

1000 ISLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

1000 ISLANDS COMMITTEE

City of Kaukauna
Nature Center Building
1000 Beaulieu Court, Kaukauna



Thursday, June 19, 2025, at 6:30 PM

MINUTES

Members Present Hietpas, Manion, Van Berkel, Rumbuc, Breitzman, White, and Pautz

Not Present West, Eggleston, and Jakel

Also Present Brad Garrity and Cassandra Kohls

White called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM. A quorum was present.

Public Appearances None

April 17, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes

Pautz recommended removing a carryover from the previous meeting minutes that stated, "Eggleston moved to approve the minutes; Breitzman seconded. The motion carried." Van Berkel suggested revising the phrase "a draft of the By-Laws updates" to read "the By-Laws and items that could be updated were highlighted." Manion moved to approve the meeting minutes with the proposed corrections, and the motion was seconded by Hietpas. Motion carried.

Financial Reports

The April Financial Report was reviewed. Pautz noted an increase in custodial supply expenditures. Garrity explained that new paper towel dispensers, which were not originally budgeted, were purchased as part of the restroom updates. He also stated that he will explore alternative custodial supply vendors to compare pricing. This budget line is expected to be increased in the 2026 budget. Breitzman moved to approve the April Financial Report, with a second by Manion. Motion carried.

The May Financial report was reviewed. Pautz moved to approve the report; seconded by Breitzman. Motion carried.

Donation Report

The April–May Donation Report was reviewed. Pautz inquired about the microscope donation, and Garrity explained that it may be used for water quality education programs. The donation included slides and eyepieces. Rumbuc asked about income from the sale of a garden bed. Garrity described the related Eagle Scout project and noted that one garden bed remains available for purchase in the gift shop.

Friends of 1000 Islands Report

Hietpas provided a summary of the Art Fair, noting that attendance was down. Sales were down at the Bake Sale, Food Stand, and others vendor compared to previous years. The number of participating art vendors was also lower. Some art vendors mentioned they may not have received

the sign-up emails, possibly due to messages being filtered into spam folders.

Garrity reported that Stone Arch Brewery felt the event was well-organized but expressed disappointment with the lower foot traffic and confirmed they will not return next year. The cooler temperatures may have also impacted attendance. On a positive note, the basket raffle performed very well.

Naturalist's Report

Garrity noted that April through May is a particularly busy time at the Nature Center. The transition of Assistant Naturalist Berge to a full-time role has been especially helpful during this period. Additionally, Intern Maddie joined the team earlier this year, providing further support.

Field trip participation has expanded beyond the local area, now drawing schools from districts such as Green Bay, Reedsville, and Oshkosh. Garrity suggested that the limited number of nature centers in the Oshkosh area may be contributing to this outreach. As teachers move to new districts, they are helping to spread awareness of the field trip opportunities available at 1000 Islands.

Pautz commented on the affordability of the trips. Garrity noted that the value justifies the travel distance for many schools. Increased media presence in the Green Bay area has also contributed to the growing interest from those districts. Garrity added that the June 14th Service Saturday event was a success, with participation from a local Scout troop.

Admin and Finance Sub-Committee

Van Berkel reported that priorities and planning were discussed during the Admin-Finance Sub-Committee meeting held earlier this evening. The Committee will provide budget guidance to staff in August and has requested a project timeline to support that process. Manion commended staff for their collaboration with the City.

Pautz inquired about the release date for the 2026 budget documents to allow time for review and recommendations. Van Berkel asked whether Garrity would have the ability to adjust the preliminary operational budget, excluding payroll-related accounts. Garrity confirmed that he would.

Van Berkel reported that the Admin-Finance Sub-Committee approved the transfer of approximately \$13,000 from the Golden Investment account to the 1000 Islands Restricted Fund, along with the closure of the Golden Investment account. Van Berkel made a motion to approve; seconded by Pautz. Motion carried.

Education Sub-Committee

Pautz provided a report noting that the Naturalist Report effectively summarized the discussion at the Sub-Committee meeting. River View Middle School will be relocating, and the group discussed how this move may impact students' ability to walk to the Nature Center. The new school site may include a school forest, which could provide opportunities for staff to deliver on-site nature programs at the new location.

Building & Grounds

Manion reported that a property walk is scheduled for Fall 2026. The Sub-Committee discussed several topics, including potential Capital Improvement Projects, the possible acquisition of Camp Winnecomac, a project wish list, and prioritization of future initiatives. Ideas included constructing an observation tower in the Upper Woods, trail and canoe launch repairs, improving trail

accessibility for strollers, and replacing the truck now that it falls under the City's fleet and replacement schedule. Manion also noted the progress staff have made in integrating with City and its benefits.

Hietpas added the discussion included the need to address erosion, hire a Forester, and conduct selective tree thinning along property lines and to manage the tree canopy. Garrity added that the shaded canopy helps suppress invasive species. Manion suggested that a consultant could assist in maintaining a healthy ecological balance. Van Berkel raised concerns about the impact of urban deer on plant life, and Manion proposed municipal deer hunting as a potential management strategy.

Hietpas reported that a landowner has a deer stand encroaching on the Hoersch property. Lot lines will need to be verified. Signage will be included on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Trail restoration and foot bridge repairs will follow the erosion project, as the landscape will change due to construction. A switchback on the Valley Trail in the Upper Woods was discussed to improve accessibility, with Manion citing Mosquito Hill as a model. Garrity noted that the new stairs to the Upper Woods could benefit from a railing.

Hietpas suggested adding a perimeter trail around Island 3, and Garrity asked whether Ahlstrom Thilmany Mill could assist with the project. Signage was recommended to be added to identify Island 3 as part of the 1000 Islands Conservancy Zone.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Good for the Center

Garrity reported that April through May was an especially busy period, with all staff contributing to support operations. Ten benches were ordered for the Boardwalk—three funded through trail funds and the remaining seven purchased by visitors as memorial donations. The benches are expected to arrive by the end of July. White also noted that staff members Berge and Gonnering assisted in protecting a snapping turtle found on the property.

Next Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be on July 17, 2025, at 6:30 PM in the Nature Center building.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Pautz moved to adjourn the June 19, 2025, Committee Meeting at 7:52 PM. Seconded by Breitzman. Motion Carried.

Cassandra Kohls, Administrative Assistant