



PORTAGE COUNTY

LAND & WATER CONSERVATION MINUTES

ANNEX CONFERENCE ROOM 5
1462 STRONGS AVENUE
STEVENS POINT, WI 54481

TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2021
7:00 PM

1. REMOTE ATTENDANCE & COMMENT

To attend this meeting by telephone : dial 1-608-338-1399, after dialing the number you will then be asked to enter in a meeting number. Use the following meeting number: 441 771 437, then press #

To attend this meeting by video: go to [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Due to COVID-19 and the potential risk to members of the public who attend meetings in-person, any person who plans to attend the meeting remotely, but wishes to comment on an agenda item can send their comments via email to benedicp@co.portage.wi.us. The deadline for sending comments by email is 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting. Emailed comments will be delivered to committee members at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Remote comment by the public during the meeting will be at the discretion of the Chair.

Face coverings are required for in-person attendance unless an exemption applies.

2. CALL TO ORDER (7:00 PM)

Members Present: B. JACOWSKI, C. GUTH, G. ZASTROW, J. MORROW, M. JACOWSKI AND M. NEVILLE

In-Person Attendees – Staff - Steve Bradley, Patty Benedict; Asa Plonsky, Golden Sands RC&D; Pete Arntsen, Kyle Gordon, Kim Krupka

Remote Attendees: Staff – Jen McNelly, Tracy Arnold; Chris Holman, County Executive; Chris Hamala and Anna Cisar, Golden Sands RC&D; John Droske, Bob Conachen, Angel Stubinski, Gary Anderson, Jim McKnight, Tor Anderson, unidentified phone callers

B. Jacowski announced comments will not be taken from public attending remotely.

3. CLOSED SESSION

4. **21-2912** AT APPROXIMATELY 7:01 P.M. ADJOURN INTO CLOSED SESSION AS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 19.85(1)(C) OF THE WISCONSIN STATUTES TO DISCUSS PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTY CONSERVATIONIST
A motion was made by Member C. Guth, seconded by Member J. Morrow, to approve Adjourn into Closed Session. The motion carried by the following vote:
YES: 6 - B. JACOWSKI, C. GUTH, G. ZASTROW, J. MORROW, M. JACOWSKI AND M. NEVILLE

5. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

6. **21-2913** AT APPROXIMATELY 7:15 P.M. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION FOR ACTION ON ABOVE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Returned to Open Session at 7:45 p.m. No action taken.

A motion was made by Member M. Jacowski, seconded by Member C. Guth, to approve Return to Open Session. The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: 6 - B. JACOWSKI, C. GUTH, G. ZASTROW, J. MORROW, M. JACOWSKI AND M. NEVILLE



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7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

8. [21-2914](#) FEBRUARY 2, 2021 MINUTES

Documents: [02-02-21 LWCC DRAFT MINUTES.PDF](#)

A motion was made by Member M. Jacowski, seconded by Vice Chair G. Zastrow, to approve.
The motion carried by unanimous vote.

9. REPORTS

10. [21-2915](#) COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

- a. Lakes Management District - Neville - Neville attended a virtual meeting for Lake Helen on February 10. Items discussed were the budget and grants to cover weed harvesting. Their Annual Meeting is the first Saturday in June.
- b. Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) - Zastrow - No report.
- c. North Central Land & Water Conservation Association (NCLWCA) - Zastrow - The WI Land+Water Annual Conference runs Tuesday through Friday, March 2-5. Benedict announced Annika Waltenberg placed third in the State speaking contest.
- d. Central Wisconsin Windshed Partnership (CWWP) - B. Jacowski/Morrow-Alternate - The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 6.
- e. Portage County Drainage District - M. Jacowski/Morrow Alternate - M. Jacowski reported candidate interviews for Drainage District Commissioner are scheduled. At their March 11 meeting, the Agriculture and Extension Education Committee will make a recommendation of candidates to the Circuit Court Judges.
- f. Mill Creek Watershed - B. Jacowski/Zastrow-Alternate - No report.
- g. Little Plover River Workgroup (LPR) - M. Jacowski, Morrow, Zastrow - Bradley reported LWCD and Village of Plover staff met to discuss a succession plan for the Little Plover River Enhancement project. It is possible that the County may take over administration of the project.



