

**Middle Cedar Watershed Management Authority
Board of Directors Meeting**

Thursday, January 18, 2024, 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
Virtual meeting with in-person option at ECICOG office

Meeting Minutes

Agenda

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

Meeting was called to order at 3:10 by Chair Stevenson.

Board Members Present:

Mary Beth Stevenson (Cedar Rapids), Steve Thompson (Benton SWCD), Chris Schwartz (Black Hawk County), Josh Balk (Black Hawk SWCD), Rick Wulfekuhle (Buchanan County), Matt Tolan (Cedar Falls), Dan Bangasser (Grundy Center), Barbara Smith (Grundy County), Jane Whittlesey (La Porte City), Bruce Frana (Linn SWCD), Wayne Castle (Waterloo)

Others Present:

Jennifer Fencil (ECICOG), Justin Schroeder (Cedar Rapids), Alec Matthew (Cedar Rapids), Dennis Goemaat (Linn County Conservation), Clark Porter (IDALS), Cynthia Farmer (Center for Rural Affairs), Shaffer Ridgeway (NRCS), Matthew Langley (Cedar Rapids), Curtis Behrens, (Tama County Conservation), Becky Van Wey (Benton SWCD), James Martin (IDALS), Jody Bailey (ECICOG), Jason Gomes (North Iowa Agronomy Partners), Faith Luce (Grundy SWCD), Courtney Myers (Grundy NRCS), Evan Brehm (Iowa Soybean Association), Chase Babcock (Grundy EMA), Andrew Skwor (MSA Professional Services), Kendra Markland (USGS)

II. Minutes of Previous Meeting – August 22, 2023 – Action Item

Minutes from August 22, 2023 – Motion by Frana, second by Schwartz to approve. Motion carried.

III. FY24 Budget Update & Invoices

Fencil reported presented summaries of the FY23 and FY24 budgets and invoices. Balance for the WMA is around \$45,804. Motion by Schwartz, second by Hosch to approve the budget summary.

IV. Local Update: Waterloo Sponsored Project (Wayne Castle, Assistant City Engineer)

Castle, Assistant City Engineer, shared information about the Sunnyside project, a 4-acre pond and 2.6-acre wetland in Waterloo that will treat 300 acres of runoff. The pond will be approximately 10-12 ft. deep. Funding was obtained through the Water Quality Initiative and state SRF – Sponsored Projects programs.

V. Funding Opportunity – FY2024 RCPP – Action Item

Stevenson led a discussion about opportunities to bring more project funding into the Middle Cedar watershed to help sustain momentum gained from the IWA project.

a. Feedback Requested: Priority sub-watersheds for each county

Stevenson asked the group to consider high priority subwatersheds identified by the Middle Cedar Watershed Plan, as well as solicit feedback from member and partner organizations about other high priority areas in the watershed where there are resource concerns. Stevenson would like to convene a working group to work on this task, launch a series of face-to-face meetings with the SWCDs to solicit this feedback, and a potential survey to request more information from members about possible project areas.

VI. Batch & Build Project: Current and upcoming activities

Stevenson provided a brief overview of Batch and Build for newer attendees and shared that there are currently 37 projects (bioreactors and saturated buffers) underway around Linn County. Other projects are forthcoming in Tama and Benton County.

Luce shared an update that there are currently 22 saturated buffers in her Middle Cedar subwatershed project area that will be constructed in spring. There are also commitments for another 48 saturated buffers and 5 bioreactors to be built.

Porter reported that his Middle Cedar subwatershed projects have 14 saturated buffers and bioreactors that are lined up for construction soon, and commitments for another 22 projects to be built. Porter mentioned that in parts of the watershed, sandy soil along waterways is not ideal for these types of projects.

Van Wey shared that Benton County projects have been sidelined by turnover in project coordinators, but that the projects are moving forward and there is interest in edge-of-field practices.

VII. Statewide WMAs & 2024 Legislative Session Update: Cynthia Farmer, Center for Rural Affairs

Farmer informed the group about the upcoming “WMA Day at the Capitol (January 29th). She also shared CFRA efforts to build relationships with legislators and highlight the many accomplishments of WMAs around Iowa.

VIII. Watershed Project Updates

a. WQI / 319 / RCPP Projects

Balk from the Dry Run Creek project shared that it has been an active year. The project completed 39 projects in 2023.

IX. Announcements and/or Board Member Updates

Fencil shared that there are boxes of the Middle Cedar Watershed Comprehensive Management Plan available for anyone who wants one and to let her know if partners would like copies.

Stevenson would like to invite WMA member and partner organizations to share updates about watershed projects they have underway at upcoming meetings and would like to make this a regular part of meetings. Contact Stevenson or staff at ECICOG to get on the agenda.

Balk shared information about a Dry Run Creek watershed event on March 5th.

Brehm shared information about an upcoming educational event, “Taking Action in Conservation” at the Kirkwood Hotel on January 23rd.

IX. Public Comment

None.

X. 2024 Meeting Calendar: Dates, Locations, Topics, Speakers

The next Middle Cedar WMA meeting will be on April 18th, 2024 Stevenson suggested that the meeting may be held at the water treatment plant in Cedar Rapids so members

can take a tour of the plant prior to the meeting. Stevenson noted that she would like future meetings move around, to provide opportunities for members to see watershed stewardship projects in other parts of the watershed.

XI. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 pm by Schwartz, seconded by Frana.