

**JOINT LAND & WATER CONSERVATION AND LABOR RELATIONS/EMPLOYEE SERVICES
COMMITTEE MINUTES**

May 13, 2009

LRES MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by Chairman John Young at 9:00 a.m. at the Oneida County Courthouse, County Board Room.

LRES COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: John Young, Ted Cushing, Paul Dean, Scott Holewinski and Charles Wickman.

LRES COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

LAND & WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Rudolph, Matt Matteson, Wilbur Petroskey, Gary Baier, Jack Martinson,

LAND & WATER CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Rod Kuczarski

ALSO PRESENT: John Potters, Lisa Charbarneau (Labor Relations/Employee Services); Margie Sorenson (Finance); Brian Desmond (Corporation Counsel); Karl Jennrich (Planning & Zoning); Nancy Hollands (Land & Water Conservation); Tom Leighton (Register of Deeds); Bob Bruso (County Clerk); Jeff Hoffman (Sheriff); Charlie Evenhouse (Solid Waste); Julie Allen (ITS); Dennis O'Brien (AFSCME Agent); Bob Martini (Green Bass Lake Association); Mike Skubal (Daily News); Peter Wolk, Frank Greb, Denny Thompson (Supervisors).

The LRES Chairman noted that this meeting of the Labor Relations/Employee Services Committee had been properly noticed as a joint meeting with the Land and Water Conservation Committee and is in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law and meets the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Motion by Cushing, second by Wickman to approve the agenda for the present meeting. Motion carried; all ayes.

The Land and Water Conservation Chairman noted that this meeting of the Land and Water Conservation Committee had been properly noticed as a joint meeting with the Labor Relations and Employee Services Committee and is in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law and meets the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Motion by Baier, second by Martinson to approve the agenda for the present meeting. Motion carried; all ayes.

Discussion/act on AIS Vacancy Options

John Young Option 2 from a memorandum prepared by John Potters dated May 4, 2009. Potters told the joint committee that he had spoken with Planning and Zoning Director, Karl Jennrich about utilizing Planning & Zoning resources to merge Land and Water Conservation Department into Zoning. Potters indicated that Jennrich indicated it was unknown at this time due to variables in workload in the Zoning Department.

Wickman asked if there was a state mandate to have an AIS Coordinator on staff.

Potters said the only State mandate was to have a Land & Water Conservation Committee. Nancy Hollands confirmed that statement.

Wickman stated that there needs to be an identity for Land & Water Conservation, whether it is merged with Planning & Zoning or the UW Extension.

Potters indicated that he had conducted research on what other counties are doing. He continued that two counties have Land & Water with Planning & Zoning, one county has Land & Water, Planning & Zoning and UW Extension, however the majority has Land & Water merged with Land Information and Solid Waste.

There was discussion about whether the current Conservation Specialist position could take on AIS duties and pass along the shoreland restoration duties to some other staff perhaps in the Zoning Department.

Young told the committee that the UW Extension and Agriculture were one committee and then broke into two. The same County Board supervisors were on both committees. Young continued that Oneida County didn't have to be the same as other counties.

Rudolph told the group that statutes require two members of Land & Water Conservation Committee to be on the UW Extension Committee so there is a natural connection there.

UW Extension Chair, Dan Kuzlik told the committee that he had given a proposal to the County Coordinator regarding the possibility of AIS being merged into the UW Extension. Kuzlik indicated that the UW Extension has greater access to research and has more support for AIS than what has been available in the past to the Land & Water Conservation Department. Kuzlik suggested that Horticulture could address the AIS issue, as it is broader and would include all invasive species. Kuzlik told the group that the Committee of Jurisdiction directs the focus of the UW Extension. If the County wants more focus on AIS the UW Extension will focus on AIS. Kuzlik suggested the creation of a Horticultural Agent at the UW Extension which the cost would be split 60/40 by the State and County or fill the AIS Coordinator position and house at the UW Extension. Kuzlik indicated that the clerical support could be absorbed by his current staff.

Young asked if part of the components would be to relocate the UW Extension to either the Courthouse or WPS building, would it hold up the merger.

Kuzlik told the group that a decision would have to be made by the County. Currently the County pays rent to the Airport; however the WPS building would be vacant in two months. Kuzlik continued that in a proactive approach he gave the department layout needs to Curt Krouze to evaluate where the department could be placed.

Young asked what the county wants the AIS Coordinator to do, education or eradication.

Kuzlik said that the position has to cover both.

Gary Baier told the committee that this is a combination of education and eradication. Baier told the group that there is a very short frame of time when chemicals can be used for the best results.

Baier suggested that Land and Water Conservation be merged into Planning and Zoning. Baier indicated that both Nancy Hollands and Jean Hansen could do AIS work. With revenues low in Planning and Zoning, they could assist with other work for Land and Water Conservation. He finished by saying that we need to work together and utilize current staff to avoid layoffs.

Martinson asked about how much money is available for AIS under grants.

Nancy Hollands told the group that DATCP funding for 2009 of \$119,346 to support the cost of staff. She continued that the County applied for a \$200,000 grant however was not successful in obtaining any of the grant money.

Martinson told the group that the State has 1.6 million dollars for AIS. This money is for phase two, eliminating weeds. Martinson continued that the county needs to move quickly in order to process paperwork to qualify for some of the state money.

