

# Coon Creek Community Watershed Council

(CCCWC)

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Coon Valley Conservation Club

Wednesday, September 18, 2024, 6:01 p.m.

In attendance: Nancy, Sydney, Monique, Tucker, Ashley, Kevin, Matt, Zach, Tim

Notes taken by syd :)

1. Call to Order
2. Open to everyone (*5:00 pm to topics covered*)
  - a. Hill Country Watershed Alliance Update

Nancy: Brady will be stopping by to talk through HCWA membership structure. There is a potential that HCWA will ask CCCWC to pay to be a member.

Brady: HCWA is proposing charging \$3,000 to each member council. There is some risk to being involved before HCWA sorts out its organizational structure. Until that point, there is little benefit to CCCWC for involvement.

Nancy: One risk is that there is no insurance policy, which makes handling money difficult. Instead, there is a long chain of approval for purchases.

Kevin: Has the council contributed?

Nancy: No, but there was some thought about doing that. Feels unsafe signing off on documents without insurance.

Tim: There are too many conflicting visions. Was hoping for an umbrella org that could share resources and ideas. Others are more interested in the very practical applications. We wanted HCWA to be able to seed other watershed groups, but now watershed groups need to seed HCWA.

Brady: It's hard to track the money, but it shouldn't be.

Monique: Can we be a general member without having to become financially involved?

Nancy: It could be good to remain involved collaboratively.

Brady: Thinks we should be involved as a collaborative member for now.

Tim: HCWA serving as a fiscal agent could be fine.

Brady: There is some good watershed representation across the board.

Monique: If we could be of assistance, even fiscally, that would be ok. But we need to make sure we don't expose ourselves to liability.

Matt: If we pull out, we need to be clear why we're doing it.

Brady: We can give them money, but first they need to put a system in place to track receipts and manage cash.

Tim: Is VSN supposed to help?

Nancy: Cash support for watershed groups was part of VSN's Fishers and Farmers grant, but VSN changed that for in kind hours.

Monique: Is this a motion or a discussion?

Nancy: A next step could be to talk to a few people on the HCWA board about getting insurance set up, and stepping off until that time. By being on that board, we are muddying HCWA's vision because they don't know how to handle our organization since we don't need a fiscal agent. And then we donate insurance to them for a year.

Tim agrees.

Board consensus is to return to a meeting and share our position.

(sidebar; Brady is building a processing plant and kitchen! He's opening a food truck!)

b. Secretary's Report

Nancy: They were great!

Board agrees that digital minutes are ok

Monique: Many notes were taken. We don't make a lot of actions but we have a lot of rich discussions. This does lend to messy notes. Monique streamlined all the minutes, compiled and organized the drive. She is a HERO!

Monique asks the board: how do we handle and archive hand-written notes?

Nancy can review her notes, but we are missing most of 2022. The meetings get progressively better, but there are still a lot of gaps.

Board consensus to leave handwritten notes handwritten.

Monique question to the board: How much information to give at the general meeting?

Consensus to make minutes available, but keep discussion light at general meetings.

c. Treasurer's Report

Nancy: I am not the treasurer's, but we have been keeping up to pay bills. We are converting to QuickBooks, I have been going back to our different grants and going through files. When it comes to May 4th, everything should be in with expenses and profit. Just need to compare that we have covered all bases. Current balance from this event: \$7143.23 (this number may go up or down) and this will be applied for next year's May 4th 2025 celebration.

\$92,763 is the current balance. May need to confirm \$2500 reimbursement from Surface Water grant. Bookkeeper has a nonprofit accounting background - anticipates it will take her about 10-20 hours the first month. Likely 10 hours to follow after that.

**Nancy made a motion to hire Kaitlin Holton Bookkeeping as our bookkeeper, 2nd by Tucker. Motion carries.**

She will not do the taxes, but she will send us reports every month. We still write checks and do that fun stuff.

Tim: PayPal donations will funnel into the account and it works great. Can even use a QR code.

Sydney: Has set up the Quickbooks account, but cannot set up it up with PayPal - some sort of glitch.

Is the expectation 2-3,000 a year for the bookkeeping (\$2100 for 5 hours, \$1000 to catch up).

Nancy: Maggie will not be around this fall to sign checks so we finally found the minutes to appoint officers. Our minutes were not good enough - they gave us what we needed to have on file to proceed. Deb Andre has not been removed to date as far as River Bank stated.

**Nancy makes a motion to remove Debbie Andres, previous Treasurer, from the Coon Creek Community Watershed Council River Bank account as a signer. 2nd by Tucker. Motion carried.**

**Nancy makes a motion to add Eric Weninger as our Treasurer. 2nd by Kevin. Motion carried.**

There is a need to have one other person to sign checks.

**Kevin makes a motion that Zach King, Board Member be added as a signer to the Coon Creek Community Watershed Council River Bank account. Ashley 2nd the motion. Motion carried.**

As statement that the signer changes having been approved by all members:

**The above motions passed with unanimous approval by the CCCWC board.**

A signature from the President (or Person in Highest Authority) and a signature from one other member or witness - Nancy and Ashley will sign.

Zach: may need to go down to River Bank with multiple forms of ID to get added.

- d. Old Business
  - i. Sept. Meeting Recap

Nancy: It was great! After the meeting, we paid out a lot of bills, we have a \$75 bill remaining. We also added an extra \$1,000 honoraria to the CVCC, which will span the entire year. The event cost just under \$2,000.