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h. Farmer Led Councils - B. Jacowski/Zastrow-Alternate - Zastrow reported the Farmers for Tomorrow offered free nitrate testing at their meeting in February at the Jensen Center.

i. Central Sands Groundwater County Coalition (CSGCC) - Zastrow/M. Jacowski-Alternate - No report.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence presented.

12. PUBLIC NOTICE

Members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their request at this time, with such comments subject to the reasonable control of the Committee Chair as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order. B. Jacowski allowed in-person audience to speak on agenda items.

13. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING SPECIAL MEETINGS (PORTAGE COUNTY ORDINANCE 3.1.47 & 3.1.48)

- REQUEST FOR SPECIAL MEETING ATTENDANCE - No requests. B. Jacowski told members to contact him if a meeting comes up they want to attend.
- APPROVAL OF ATTENDANCE OF SPECIAL MEETINGS - Motion by M. Jacowski, second by Morrow to approve Neville attending the virtual Lake Helen District meeting on February 10.
- SPECIAL MEETING ATTENDANCE REPORTS - Given under Committee Representative Reports.

14. 21-2917 REVIEW VOUCHERS, PURCHASES, AND PROCUREMENT CARD CHARGES

Documents: [FEB VOUCHERS.PDF](#)

Vouchers, purchases, and procurement card charges were reviewed.

15. 21-2916 DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION - CENTRAL WISCONSIN INVASIVES PARTNERSHIP (CWIP) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Documents: [CWIP 2021 MEMBER INVITATION LETTER + MOU + SIGNATURE SHEET_.PDF](#), [CWIP 2020 ANNUAL REPORT.PDF](#)

Bradley reported the CWIP MOU was originally presented in March 2020. On the advice of Weed Commissioner John Eron, the LWCC requested bringing the MOU back after one year. Plonsky said the CWIP is a cooperative invasive species group serving central Wisconsin counties. She explained the goals



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and projects and encouraged the LWCC to consider becoming a member. Membership is free, has no legal obligations, and members may join or withdraw at any time. She said the MOU wording can be revised. Bradley was asked to contact John Eron for his opinion and have Corporation Counsel review the MOU.

A motion was made by Member M. Jacowski, seconded by Chair B. Jacowski, to lay over Action Until the April Meeting. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

16. **21-2939** **DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION - AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS) GRANT PROGRAM**

Bradley stated Golden Sand RC&D administers the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program for Portage and other Central Wisconsin counties. In the past, RC&D has applied for grant funding for the counties. The process has changed, and counties must apply for the AIS grant funding. Chris Hamerla, RC&D Regional AIS Coordinator, said the AIS program is funded through December 31, 2021. Going forward, he said \$13,955 is available for each county and RC&D has offered to be the dedicated agent. Hamerla and his teammate, Anna Cisar, would complete the deliverables for the grant. Hamerla said an agreement will be provided for LWCC review. The deadline to inform the DNR of intent to apply for grants is September 2 and November 1 is the final deadline.

A motion was made by Member M. Jacowski, seconded by Member C. Guth, to approve AIS grant application for 2022 and subsequent years, naming Golden Sands RC&D as the agent..

17. **GROUNDWATER ISSUES DISCUSSION**

18. **21-2919** **DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION - GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN APPENDIX A REVIEW**
Documents: [GMP APPENDIX A SUMMARY.PDF](#)

Zastrow proposed beginning on page 10, which deals with water quality issues. He believes the information will help evaluate and plan the next steps. McNelly reviewed activities and accomplishments under Objectives 2.1 through 2.2. Review will continue with Objective 2.3 at the April LWCC meeting. Zastrow requested having this item moved up in the agenda to allow more time for discussion. No action taken.

