

1000 ISLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

1000 ISLANDS COMMITTEE

City of Kaukauna
Nature Center Building
1000 Beaulieu Court, Kaukauna



Thursday, August 14, 2025, at 4:30 PM

MINUTES

In-Person

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Manion, Van Berkel, Eggleston, White, West, and Pautz

Also Present: Vosters, Garrity, and Kohls

Van Berkel called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM

2. Reading and Approval Minutes

a. None approved

3. 2026 Budget

Terri Vosters shared that department goals and objectives will no longer be included in the budget book. Instead, they will be presented in a year-end report to the City Council.

5264 – Program Budget

The program budget was reduced by \$1,500 due to securing a sponsorship for Eagle Days. While additional programming has been added, the cost of program materials will see a slight increase. Assistant Naturalist Berge is currently reviewing program supply needs.

5276 – Conservancy Zone Maintenance

This budget line increased by \$2,000 in 2025 to prepare for potential tree removal due to weather-related events. Rather than increasing the budget further, the department will exceed the budget if removal becomes necessary. Overall, the 5276 budget increased by \$500. Brad Garrity noted that proceeds from the seedling sale will be used for tree planting efforts.

5205 – Seminar

This budget was reduced by \$500, reflecting a change from two staff members attending conferences annually to just one.

5416 – Custodial Supplies

This category exceeded its budget in 2025. Garrity explained the overage was due to upgrades including new paper towel holders and air fresheners, increased usage of paper products from higher building traffic, more water softener salt, and issues with running toilets. The toilets require replacement parts that are now obsolete. Staff have implemented periodic checks, and toilet replacements are scheduled under the 2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Garrity will seek quotes from custodial vendors to help reduce costs.

5306 – Heating Fuels and 5309 – Water, Sewer & Electric

These budget lines were noted due to uncertainty around projected increases or decreases, which remain unknown at this time.

5804-Equipment

\$1,500 was added to the 5804-Equipment budget line to replace the Administrative Assistant's laptop, as noted by Vosters.

4. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Front Entrance Improvements

Manion expressed interest in enhancing the front entrance by improving natural lighting and aesthetics. Garrity noted that modifications are limited by fire and building codes. Van Berkel inquired about changes to the entrance size, and Garrity confirmed the footprint will remain unchanged. Handicap-accessible buttons will be installed at both doors of the new entrance. Vosters suggested adding a key fob system. Eggleston commented that the entrance design could be more visually appealing and appreciated the overhang for visitors. Garrity will present design plans and cost estimates to the Committee.

Window Replacement

Garrity reported that the current windows are not energy efficient and most will need replacement. Eggleston questioned whether the allocated \$50,000 would be sufficient. Garrity estimated the cost to be between \$50,000 and \$80,000.

Lighting

Garrity stated lighting updates are planned for 2029. Pautz voiced concerns about LED lighting, noting that entire fixtures must be replaced rather than just bulbs. Garrity emphasized the high energy costs as a reason for considering LED upgrades.

Other CIP Updates:

- The display case has been removed from the CIP.
- The playscape project has been postponed to 2030, and its budget reduced from \$300,000 to \$100,000.
- A security camera system upgrade is currently planned for 2030 to improve coverage in areas lacking surveillance. The proposed system would include additional cameras with attendance-tracking counters. The Committee recommended accelerating this project—ideally within the next two years—and completing all replacements at once.

5. **Additional Building Updates**

- Garrity proposed adding windows along the back of the Nature Center to improve views of the Fox River. Eggleston suggested seeking window donations instead of bench donations.
- A contractor will assess the water softener system to ensure optimal performance.
- The Fox River Room currently lacks air conditioning; staff will evaluate the feasibility of adding a duct.
- Garrity recommended installing a drinking fountain as part of the existing water bottle filling station.

6. **Signage Updates**

Garrity met with Eagle Graphics to discuss building and trail signage, as well as vinyl prints for displays. Priority will be given to trail signage in the Upper Woods and boardwalk areas. Funding will come from the restricted trails account. Eggleston asked if Eagle Graphics could sponsor Eagle Days. Garrity explained that Friends of 1000 Islands is already committed to sponsoring the 2026 event, but other community sponsors may be considered in the future.

7. **Strategic Plan Update**

Garrity reported that the primary objectives outlined in the strategic plan have been successfully achieved. The department is now focusing on secondary goals. One upcoming initiative includes adding a hunting display, funded through the restricted account.

Pautz asked about the status of the out-of-order Augmented Reality sand table. Garrity explained that maintaining the outdated software is cost-prohibitive, and as a result, the display will be discontinued. Instead, plans are underway to refurbish the turbine display and convert it into an interactive exhibit.

8. **Ordinance Amendment – Section 1.44**

Eggleston recommended grammatical corrections to the ordinance draft, including removing the apostrophe “s” after “Committee” in the second paragraph and eliminating the repeated word “creation.” Vosters proposed presenting the revised ordinance to the full Committee.

Eggleston asked how the ordinance changes would affect the Committee’s by-laws. Vosters confirmed that the by-laws would need to be rewritten and approved by the City. Eggleston noted that while the framework would remain intact, some language updates would be necessary. Van Berkel asked if 1000 Islands policies would be followed in the interim. Vosters confirmed.

Manion motioned to advance the ordinance with the proposed changes to the 1000 Islands Committee. Pautz seconded. West voted no, while the remaining sub-committee members voted in favor. The motion carried.

9. **Good for the Center**

Memorial benches were delivered on Tuesday, August 12, 2025. Ten new benches were installed on the boardwalk this week. Plaques for the benches will follow.

Van Berkel inquired about staffing increases. Vosters explained the City's People Plan. Pautz inquired if we are in danger of losing the Assistant Naturalist's position. Vosters indicated there is no danger. Staffing in 2026 will be the same as 2025. Vosters has been completing reports from the Community Foundation to update them on the position.

10. **Adjourn**

With no further business to discuss, Eggleston made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Manion. Meeting adjourned at 5:58 pm.

DRAFT