

**Vilas County Lakes & Rivers Association (VCLRA)  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Monday, September 23, 2019  
9:00 a.m. St. Germain Community Building**

**Present:** Tom Ewing (President), Carol Warden, Steve Budnik, Emily Heald, Paul Lewandoski, Anne Kretschmann, Susan Knight, Celeste Hockings, Carolyn Scholl

**Absent:** Debby Soberg, Karen Dixon, Jeff Curry

**Guest:** Dick Jenks

**Call to order:** President Tom Ewing called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Agenda:** Accepted as presented.

**Secretary's Report:** Comments on Jeff asking about new initiative; nothing to add. No additions to questions on the item we didn't cover about discussion with OCLRA. Motion to accept by Anne Kretschmann. Second by Steve Budnik. Motion passed.

**Treasurer's report:** Renewed our non-profit status with the state. Annual meeting cost us \$275 this year, in other years it was \$100. Additional educational related expenses were the water quality study printing which takes us to a balance of \$9680. Total membership is 57 with 60 lakes represented. Tom asks to look up past members that aren't currently on the list and target them. Motion to accept by Paul. Second by Carol. Passed.

**President's report:** Recapped our multi-county workshop. Tom discussed reaching a larger crowd outside of the normal attendees. This was done through email, newspapers, affiliated websites. We had nearly 100 guests this year.

Discussion on temp/DO meter being shared with Oneida County. Paul brought up that Presque Isle will purchase their own. Celeste offered to help with calibration if needed. For the next meter, OCLRA may take the turn to do that grant. Dick also has a maintained meter that he's willing to lend out. There is a concern that our grant only covers Vilas Co use and also that our grant was written to store it in Vilas County. We will address this.

New website rolled out in June, 4000 views and 1000 unique visitors. Tom also added a Donation option. With online payments, when someone donates, there are transaction fees associated so we have to consider this when we get the deposit. Tom uses Cognito Forms and Stripe. He will work toward online forms for membership payments as well. Motion to accept fee terms of 1% per transaction plus Stripe's 2.90% plus \$0.30 USD fee by Carol Warden. Second by Susan Knight. Motion passed.

Tom discussed liability insurance for VCLRA Board when we go to booth events. He got a quote for \$475/year. Tom also talked with WI Lakes and they said Lake Associations are given a lot of protection by the state and it's very unlikely that we would face a lawsuit for doing outreach. He recommends we do not seek insurance at this time. For annual meeting, we're covered under WI Lakes.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS/OLD BUISNESS**

**Multi County Workshop:** New auditorium was nice. Let's keep with this if we can. Tom discusses follow-up for putting presentations on our website, etc. Steve points out that we avoid calling this meeting "annual". We

decide every year whether to do it again. Tom will reach out to Quita and Emily will reach out to Whitaker about getting their presentations for the VCLRA website. Carolyn suggests hosting meeting in Vilas Co. every other year, possibly at Highschool or Convention Center at casino, or at Trees for Tomorrow. We also discussed considering an evening event to attract other guests.

Shoreland Owner Initiative: Dick handed out summary report and also emailed this to the Board. Website is looking good! WI Lakes is not too concerned about screening out bogus requests. Dick and Debby have already been very active in handing out business cards. Dick will make a form to track where we're leaving cards. Tom suggests including cards with our mailings. Anne suggests putting a place on website to request cards. Committee felt it was a very important aspect to the initiative to enlist associations to initiate face to face contact with their neighbors. Dick described how to get property transfers in the hands of the lake association presidents along with an introductory letter. He suggests bringing them to the Vilas Co. meeting on Oct 18. Carolyn suggests going to Town Lakes Committees for card distribution. Write something up for newsletter as well to get people informed. We can include this on the website as well. Committee also discussed a welcome letter; we could generate these and then house them on website for everyone to have access. We need to consider how to keep the initiative going into perpetuity. Dick points out that OCLRA is considering a similar initiative.

We started this initiative thinking we were going to approach realtors and then evolved to see realtors as a secondary option. Lake associations became primary contact. One realtor suggested scheduling a five to ten-minute meeting in Jan/Feb to explain and educate them on our initiative. We'll get a presentation together and start setting up these meetings. Our focus will be to emphasize how this initiative is to maintain the quality of life in the Northwoods. Dick will keep tapping into realtors annual meeting. Carolyn suggested a name that used to be involved in this way, she and Dick will follow up with this. Susan discussed events that there are a lot of events for realtors throughout the Northwoods; Northwoods Association of Realtors. We suggested also to invite them to our multi-county workshop.

