

DRAFT MINUTES
Upper Cedar Watershed Management Improvement Authority
3/12/13 Board Meeting 6:00PM
City Hall, Charles City -- Milwaukee Mall

Mark Kuhn called the meeting to order at 6:03pm

Present: Mark Kuhn, Floyd County Supervisor; Sherman Lundy, Black Hawk County SWCD; Tim Zoll, Chickasaw Co; Erik Butler, Worth County SWCD; Stephen Main, City of Waverly; Ron Lenth, Bremer Co SWCD; Jim Erb, Mayor of Charles City; Eric Jellum, Mitchell Co SWCD; Kip Ladage, Bremer Co.; Ken Abrams, Worth County Supervisor; Roger Gigler for Worth County SWCD.

A quorum was lacking.

Others in attendance included: Kevin Sprung, Mitchell County Farm Bureau; Eric Isaacs and Tom Brownlow, City of Charles City; Jean Simmet, AgriNews; Jay June, Floyd/Chickasaw County NRCS; Matt Saur and Susan Judkins, MSA Professional Services; Marybeth Stevenson, DNR; Todd Sutphin and Keegan Kult, Iowa Soybean Association; Sara Steussy, Larry Weber, Marian Muste, and Cristina Munoz, Iowa Flood Center/IIHR/University of Iowa; Katie Yule, NRCS.

Also on file: sign-in sheets.

1/10/13 Trip to Austin, Minnesota

Sara Steussy from the Iowa Flood Center briefly discussed a presentation in Austin, Minnesota, on 1/10/13 that was attended by several from the Upper Cedar Watershed Management Improvement Authority. Differences between the Minnesota and Iowa sections of the HUC-8 Upper Cedar Watershed (UCWMIA) include the fact that the Minnesota portion has taxing authority. They have created a watershed model with support of a local engineering firm, and are currently working on an interface for communities and others.

Update on Phase II Watershed Management Authority Grant

Mark Kuhn, Chair, reminded the group that although no funding has been received to date for a watershed plan, known as the Phase II Watershed Management Authority grant, the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) is going through a “clawback” process with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and hopes to have funds available for this project soon. Sara Steussy said Jeff Geerts from the IEDA mentioned this recently at a public meeting.

Upper Cedar Selected by Iowa Flood Center for Flood Mitigation Project Implementation

The UCWMIA received a letter notifying the group that it was identified as a target area by the Iowa Flood Center for pilot watershed management projects for flood mitigation. \$1.5 million will be made available for this effort. Larry Weber from the Iowa Flood Center attended tonight’s meeting to review the scope and expectations of the project. The three areas chosen for

pilot project implementation are the UCWMIA; the Turkey Watershed/ and the Soap Creek/Chequest Creek watersheds. The Middle/South Raccoon Watershed was NOT selected, but it is hoped that there may be some availability of funds through IEDA's clawback process. However, it is not likely to reach the funding level achieved by the UCWMIA. The UCWMIA was selected because of engagement in the region and an expectation of success in engaging landowners, outlining projects and monitoring construction. Construction is expected from 2014-2016, with monitoring and assessment being undertaken as soon as construction is completed. The project will wrap up in 2017. Data is available for two major rainfall events in the region, occurring on 9/14-15/04 and 6/7-8/08. The Iowa Flood Center is still in the early stages of calibration of that data.

HUC-12 Prioritization Process

A map was distributed showing the HUC-12 watersheds in the Iowa portion of the Upper Cedar Watershed; the group will be asked to prioritize watersheds for implementation of the pilot projects. At least one watershed should be prioritized, and if local funds are able to be leveraged, more than one could be considered for project implementation. Sample positive characteristics were outlined on a power point slide and include:

- 1) Watershed with intrinsic public value and awareness
- 2) Headwater regions;
- 3) High runoff and localized flooding observed during rainstorms, including property damage to residential, commercial and crops, and washed out or impassable roadways.
- 4) Team of diverse stakeholders, technical expertise, and local leadership, including local, state and federal partners from the public and private sectors.
- 5) Past and present watershed projects
- 6) Landowner/producer willingness to participate

Larry Weber described the process used in the Turkey Watershed for prioritization. They have six counties participating in their WMA. The WMA heard a presentation from each area, then the executive committee met to review the proposals. They considered the Iowa Flood Center's criteria but developed a local scoring process. The committee shared recommendations with the full board. Ultimately there was unanimous support for one watershed.

Mark Kuhn asked how the contract is administered; Larry explained it will be with the city or county responsible for administering the funds, NOT with the WMA. The \$1.5 million award allows for some administrative expense.

Sherm Lundy noted the timeline of watershed prioritization by late May 2013; the relevant city or county can contract with IEDA, and the group can engage with the NRCS and others for landowner engagement, but what about a project coordinator to work with the committee? He recommended identifying structure and leadership of the process.

Jay Jung asked what size of drainage area is ideal for a project; Larry Weber responded they have no preconceived notion and both larger and smaller projects can be valuable. Jay suggested reviewing the challenges in a watershed. Sherm noted that urban area projects are not precluded, and Larry Weber noted that in the Turkey Watershed, the fact that West Union had stormwater

projects underway was viewed as a plus. Jay said a mix of ag and urban can be good from a partnership perspective, and gave an example in Knoxville.

Eric Jellum joined the group at 7 AM.

Discussion was held on how to proceed. It was suggested that a meeting be held in April to hear from various watershed proponents and to identify a possible prioritization process. Jim Erb noted that the process used by the Turkey Watershed provides valuable guidance. Sherm Lundy suggests that each city, county and SWCD in the WMA be invited to generate a proposal for a HUC-12 if they desire. Larry Weber thought this might be even better than a process of inviting one proposal per county. Mark Kuhn agreed that this is a good way to identify many things going on in the watershed.

Next Meeting 4/3/13

The next meeting date was discussed. General consensus was reached to meet on Wednesday, April 3rd. Tim Zoll said that should work for SWCD representatives. An important agenda item will involve reaching agreement about the review process and proposal deadlines for prioritization. Larry Weber promised to send the Iowa Flood Center's proposed criteria and the map detailing all HUC-12 watersheds in the Iowa portion of the Upper Cedar Watershed (criteria 1-6 are listed above; map is attached and made a part of these minutes.)

Sponsored Projects (SRF) and other Funding Opportunities

Charles City is eligible to apply for funding for a "sponsored project" via the State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF). This process will allow for loan interest payments for a wastewater project to be diverted to a water quality project. The NPDES permit process now has nutrient regulations, so nutrient trading is receiving some attention; Larry Weber said the State is still working on this and there will likely be no trading implementation for 2-3 years. Mark Kuhn mentioned that the Army Corps of Engineers may have funds that could be matched by the Watershed Management Authority funding being received from HUD via the Iowa Economic Development Authority; but the Corps funding is on hold for now.

Ongoing Watershed Activities

Todd Sutphin from the Iowa Soybean Association reported that a watershed plan will be developed for Rock Creek in Mitchell County. Another watershed planning project is getting underway in Beaver Creek (Floyd and Chickasaw Counties) funded by EDF. Jay Jung from the NRCS reported that NRCS Missouri River Basin Initiative (MRBI) funding has been approved for several areas including Spring Creek, Beaver and Little Cedar Watersheds.

Upon motion to adjourn by Sherm Lundy, seconded by Ron Lenth, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Susan Judkins for Karen Damjanovic
Secretary

