff (Dave/Josh) to discuss any edits/alterations sought to be made. According to the agreement, this must be done prior the end of June 2023.
- **Pending awards:** Cassel notified the board and partners of two grant applications that were successful. An MISGP award for Himalayan Balsam work (\$194,200) and additional USFS work for pollinator habitat work (\$75,000). Janssen inquired the geographic reference of where these projects would occur. In addition, she made mention that the Houghton and Gogebic CD's has become much more active, and UPRCD should reach out for future project collaborations.
- **Upcoming project applications:** Hank informed the board of two upcoming project applications she's been working on. 1) Great Lakes Commission proposal to do aquatic invasive species awareness events at boat launches across the UP. 2) Deer Habitat Improvement Project – enhancing private landowner parcels for deer habitat with fruit trees and oak trees. Both are being refined, but she will send out project descriptions, and budgets for approval to submit.
- **2023 In-person meeting – Marquette/Chatham?** – Cassel reminded the board and partners of a discussion had regarding an in-person board meeting. The desire to meet in person remains, thus Cassel can coordinate to make the September meeting be in person. Ideas were floated around of locations, including the UPREC site in Chatham, various sites in Marquette, with a potential site visit to Au Train Lake to view the UPRCD and ACD fish habitat project. Cassel will coordinate with Daines should there be an MSUE component to the meeting.
- **UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS AND PROJECT FUNDS**

EPA GLRI – Expanding Phragmites management in Michigan's Upper Peninsula

Agreement Amount \$663,655 Match Commitment \$0.00

Project Dates: January 6, 2022 to April 30, 2024 (*will be extended through fall 2024 due to delayed start*)

Partners – DNR, Dickinson, Iron/Baraga, Marquette, Chippewa/Luce/Mackinac Conservation Districts, Michigan Tech and their associated CISMAs

Remaining funds **\$465,960.39**

NFWF SOGL – Life After Phragmites: Wetland Restoration & Landowner Stewardship in Michigan's UP and Northeastern Wisconsin

Agreement Amount \$150,000 Match Commitment \$150,000 (reduced to \$66,035.26 due to COVID)

Project Dates: August 2019 to December 31, 2021 (Received extension to June 30, 2023)

Partners - Marquette, Alger, Dickinson, Schoolcraft & Chippewa Luce Mackinac CDs, GLIFWC, WIDNR, Marinette Co.

Remaining funds **\$22,917.72**

MISGP – Upper Peninsula European frog-bit detection initiative

Agreement Amount \$239,100 Match Commitment \$37,400

Project Dates: April 30, 2021 to April 30, 2023

Partners – Dickinson, Iron/Baraga, Marquette, Chippewa/Luce/Mackinac Conservation Districts, Michigan Tech and their associated CISMAs

Remaining funds **\$45,602.72**

DNR Fisheries Habitat Grant Program – Tahquamenon River road stream crossing inventory update

Agreement Amount \$62,400 Match Commitment \$6,900

Project Dates: July 16, 2021 to Oct. 7, 2023 (*extension to accommodate DNR Fisheries Biologist extra request – prioritize work*)

Partners – DNR Fisheries Division, DNR Forest Resources Division, Bay Mills Indian Community, LSSU Center for Freshwater Research and Education, Chippewa/Luce County Road Commissions, Hiawatha National Forest

Remaining funds **\$3,101.12**

DNR Fisheries Habitat Grant Program – Au Train Lake Cooperative Habitat Enhancement Initiative

Agreement Amount \$89,200.00 Match Commitment \$22,500

Project Dates: August 2, 2022 to Oct. 6, 2023

Partners – DNR Fisheries Division, Alger Conservation District, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC), Hiawatha National Forest

Remaining funds **\$81,074.90**

Hiawatha National Forest PA – Sharptails and Pollinator Habitat Enhancement

Agreement Amount \$67,000.00 Match Commitment \$17,617.60

Project Dates: August 11, 2022 to Dec. 31, 2024

Partners – Hiawatha National Forest, Sault Tribe, Michigan Sharp-tailed Grouse Association

Remaining funds **\$67,000.00** + an additional \$35,000 when agreement is complete

GLRI CWMA – Managing non-native Phragmites across the Hiawatha National Forest

Agreement Amount \$55,138.00 Match Commitment \$15,163.20

Project Dates: August 24, 2022 to Mar. 31, 2025

Partners – Hiawatha National Forest, Three Shores CISMA, Lake to Lake CISMA

Remaining funds **\$55,138.00**

Partner Updates: Janssen discussed Act 15, in which the State is updating the MMP, for recycling efforts and landfill reductions. Carlson discussed his recent involvement with WRISC in Menominee County. Reitter informed the board SCD will be hiring a full time person to tackle their MISGP project, communications/outreach and help with tree sale. McCarthy discusses the busy time of year with all CD's active in their own spring tree sales. He also discusses Three Shores CISMA gearing up for another busy season, in addition to their watershed program and QFP in Chippewa County. Butterfield echoed McCarthy with the business of tree sale. DCD is also involved with developing framework for recycling, food desert, water quality, and hiring on an outreach coordinator. Ricker-Feak updates also included tree sale activities, actively hiring a CTAI position for IBCD, and working on seasonal reporting.

Future Meeting Dates: June 20, 2023 @ 10:00am - Virtual

Adjournment: Motion was made by Grout, supported by Ricker-Feak to adjourn the meeting at 11:23am. Motion passed.

*Resource Conservation
and Development Council*