19. **NELSONVILLE GROUNDWATER SITUATION**

20. **21-2918** **DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION - MONITORING WELLS**
Documents: [SAND COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL ROI.PDF](#), [TETRA TECH VILLAGE OF NELSONVILLE ESTIMATES.PDF](#), [REI-NELSONVILLE MONITORING WELLS.PDF](#), [AECOM-VILLAGE OF NELSONVILLE.PDF](#)



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McNelly stated staff was asked to gather information and cost estimates for installation of monitoring wells upgradient and downgradient of the Village of Nelsonville. She referred to the memo in meeting packets which explained the goals and information for local engineering firms to include in proposals. All of the engineering firms replied and submitted proposals, which are included in the meeting packets. The UWSP Center for Watershed Science declined to submit a proposal. McNelly said costs varied, in part depending on the number, type, and depth of wells. Additional costs may include contracting with well drillers, frequency of sampling, lab analysis, and fees for the engineering firm's services. McNelly said the goals were fairly broad and feels further discussion is needed to determine specifically what the LWCC wants to accomplish with the monitoring wells before making a final decision. M. Jacowski asked to have the information summarized in a spreadsheet. McNelly will provide a spreadsheet for the next meeting. M. Jacowski feels the costs for monitoring and testing are high and asked whether that is something that could be done by staff. McNelly replied that would have to be worked out with the engineering firm. She added she will go through the proposals and try to determine the types of tests. Herbicide and pesticide testing on a regular basis can increase costs.

From this point forward in the meeting the minutes were requested to be verbatim. (Portions of the audio cut in and out and some portions were inaudible.)

Morrow: Could I make a comment?

B. Jacowski: Oh, go ahead Julie.

Morrow: I was just, this is so much more expensive than I thought it would be too. And, I wonder if maybe once we narrowed it down and we got our amount, it might be worthwhile discussing it with the Village of Nelsonville residents. Is this what they want, or would they rather try to look for a more specific answer, like a fund of money that could help somebody put in a better well, or a better, or a filtration system. It might actually solve the problem of these residents. Instead, we've kind of, what we've been doing for years, which is this continued testing. And, the numbers are bad. We test again. The numbers are bad. I mean, we could spend a lot of money just on monitoring and all we're going to be doing is watching the numbers either



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stay the same, get worse, get little better. But we're not really solving anything. Maybe they'd rather have help, you know, with newer wells or things like that.

M. Jacowski: And in Mr. Gordon, Mr. Jay Gordon's letter here, I think he kind of alluded to that a little bit.

B. Jacowski: At this time, Patty could...

Morrow: Yup.

B. Jacowski: And thank you Julie. I think we've all had that in the back of our mind as well as we read through these proposals. At this time, I would ask to task Patty into reading, uh, Jay Gordon's letter into the record. Before, the hour is getting late and I'm thinking of, uh...

Benedict: I'll try to read fast.

Neville: Can I ask a question about that?

B. Jacowski: Certainly, go ahead.

Neville: If something is turned in, so it doesn't get, um put out. I mean, couldn't this have been attached to the packet when it came in? I don't mean, the packet had gone out, but couldn't it have been put online?

Benedict: It, it was. I did put it...

Neville: So, so why does it need to be read...

Benedict: ...as an additional document.

Neville: ...if it was online? I guess that's my question, why do we...

M. Jacowski: And, and I guess I've done this in other, I guess you could speak Chair, sorry. I've done...

B. Jacowski: Go ahead.



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M. Jacowski: I thought you could speak (inaudible). Um, and, and I guess, my thing Mildred, I've done this in other committees. If I would get correspondence, like this, since we don't allow public comment...

Neville: Yup.

M. Jacowski: Or public comments, (inaudible) I consider this a public comment. So, if this person was here, they could speak their piece. And I've had it read in in other committees, just for the fact that they aren't here, they're replacing their, their opportunity to come and do public comment with a letter. It's a little different times, and that's, that's the way I, I felt about it.

B. Jacowski: And Mildred, if you feel uncomfortable about it, we don't have to.

Neville: Well, it, it just seemed to me that it might...