Young asked again if the Land and Water Conservation Committee would have problems adding eradication to the AIS Coordinator job description. Young continued that no matter where the county goes with the position, eradication needs to be in the job description.

Rudolph agreed. He continued that the job requires the education component as well. He also stated that the AIS Coordinator would not be expected to spray or pull weeds, but would work with the Lake Districts to coordinate their efforts.

Greb told the committee that Oneida County has a huge amount of lakes, and tourism is a huge industry in the Northwoods. Greb suggested that if an AIS Coordinator is hired they could go to Dan Kuzlik to obtain his contacts. He continued that the Three Lakes Lake Association was meeting on June 13th. He told the group that they had tired pulling weeds, but it had not been successful.

Young stated that there are two current staff members in Land and Water Conservation with AIS in their job descriptions, and if they are not attending Lake Association Meetings by request, it is the fault of the committee of jurisdiction.

Bob Martini addressed the Committee. Martini told the committee that he is the Green Bass Lake Association President, on the board of directors of the Lakes & Rivers Association, plus had worked for the DNR for many years. Martini indicated that there is an immediate problem with all the boats at boat landings. The damage of AIS is irreversible. Martini encouraged the committee to have an AIS Coordinator to be aggressive in learning new technologies. Martini said he has a great respect for education; however it is not the entire job. He stated that the County needs someone focused on invasive problems and to act quickly. He encouraged the committee to take this situation seriously.

Young stated that no one here is against an AIS Coordinator. He reminded the group that the position must go up before the full County Board in the fall for review per the resolution that created the position. He continued that the county had two very good, qualified individuals who were dedicated to the job. Young continued that neither individual stayed for more than a year. The County needs longevity in this position. He continued that it was time to find out what is wrong, why there is so much turnover in the position.

Matteson stated that the County needs an AIS person onboard. He asked the group if current staff could handle the full time AIS duties or if they even wanted to do the full time duties of AIS. He continued that he was totally against merging Land & Water with Planning & Zoning, but open to the merger with UW Extension. He also said that AIS needs to be full time, not a part time effort of someone else's responsibilities.

Rudolph told the group that everything pointed to the need of a full time AIS Coordinator regardless of which option the committees agree to go with. He continued that the County needed to establish stability in the position by filling a full time position dedicated to this effort.

Baier stated that the County already has an employee willing to take on the AIS responsibilities and it is already in their current job description. He continued by saying Planning & Zoning could supply support staff to the position with their existing staff. Baier reminded the committee that Oneida County is right in the prime season for AIS, and we need to continue to work with local organizations, not start all over. He finished by stating the County should use the person already employed in the department.

Rudolph told the committee that he had a long discussion about the situation with the County Coordinator and they agreed the best option would be a combination of Options 1 and 3.

Petroskey told the committee that the County needs an AIS Coordinator now. He said the UW Extension has a lot of useful resources that could be utilized. He reminded the group that the position requires a lot of night and weekend work.

Cushing stated that he agreed with Baier about utilizing the person already on board who has the necessary training. Cushing said the position should be housed at the UW Extension and have Kuzlik apply for a Horticulture Agent. He continued by saying perhaps the Conservation Specialist position could be filled. He finished by saying that the UW would handle the education and IS does the eradication and perhaps that would resolve the turn over issues.

Dean stated that he believes the UW Extension has current staff to handle AIS. He continued that it would save a lot of time and money, instead of hiring someone new.

Martinson asked about how the committee felt about someone in Planning & Zoning handling shoreland restoration work to cut costs.

Karl Jennrich was asked to respond. Jennrich stated that he would have to know more specifics about shore land restoration before answering that question. Jennrich stated that he had already met with the Land & Water Department regarding providing administrative assistance to their department like answering phone calls and mass mailings. Jennrich stated his office has worked with Jean Hansen in the past to provide technical support regarding shoreland restoration issues. He indicated he was certain there were ways his department could help.

Thompson told the committee that they need to listen to the public. Look at ways to sustain, to find ways to get things done without hiring new staff. He continued by saying if you can find a way to do it in a more sustainable manner, folks would appreciate it.

Rudolph stated that they needed to move this issue along. That everyone in attendance is interested in trying to accomplish with the least cost to the County. He continued that it is an investment, pay now or pay much more later. He suggested a two-prong solution. First to do some consolidation by merging Land & Water Conservation with the UW Extension. Second, by tweaking Option 1 to accomplishing hiring someone to handle AIS by having the UW Extension hire an agent and pay 60% of the cost of the AIS Coordinator position.

Motion by Rudolph, second by Matteson to work toward merging Land & Water Conservation and UW Extension departments and offer the Horticulture Specialist position to the incumbent Conservation Specialist for the remainder of 2009. Rudolph, Matteson, Petroskey, Baier, Cushing, Young, Wickman voting aye, Martinson, Dean, Holewinski voting no. Motion carried.

Motion by Matteson, second by Petroskey to adjourn the Land & Water Conservation Committee. Motion carried; all ayes.

The Land & Water Conservation Committee Meeting adjourned at 10:35.

Tom Rudolph, Chairman

Nancy Hollands, County
Conservationist