

Minutes for 1000 Islands Environmental Center Committee Meeting on Thursday, November 21, 2024

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

Not Present Jakel and Hietpas

Also Present Brad Garrity, Cassandra Kohls, Will VanRossum, and Ashley Roehl

White called the November Committee Meeting to order at 6:30 PM. A quorum was present.

Public Appearances None

October 17, 2024, Committee Meeting Minutes

VanBerkel moved to approve the October 17, 2024, minutes. Seconded by Pautz. Motion carried.

Financial Reports

The Committee reviewed the October Financial report. Pautz mentioned gift shop sales were down. Kohls indicated the budget over projected concession sales. Pautz moved to accept the October Financial report and Breitzman seconded. Motion carried.

Finance Presentation

Eggleston noted that the 1000 Islands Committee is responsible for developing the budget and suggested that discussions should start earlier. Roehl mentioned that Directors received budget materials in July, with a submission deadline to Finance in the first week of September. VanRossum recommended beginning budget discussions in June to address any needs and wants. He also provided an overview of the CIP process and the history of the 1000 Islands budget, noting that in 2023, the operational budget was moved from the 201-restricted account to the 101-operational account to align with other City Departments' budget schemas. VanRossum suggested moving the 4391-Kaukauna School District Appropriation and 4392-Outagamie County Appropriation revenues to intergovernmental revenue. The distribution from the community foundation for the 1000 Islands Endowment fund is going into the operational budget. The Committee will need to decide whether this distribution should go into the 101 or 201 accounts, or remain in the Community Foundation for reinvestment in the endowment.

Manion emphasized that the Committee should consider potential budget cuts during discussions. Eggleston agreed, stating that cutting the EV truck was a good compromise. Garrity mentioned that Friends of 1000 Islands is developing a process for their annual budget donation to 1000 Islands.

Friends of 1000 Islands Report

In Hietpas' absence, Garrity reported that Friends will provide a food stand and hold a membership drive at Eagle Days. They will inventory the Nature Center kitchen, removing old or damaged items and replacing them with new, donated items. Friends has created a Facebook page, and both 1000 Islands staff and Friends are collaborating on social media. Manion suggested adding Friends as a subsidiary on the 1000 Islands website.

Naturalist's Report

Garrity reviewed the October Naturalist with the Committee. Friends received a grant from the Community Foundation of the Fox Valley Region to fund a full-time assistant naturalist position. The City Council approved covering the employee benefit costs not included in the grant.

Garrity and Vosters attended a budget meeting with Outagamie County, thanking them for their \$10,000 annual donation. The County was impressed with the number of residents and non-resident visitors served. West offered to provide KASD with information on student usage and program benefits. The Assistant Naturalist will go full-time in January, increasing her hours by 20. White noted the need for another full-time naturalist. Garrity mentioned an increase in off-site programming and bussing challenges.

New ADA-compliant sinks and countertops will be installed at the nature center, exceeding the \$5,000 budget but authorized to proceed. Pautz requested new towel dispensers. Garrity reported that Bella Lundt, a Jet student, gained work experience while volunteering at the nature center.

The boardwalk project is about two weeks behind schedule due to weather and prior project delays. The tear-out is underway, with materials being removed in sections. The public can take used sections if available. Staking of Phase 2 will begin before the ground freezes, and the trail will remain open after staking.

Old Business

Eggleston noted to correct "Rumbac" to "Rumbuc". Rumbuc is appointed to the Building and Grounds and Education Sub-Committees.

New Business

Garrity provided a hand-out and explained the proposed sub-ledgers for the 201-restricted account. VanBerkel supported. Funding would be allocated from the general restricted account into sub-categories. Manion moved to approve the creation of sub-ledgers within the 201-restricted account, seconded by West. Motion carried.

The discussion on the Golden Investment Account allocation/closure was tabled and moved to the next meeting. Eggleston motioned to approve, seconded by Breitzman. Motion carried.

Garrity reported that both beehives at 1000 Islands have collapsed, with yellowjackets taking over one of them. The City Attorney has approved the purchase and ownership of honeybee hives and colonies for 1000 Islands, and the city's ordinance on this matter is currently being revised. Two full-time staff members will need to be trained in beekeeping, with hives costing between \$200 and \$300 each. VanBerkel noted that losing colonies is common and suggested increasing the educational value and visibility of the beekeeping program. Brian Jacobs, the current beekeeper at 1000 Islands, will work on enhancing visibility and offering beekeeping classes. Manion inquired about the educational use of the hives, the worthiness of the effort, and concerns about bee stings. Garrity assured that bees have not stung visitors, only yellowjackets have. Currently, there is no formal program, but Jacobs has organized a honey extraction event, and honey from the hives is sold in the gift shop. Additionally, a popular lip balm workshop has been expanded this year. Manion moved to approve the purchase and ownership of honeybee hives and colonies for 1000 Islands, with Pautz seconding the motion. Motion carried.

Good of the Center

Receiving the Community Foundation grant was good news for 1000 Islands.

The 2025 calendar was provided to the Committee.

Pautz requested the responsibilities of the Committee to be added to the January agenda.

1000 Islands Volunteer Appreciation party will be held at the Nature Center on December 4, 2024, beginning at 3 PM. 1000 Islands will have a float in the Holiday Parade on December 3, 2024.

Next Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be on January 16, 2025, at 6:30 PM in the Nature Center building.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Breitzman moved to adjourn the November 21, 2024, Committee Meeting at 8:29 PM. Seconded by Manion. Motion carried.

Cassandra Kohls, Administrative Assistant