B. Jacowski: Well, if, if, if you feel uncomfortable about it, all you have to do is say so.

M. Jacowski: And I guess I would just ask that it, that it be put, um, on rec, on file with the, with the minutes. It doesn't have to be read in, but put on file with the minutes. And, I guess it's on file with the, the agenda, so it's on file already, so, and that's fine. I've just done in other committees that, because yeah, they have 48 hours prior to, to send a comment in. I read that as public comment, just like they were there saying something about it.

Guth: Is it for the benefit of the other people here that don't have a copy?

B. Jacowski: Mildred seems to be uncomfortable with it, so...

Neville: Well, well, let me finish what I was going to say.

B. Jacowski: Please go ahead.

Neville: It, it would seem to me that if, things like this, if we read them in, that we could start getting large numbers of things at the last minute that didn't get read in, in, so that was my reason for raising that and asking the



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question. I haven't, um, experiences in the committee, of course, so I'm asking the question.

M. Jacowski: And I guess Mr. Chair I would, I would suggest that we encourage anybody that's listening that would like to see it, or that's here in person, that would like to see it that it is on the County website under tonight's agenda. Um, so it is documented if they would like to take a look at it. And we'll save the time.

B. Jacowski: Certainly.

M. Jacowski: And, and again I can see it become a problem if we end up getting 50 letters we'd take our whole meeting up reading letters into the thing.

B. Jacowski: You bring up a very valid point.

M. Jacowski: And, I think that's what Mildred was worrying about, so she brought up a good point.

B. Jacowski: And thanks for...

Zastrow: Mr. Chair.

B. Jacowski: Uh, go ahead Supervisor Zastrow.

Zastrow: Thank you. Um, I'd like to respond to uh, um, Supervisor Morrow's, um, um, note asking the people of, of Nelsonville. Uh, you know, that's one thing to do, but, you know, say they were to find funding to drill deeper wells, and you know make the problem go away. Well, we got around it. They're getting water, but potentially the problem still exists then and, uh, could rear it's ugly head again down the road somewhere sometime. You know, I, I think we're looking here to uh, fix...

Morrow: We, we, okay, when we do that though, there is no specific request. They're saying the water has a problem, but, I feel like spending years and years endlessly having the same discussion. We do the testing, and we repeat it and repeat it and we go on and on, and I just wonder if, like, if this is an endless series of testing, (inaudible) do we need this? What would



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we need to be able to live where you live and have safer water. And, maybe we look at more like solutions based, because we keep going round and round with all this testing. But, you know (inaudible) well, who's responsible, well it's not just me, it's him. And I just think the source problem is so complicated and it's on a higher level than the county. Where maybe locally, we can just start trying to help people. Because in five years, we've been sitting here. All we've done is test and we've done nothing to make anything better.

Zastrow: Well, and I agree with you Julie. Thank you for that. Um...

B. Jacowski: And Supervi... Supervisor Zastrow, I don't think Julie is only referring to a well. It may be a treatment system, or again, and as she reinstated, something to improve people's water. It doesn't necessarily have to be a new well. But to improve their water quality.

Zastrow: Understood. Um, but, my point still being is you know we, yes Julie, they've run numbers of testing. You and I are both, you know, been on this for five years and we're tired of it. And, I'd like to see, um, some, to come to some resolution. But, we've never done this kind of testing. We've only done testing of individual wells. And, I, if we can locate the source, direction, and everything (inaudible) it's potential that we could eliminate this for good, not just on a temporary basis with uh, whatever kind of um, filtration or deeper wells or whatever. So, I'm, I'm, what you're saying, I agree with is an option, certainly. But I think we need to go and follow through with this once and for all and find out (inaudible) testing like this that we have not done before.

