

Minutes of Aquatic Invasive Species Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 7, 2020

The meeting was called to order by Chris Webb at 2:00 pm.

1. Roll Call:

Members Present: Sally Pease, Gerald Gustafson, Judy Bourassa (at town office), Ingemar Ekstrom, Diane Menard, Chris Webb, Andy Teal, and Claudia Duffy-representative from DNR (on Zoom).

Members Absent: Marcia Wellnitz

Roll call verified a quorum was present.

Verification of Public Notice: Public notice of meeting was posted on May 5, 2020 at 11:16 am by Judy Bourassa, clerk/treasurer.

2. Agenda approval: A motion was made by Sally, seconded by Gus to approve the agenda. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried.

3. Approval of last month's minutes: A motion was made by Sally, seconded by Diane to approve the minutes of previous meeting, held on October 21, 2019. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried.

4. Bayfield County A.I.S. coordinator report – Andy Teal:

The coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected Andy's job in many ways. He now works from home; he has rescheduled, postponed, or cancelled many events; he has no interns working with him; all meetings are done virtually; site visits are very limited, etc. The Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference (May 18th) will be a "virtual" conference, as the Lakes Partnership Conference was in April. Three site visits were done in Barnes for erosion issues. There may be no projects until 2021. No boat wash units at boat landings this year. The landing blitz and drain campaign will be combined this year with gifts of ice packs or towels given out (these items have not shipped as yet). No water chemical samples will be taken at the present time. No in-person trainings right now, only virtual trainings. Volunteers can do shoreline monitoring and boat landing inspections, but only following the COVID guidelines.

Claudia Duffy, representing the DNR, reported that she is working from home and doing little field work. She has little information about what will be happening in the DNR with the COVID crisis continuing. About our grants, Chris submitted them, likely they were approved. Laura MacFarland, Environmental Grant Specialist, would need to be contacted to be sure about the grant status.

5. Consider purchase order for GPS:

Gus selected a Garmin GPS unit for about \$600. A motion to purchase this unit was made by Diane and seconded by Gus. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. A purchase order will be prepared and the unit will be ordered.

6. A.I.S. Budget/Grant Balances:

Sinking Fund Balance: \$11,255.41 (same)

CBCW 2019: \$15,000 remaining, \$5,000 was added for this year = \$20,000

DNR Middle: \$11,279.39 remaining (same)

DNR Upper: \$4916.41 remaining (same)

Tomahawk/Sandbar: \$24,464.31

Expenses: None

It was suggested that Pamela Toshner be contacted to determine if the UEC and MEC grants can be extended beyond 6/30/2020.

7. BAISS Boat Report – Gus Gustafson:

The BAISS boat was used to install buoys in the river. It was unsuccessful because the boat could not get under the bridge. The boat will have to be reconfigured in order to lower the equipment by about 12 inches for this to happen. Also, the motor needs a part replaced in order to be able to tilt the motor up higher which is needed for some maneuvers. No start date or no schedules have been developed at this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopefully, the BAISS boat can be operational in June. One of the issues is volunteers. Since all or most of the present volunteers are in the COVID “susceptible/risky” group, who will man the boat? Some ideas are to test volunteers for COVID when coming on duty (temperature checks), wear face masks, wear gloves, or use younger (maybe paid) persons instead. The boat would need frequent sanitizing. We all agreed that social distancing on the boat would be very difficult. Gus will send out an email to our present volunteers to survey them about their comfort level of working on the boat this summer. Lastly, Fritz, our driver, may be available to dive this summer when his schedule allows. We again discussed the need to place ads in two newspapers, Duluth and Ashland, for certified divers. Hiring two divers would be the preference. (Note: Judy Bourassa sent an email dated 5/12/2020 for our approval concerning a newspaper ad to recruit.)

8. Clean Boats Clean Waters Report – Sally Pease:

Due for the COVID pandemic and “safer at home” orders, the CBCW program is suspended at this time. The same paid workers will be on duty again for this year. They are John (Middle), Doug and Judith (Lower), Rocky (Upper), and Sally (Tomahawk and Robinson). They work 4 hours on Fridays, 8 hours on Saturdays, and 8 hours on Sundays. No start date for the CBCW program has been determined at this time.

9. Upper/Middle Eau Claire Lakes plant studies:

Matt Berg will do the plant studies on Upper and Middle between June 15-20th. The grants expire on June 30, 2020 (extensions possible?) Matt would do Tomahawk and Sandbar in July. It is on his calendar. He will not have any interns this year.

10. Tomahawk/Sandbar Grant:

The BAISS boat is projected to pull Eurasian milfoil in July. This would be after Upper and Middle are done and the plant study on Tomahawk and Sandbar Lakes has been performed. We would take before and after photos. We would measure the cubic feet of plant matter collected for our data report.

Two other items mentioned:

A committee member to replace Jim Krook needs to be recruited from the Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes organization.

Ingemar suggested that we purchase copies of 2 books for new volunteers to use in identifying AIS.

11. Next meeting for Town of Barnes AIS Committee is Monday, June 8, 2020 at 9:00 am. All interested parties are welcome to attend.

12. Adjourn: A motion was made by Ingemar, seconded by Gus to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Menard
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