Blue Heron: Carol will send Tom the write-up from the latest winners and he will update website. Carol will send it to paper as well.

Scholarship status: Committee hasn't met yet. We send documents out to schools in Jan/Feb. Anne describes follow-up contacts; student sends transcripts then we write a check. Check gets made to school and school puts it in their account. We will send a reminder if we don't hear from them. First student took a year off, but we can still honor that when he re-enrolls.

Booth Events: Cran-a-rama in Manitowish Waters on Oct 5. Steve will be manning a booth. First one is Lake Fest in June in LdF.

Temp/DO grant: see president's notes above.

County Conservation report: Carolyn shared report on 2020 AIS work planning activities. Committee met with LdF and Discovery Center to produce list. Hoping to hire another Limited Term Employee (LTE).

Committee decided not to partner with UW Oshkosh anymore. UW Oshkosh are still offering services; Vilas Co will not be partnering with them. Currently, the grants involved with are Healthy Lakes, five projects. Approved for a project called Lakes Assessment trying to answer the question about how healthy lakes are in Vilas Co. This uses data already collected. DNR Directed Lakes grant approved to hire Limited Term Employee for a two-year grant to do the surveys associated with this initiative. Looking to do more Healthy Lakes grants for 2020, there

are more interested parties. Site work and planning is required to apply for these grants. Rivers grant has been inventorying culverts throughout Vilas Co. That will keep moving forward.

Carolyn discusses plans for DNR to provide base funds to each county for lake needs. She's working on how this money will be distributed. Earmarked mostly for AIS work.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

VCLRA/OCLRA joint activities: Carol will keep in touch with OCLRA about Blue Heron. Steve suggests having a meeting with them again in person. Steve outlined a potential regional zoning document and problems we ran into with different statutes with each county. Susan suggests that even if we don't do a joint publication, we could use templates with each other. Currently the only joint activity outside of multi-county workshop is that we each have a link to the other's website. Tom suggests doing a joint booth at Lakes Convention.

We are in favor of doing another multi-county meeting in 2020.

January Newsletter: Tom suggests an article on Shoreland Owner Initiative. Maybe an article about why we measure DO/temp, and that they're free to access. We could ask Sandy to provide this article for us. Carolyn suggests an article on trying to increase volunteerism in your community, we could ask Eric Olson to provide this on capacity-building. Maybe include a few people offering their personal journey that can ease people's doubts about not knowing what to do or how they can help, so people can relate. Look in Lake Tides to see if there's an article we can use. Traditional items such as membership, president's notes, blue heron, scholarship. Deadline for articles is Dec 10.

Blog articles: Tom is hoping to get some folks involved in helping with Blog articles. Carol suggests using Susan's field notes on our blog. Tom sees a vision of a year-round outreach. He is thinking one-page articles, but could include links, videos, forms, etc. A common search we have is "kids page", we could have a page where you can "ask an expert" and we provide an answer to the kids. Crossword puzzles, kid art, things like that might be fun too.

Other New Business: Carolyn describes that Vilas Co. started an award program. Three different categories. Carolyn is hoping to invigorate this event. She will look into how Oneida Co. does their awards banquet night. Public acknowledgement is positive feedback to volunteers and may pique interest in others. Maybe a great opportunity for VCLRA (and maybe OCLRA) to host an awards banquet. Opportunity for networking, see what work is being done. The board can call to check on details.

Paul ran into Bob Barofsky and discussed possibly changing boat house ordinances for Vilas Co. The change would be to increase the size of boathouses. Proposal includes a lake over 500 acres, a boathouse can be 720 square feet. Paul will share this information with Board. Currently boathouse ordinances are county by county. Anne suggests sending a letter to Vilas Co Zoning Dept opposing these changes, Paul agrees.

Dick discusses partnership between VCLRA, and Northwoods Land Trust based on where they own land. Include their new executive director to our communication and next meeting, etc.

Next Meeting: April 6, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. Tentative meeting place is Trout Lake Station.

Adjourn: 11:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Carol Warden, Acting Secretary