Morrow: But we're never, we never have come up with a number. Nobody ever says, okay, Gordondale Farms needs to reduce their nitrogen output, their (inaudible) in the whole operation by 30%, 35%. The farms that, other farms surrounding, they need to decrease their output of nitrogen, um, contamination by 20%. We never reach any conclusion where we have a specific ask where we are requesting that they do this. We could direct the money to that. We could say, here, we will compensate you X dollars if you would reduce to this level. All these years have gone by and we have never come up with a number, with a request, with some direct action, even a legal action to try and stop something. We just have this endless back and forth



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and I just think that that's some of the hostilities that we never can move one step forward.

Zastrow: No, but I believe this testing would, would give us the answers we want to know. We're not going to be (inaudible) anymore that uh, we'll be able to trace things down to a pretty uh, accurate, precise uh, place. And, and that's what we're after here, I think. And then we can deal with it at that point as to what we do. But we, we have to find out the source of all of this and whatever it may be, these would do that for us. And I think it's the right way to go.

McNelly: So, I just, I have a couple of points that I would like to point out. So, um, the, Julie had pointed out the numbers from, from either fields or farms or even just a general area. That kind of speaks back to the nitrogen budget um, and the nitrogen budgeting process that Kevin had talked about um, and what that looks like. Um, especially for uh, on a more specific area. So, if that's, if that's something that, you know, that this committee wants or is interested in, that might be the more appropriate route to go. Or, in addition to um, the monitoring wells, as well. You know, that was something that you had talked about beginning and it kind of got put off for uh, uh, various reasons. But that's something that would, that could come back and be brought up again. Um, and then, Gerry, you had mentioned finding specific sources and you were hoping that the monitoring wells would tell us a specific source? Am I, am I accurate in that?

Zastrow: Uh, yes.

McNelly: Okay, so you are hoping that these monitoring wells would, would point to a specific source of elevated nitrates within the Village of Nelsonville.

Zastrow: It's something that everybody has wanted to know for the five years that Julie and I have been on this committee, and uh, uh, let's finally get an answer. We're not going to get that answer if we don't do these testing wells.

McNelly: So, when you say the specific source, and you say, like down to a specific field or farm? Or are you saying, like a general land use that's contributing to this?



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Morrow: I think everybody wants to know if and how much Gordondale Farms is contributing to their problem. I think the hostility is extremely focused.

Zastrow: And, these will prove that, one way or another. And I think everybody's up for that.

McNelly: Okay. I, I have a couple, I have a couple of issues with that. First of all, so, it would be very hard in, in tracking down a nitrate issue to pinpoint it to a specific farm. Because within that watershed area there are multiple farms. And there is agricultural land for a pretty far extent. So, trying to say, it is this specific farm, is going to be virtually impossible, especially when it comes to something like nitrate/nitrogen. Which is part of the difficulty in solving this problem. Um, so that just, that becomes very complicated when you're trying to do that. And, I think we also were talking, you know we're talking in this specific area, with this specific farm and part of the issue it's just that, it's finger pointing against a specific farm. And, I realize that it's, you know, a vast majority of the farmland in that issue, but, you know, we have to look at this as kind of, it's not just one farm. You know, I guess is, is the point I want to make. Um, there is more than one farm in, within that watershed. And, if we're talking, you know, what is the land use that is contributing to this, well, we did the water quality sampling and I think that water quality sampling was, was pretty definitive in showing that, you know, we have a, a large percentage of agricultural land use within that contributing watershed to the Village of Nelsonville. We see a lot of um, associated pesticides and fertilizers that are associated with that land use and it's not, it's not pointing fingers, it's just what it is. And given the soils, and the, and the farming practices, you know, I think it's pretty definitive that that's where a majority of the nitrates within that watershed are coming from. Um, and I think, I, I do think that that work was kind of already been showing that. So, if that's what we're trying to answer, you know, I guess the discussion is, do we need further water testing?

Zastrow: Um, you know, I, I, well, what, what water testing have, what, what have we done? Have we done uh anything this extensive before anywhere in Portage County? I don't believe so. So that, could this give us answers that the sampling of wells, individual wells has, has given us. Would this give us more?