Monique: Totally blown away by how nice it was. Everyone came. Music was great.

Tucker: SO many good comments on the food. The table was accessible to people with eating restrictions. More cheese and more cake next time 😊. And it was amazing to see all the kids.

ii. Vernon Co Board update: Flood Mitigation Alliance

Nancy: At the last L&W Committee meeting, they elected to resurrect the last flood mitigation alliance. Monique put a lot of work into its first iteration. In this new form, it involves community members, partners ect. They want two board members, one from land and water (Wayde Lawler, Nathaniel Slack). Then they added Mary Henry. They put out a press release looking for people on the committee, interested parties should send a letter of inquiry to Vernon County Administrator.

Nancy: Was initially confused. What is the criteria by which committee selection decisions are made? Didn't seem that there was much of a set criteria. Nancy recommended that they look to the other watershed councils as adding possible reps, and that representatives can rotate if they need different sets of expertise. Mary Henry said they already have that type of representation because of who already sits on the board. Mary also spent a lot of time talking about the dam decommissioning, that it is not set in stone. Nancy re-articulated our position, and also let out that there is some misinformation.

Tim: The good faith agreement doesn't mean that every single dam plan can be rejected by the county when the time comes.

Great effort to put these 3 County Board Supervisors on the FMA. Tim thinks the name flood mitigation alliance is too narrow.

Monique: When Ben presented the committee, he talked specifically about Bad Axe and Coon Creek serving as reps.

Nancy: Hopes that there will be enough people in the room to get some good conversations, and invites anyone to apply.

iii. Fishers and Farmers

No updates. We have a grant application from last year and could submit it for 2025-'26. Heidi said the conference is coming back here. It had been in Illinois or down south, but in Coon Valley area next time around.

Tucker: Thank you Tim for raising up the work the CCCWC is doing and folks are paying attention. We definitely need to apply.

Tim: recommended that we apply for the project ideas: School curriculum, Conservation Tinder, Crisis Messaging Campaign.

Kevin: They wanted to see more projects on the ground which is why we didn't get funded last time.

iv. Committee Formation

**General discussion:**

1. Monthly meeting (Party Planners - Ashley, Sydney)
  - a. Outreach/Recruitment
    - i. Education & Awareness
2. Large events (Party Planners)
3. Annual Support Development/Long Term Development/Fundraising (Money Makers)
  - a. Congressional earmark starts in February through March, need a plan to submit (subcommittee)
4. Conservation/BMPs (Kevin, Ron, Anthony)

Nancy: Put more thoughts into names. Need to come back with more thoughtful ideas.

Tim: We need to make the request

v. Mailers

Nancy: We need to send to our 2170 name address list. Issue with labels getting printed.

Kevin: They look perfect.

Sydney: We could possibly submit the excel spreadsheet with addresses to have the labels printed and stamps added.

Tim: Political campaigning background helps to know that we should inquire at the post office to make sure we have the correct size for most economical costs.

vi. Grants

1. DATCP PLWPG

Nancy: Thank you Sydney: \$40,000

2. TNC Conservation Innovation Challenge

Nancy: Thank you Sydney: \$10,000

3. TNC Conservation Planning Grant

Nancy: Thank you Sydney: \$22,000

4. Surface Water Grant (pre application)

Nancy & Sydney - thank you for working on this! \$10,000

Tim: Do we want to do anything with remaining TNC grants? What about Orlan?

Nancy: We took some time to put together the handouts to explain the difference. This is our surface water grants - and how they are working together. It's a rich text.

Discussion and review of DNR Surface Water Grants Summary handout.



e. New Business

i. Surface Water Gulf Hypoxia project update

We aren't included next year in the timeline past the spring. VSN is open to forwarding us more funding.

We need to resubmit a budget. County con asked us to recruit watershed residents to participate in the planning process. VSN wanted to pay people \$25/participant, Nancy thinks it should be \$200/person.

One deliverable is the VSN Watershed Inventory report, which they drafted. There are some serious errors.

Kevin: Anoka Mn has been glaciated, but we won't hold that against them.

ii. Accounting and signatories

Addressed in the treasurer's report

iii. October Meeting planning

Ashley: Talked to Matt - weather depended, we would have the meeting down at Timber Coulee in the field he recently seeded and have a quick meeting/discussion about what he did, how he harvested it. Cannot commit due to rain. It gets dark so fast so we need to consider this. Parking is possible on the field road.

iv. November meeting planning

Host meeting at the Coon Valley Conservation Club - 9 key element reflection/debriefing. We have the CVCC for the next year squared away for the next year: the first and 3rd Wednesday of the month.

v. Driftless Harvest Fair

Matt: Food purchases are not local food provisions - Viroqua folk do not attend the Vernon County Fair. Absence of agriculture at Vernon County Fair the Kickapoo Country Fair + other examples. Not-conventional or organic, but local. Celebration of eating and eating well. Having this event in October of next year 2025. So many of the farmers are so busy expanding the mission of the Driftless to outsiders, yet folks lose the grasp that these can be shared locally. Harvesty-fair thing.

Local economy. Watersheds and foodsheds. Not fair food. No beef, dairy, honey, maple, etc available at the fair.

Folks think it is a fabulous idea.

3. Other business
4. Next Board Meeting: October 16, 2024

Motion to end meeting by Kevin. 2nd by Matt. Motion passed.

5. Adjourned at 8:47pm