

1000 ISLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

1000 ISLANDS COMMITTEE

City of Kaukauna

Nature Center Building

1000 Beaulieu Court, Kaukauna



Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 6:30 PM

MINUTES

Members Present West, White, Breitzman, Eggleston, Timmons, Hietpas, Manion, Jakel, and VanBerkel

Not Present Rumbuc

Also Present Brad Garrity and Cassie Kohls

Jakel called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. A quorum was present.

Public Appearances None

Timmons was introduced and welcomed to the Committee.

November 20, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes

Manion motioned to approve, seconded by VanBerkel. Motion carried.

November Financial Report

VanBerkel asked whether the interest check from the Community Foundation endowment would be reinvested back into the fund or if it could be used to purchase items that were not included in the budget. He also inquired about where the endowment's interest earnings are recorded. Kohls explained that the City Clerk receives the annual interest payment from the Community Foundation and deposits it into the Interest Income Account 101-48100-4810, which is not a restricted account. Eggleston asked what percentage of interest the endowment fund will generate in 2026, and VanBerkel noted that this information is not yet available.

Garrity informed the Committee that Finance Director VanRossom has submitted his resignation.

VanBerkel moved to approve the November Financial Report, and West seconded. Motion carried.

Correspondence None

Friends of 1000 Islands Report

Hietpas provided an overview of the Friends' Annual Meeting. Carol VanBoxtel presented her new children's history book, and 18 people were in attendance. No elections were held, so all current officers will remain in their roles. The Friends group will operate a food stand offering hot dogs, popcorn, and beverages at Eagle Days on January 31, 2026.

November-December Naturalist Report

Garrity reported that a new credit card system has been implemented at the Nature Center. The annual volunteer appreciation event was held in December with approximately 25 attendees. Communications Manager Fencil integrated the 1000 Islands website into the City's website, and Kohls has been trained on managing the new site. Assistant Naturalist Berge was recently married at the Nelson Overlook and is now using the name Kat Benson. Rosy the tarantula has been moved to a new tank after her previous enclosure was tipped over and destroyed by a visitor; fortunately, Rosy was not injured.

The Jabber memorial fundraiser generated approximately \$400, which was divided between J & R Aquatics and Wildlife of Wisconsin. There are no plans to replace Jabber.

Staff also participated in the Electric City Christmas Parade and Gingerbread House contest.

The eagle camera project will have a soft launch at Eagle Days this year. Two camera locations are being proposed: one at the Kaukauna Utilities dam with zoom capability, and another at the eagle nest powered by solar with battery backup. Some donations have already been received, and Gonnering is conducting additional research.

The Silent Night Hike drew around 300 participants and was considered a great success, raising \$400 in donations.

Snowshoeing season is beginning, though rentals have not yet occurred; the Junior Naturalist program used the snowshoes during their session.

November was a busy month for field trips. Volunteers Pautz and Hayes assisted with a program for St. Paul Elder at 1000 Islands.

Outagamie County Land Conservation (OC-LCD) received a \$300,000 Great Lakes Commission GLSNRP grant to address severe erosion in the Conservancy Zone. The City's DPW has an additional \$100,000 allocated, bringing total project funding to \$400,000. Project components include gully repair, trail restoration, videography documentation, and installation of step pools— a first in Wisconsin. Survey work by OC-LCD will take place in 2026, with two public meetings planned: one for the general public and one for neighboring property owners. Construction work is expected to begin in 2027, and the grant may extend into 2029. West asked how many neighbors are involved; Garrity was unsure but confirmed neighboring properties within the easement will be included. Manion asked about the easement recording, and VanBerkel confirmed it is recorded. OC-LCD hopes to involve additional landowners to potentially extend the project beyond City property. A press release will be issued in the coming weeks. In response to Hietpas's question about total project cost, Garrity explained that the County will remain within existing funding. The City will contribute in-kind materials and labor when feasible, including fill material from other City projects. Step pools will be constructed on newer gullies, while older gullies will receive berms with trails routed across them. Street Department staff and community volunteers will assist, and trees will be repurposed for root wads and fill. The riparian buffer will be cleared and replanted with native vegetation to restore shoreline habitat.

Garrity also reported a roof leak. After contacting the Street Department and a roofing contractor, it was determined that a row of shingles had been improperly nailed, causing the nails to rust and create holes. The contractor recommended sealing the holes and applying sealant to screws near the solar panels. The inspected section of the roof appears to have an estimated remaining life of 5–10 years. Manion asked about staining on the roof sheeting; Garrity noted that snow has been blowing in through the ridge vent, but overall the sheeting is in good condition except for the area affected by nail failure.

Bidding for the Nature Center's front entryway renovation is underway, with construction scheduled to begin in late spring or summer. Jakel asked about the design, and Garrity shared that McMahan developed the plans, which include new doors, a leveled floor, key-fobbed and ADA-compliant entry doors, and relocation of the entry door toward the building's front corner. The interior door will also be widened. Hietpas asked whether the footprint would remain unchanged, and Garrity confirmed that it will, with existing window locations preserved and leftover siding from last year's replacement being reused. Garrity will present the design at the next Committee meeting.

Hietpas moved to receive and place the November–December Naturalist Report on file; Breitzman seconded. Motion carried.

Usage Report: VanBerkel noted that the totals in the bottom column were not calculated correctly. Annual usage totals will be presented in February. Garrity reported that Outagamie County was pleased with the strong participation from individuals residing outside the county. VanBerkel moved to place the 4th Quarter Usage Report on file, and White seconded. The motion carried.

Sub-Committee Meetings: Sub-Committee Chairs will convene meetings as needed. Membership was reviewed, and the following updates were made to the Sub-Committee Member list:

- Manion was removed from the Administration & Finance Sub-Committee.
- White was appointed Chair of the Education Sub-Committee.
- Timmons was added to the Education Sub-Committee and will not serve on the Administration & Finance Sub-Committee.

Old Business - None

New Business - None

Good for the Center

Eagle Days will take place on January 31, 2026, from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM. All viewing station volunteer positions are filled, with Bald Eagle Nest Watchers assisting this year. The National Eagle Center will attend, and the Kaukauna Public Library will give a Native American presentation. Garrity will present on the Bald Eagle Nest Watch program.

Next Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be on Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 6:30 PM in the Nature Center building.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Manion moved to adjourn the January 15, 2026, Committee Meeting at 7:29 PM. Seconded by White. Motion carried.

Cassie Kohls