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McNelly: It would give us potentially some additional information in terms of uh, the multiple depths the varying depths and what those concentrations look like at the varying depths. Um, that, it could help answer the question, if there is a potential well casing recommendation for the folks within the Village where we see those nitrate concentrations, uh, dip below. It's also another opportunity, I mean the Village, in that interim between our sampling has stepped up and done pretty routine sampling. It is another opportunity to establish, you know, uh, a steady baseline of data for the trend analysis um, in that type of work. So, so there are additional benefits with this, with these monitoring wells. I, I will agree to that, yeah, absolutely.

Zastrow: Cause, if we're testing at different depths, we'd be able to determine where this, or the uh, contaminated water is coming from by finding out what depth it's at and you know how fast it typically travels in groundwater. And, uh, so that, that can give us a lot of information.

Morrow: So, what value does that information have Gerry? The nitrates are high. The water isn't safe. We could spend half a million dollars in three or four years testing it, while a six year old becomes nine years old and spent another three years of their life being exposed to bad water.

Zastrow: Ok, but what about, what about that nine year old grows up and has kids and lives in Nelsonville and the problem still exists.

Morrow: Ok, but are you...

Zastrow: We didn't do anything to try to fix it.

Morrow: Are you going to be able though, to stop all ag? So what Jen is saying is, you're never going to be able to link it to one. Are you going to be able to stop all agriculture there forever and get the wells back to normal, or do you have to accept the fact that you live in an ag community and that you have to (inaudible) your water.

Zastrow: Well, I think we all agreed from the beginning that we weren't out looking to put an end to ag. That wasn't our intent and it still isn't.

Morrow: (Inaudible) ...get the nitrates down?



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Zastrow: I guess that's what we're trying to determine, is what is a better solution and uh, you're offering one and I'm, I'm, I'm agreeing that that's an, an option, but I'm thinking the well testing is, in my opinion, would be a better option.

Morrow: But it's an academic exercise (inaudible).

B. Jacowski: He keeps going (inaudible)

M. Jacowski: Yeah, yeah, he keeps pointing a finger, but says he's not after ag. He's after ag.

Neville: Hey.

Zastrow: Who's after ag?

M. Jacowski: You are Gerry. You said right in that, we've got, we've got to find the, pinpoint this down, which farm's doing it. You just kept saying, farm doing it, farm doing it, farm doing it. You're after ag and don't lie to me.

Zastrow: I, I, I don't, well, is it obvious where it's coming from? I believe so, yeah. It's actually been shown and proven that by, by uh George Kraft and others said. So that I'm, I'm, I, I disagree with you. I'm not headhunting over here by any stretch. I want the problem solved, because all we've done is let it keep rolling on and rolling on forever here.

Neville: I would like to say something.

B. Jacowski: Go ahead Mildred.

Neville: That's about, sitting here in the room, and as they were talking, and you were making comments, he is after ag, he is after ag. That's not how I think we should be conducting the meeting. I mean, this is not, it's not some kind of two-sided thing. It's about water quality in Portage County. It's about the quality of our water. And, I don't think making it into a two-sided thing, it helps, especially on our committee.

B. Jacowski: You're absolutely right Mildred.



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Neville: And I, and I guess, as Chairman, do you feel it is a two-sided thing? I'd like to ask you that question, because I got that impression.

B. Jacowski: Thank you Supervisor Neville.

Neville: You're not going to answer my question?

B. Jacowski: No.

Neville: Okay.

B. Jacowski: The hour is late, I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

Guth: I'll so move.

M. Jacowski: I'll second.

B. Jacowski: All in favor signify by, any further, no, all in favor signify by saying aye.

Multiple voices: Aye.

B. Jacowski: Good night everybody.

21. NEXT MEETING DATE

No date set.

22. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

23. NOTICES

Notice: Any person who has special needs planning on attending this meeting in-person or remotely should contact Facilities Office at 715-346-1598 as soon as possible to ensure that reasonable accommodations can be made.

Notice: A quorum of the Portage County Board of Supervisors, or any committee thereof, may be present at this meeting.