

MINUTES
ARPRD Annual Business Meeting
Amery City Hall, Amery, WI
10:00 a.m. on August 17, 2024

1. Chairman Roland Peterson welcomed ARPRD residents, called the meeting to order and set the agenda. Roland introduced Fran Duncanson, the new City of Amery representative.
2. The official notice of the meeting and agenda was posted twice in the Amery Free Press, and the agenda and proposed budget were mailed out and posted on the arprd.org website. The meeting notice was also in the Summer 2023 ARPRD Newsletter, which is on the arprd.org website.
3. It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting.
4. It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Treasurer's Report. As of August 17, 2024, there is a balance of \$21,156. Income to date is \$74,639.70. Expenses to date are \$54,483.48. Carryover from 2023 was \$12,333.
5. It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Audit Committee Report from January 1-July 31, 2024, provided by Derrick Carlson, which indicated everything balanced. The Committee reviews the bank statements, spreadsheets, and register if needed. The Treasurer has a copy of the report signed by all audit committee members.
6. Reports were provided:
 - a. The weed harvesting report was provided by Harvesting Operations Manager Dave Schleusner. The Curly-leaf pondweed this year is the worst ever. On April 8th Dave pulled the old harvester from the shed and did maintenance work for two weeks. He made repairs, changed the oil, and serviced the total machine. On April 16th he pulled the new harvester out, changed the oil, and serviced it to make it water ready. Both trucks were serviced, including changing the oil, and putting on two new tires. Dave also put a new bearing in the elevator used for loading on the north end. Dave put the old harvester in the north end on May 6th and started harvesting. There was heavy Coontail all over. On May 8th the new harvester was put in at the Lincoln Landing. To date, there have been 710 loads. There has been a lot of wear on the equipment. The largest expense for repair was \$2,433.55 for a used rebuilt GPS for the harvester. It is guaranteed for three years. Dave has sent the old GPS in but has not yet heard back. The old GPS is fourteen years old, and the rebuilt GPS is three years old. In July Dave had to put in new brakes on the trailer. A new drive motor will soon be needed, and that will be about \$800. The one on the old machine is still working. The larger harvester has 499 loads for the season to date, with 4,740,000 pounds and 58,025 cubic feet. It just had two new sensors put in and needs a glow plug. Most equipment is in really good shape. A hydraulic oil change will be needed soon. It uses vegetable grade oil. The last hydraulic oil change was \$800 however Dave expects the upcoming one to be at least twice that. The smaller harvester has had 211 loads this year, with 947,179 pounds and 58,025 cubic feet. The DNR requires all harvesting to be mapped, and Dave does that at the end of every day. The water was very low this last week, especially North by Larsons to the Lincoln Landing. It was down almost two feet Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Dave has called multiple times regarding the dam but has not heard back yet. If the water level needs to be lowered Dave should be notified so they will not harvest during that time and risk getting stuck. Dave usually starts at dawn when there is no wind. In Milwaukee two men operating a harvester were killed when a heavy wind blew over a harvester. Inland sent an e mail notifying harvester operators to get off the water if there are wind gusts of fifteen miles per hour or greater. Dave tells the harvester operators to go to the first shore if conditions are unsafe. Dave has six crew members. Dave does not charge for the washing, waxing, and maintenance work he does. Whoever does this work after Dave retires may not do this work for free. Dave also helps other lakes. This year Balsam Lake spent \$100,000 on spraying. Balsam lake had been doing some dredging but that was shut down by the DNR. The DNR added a new sign at the landing entry, showing that the county requires

boats to be cleaned. Dave refills the cleaning solution every morning; it is being used. Very little bleach is needed, and it will not damage boats. The expenses for CBCW inspections this year were \$2,497 and the grant covered \$2,200. If boaters do not follow the rules the first time, they can be fined \$397 and the second time they can be fined \$587. Violations must be documented on camera. Currently, we have not seen Zebra mussels in the flowage. It was reported that a sheriff was out on the water on Deer Lake, dropped in an anchor, and when he pulled it up it was filled with Zebra mussels. Dave learned that Nelson Lake in Hayward does a drawdown every fall, 20 feet per side. They lose some fish, but it really helps with the weed growth. The DNR will not allow us to do a drawdown due to the hydroelectric dam downriver. It is possible this will change if there are enough new solar panels put into place that the need for power from the dam is decreased. In the spring Dave was working 11-12 hours per day. The dock at Lincoln Landing is in terrible shape and a new one is needed; talk to Jay Luke. They are building a new sewer plant adjacent to the old one, right on the river, which may have been why the water needed to be lowered. Possibly cement needed to be poured. Fran may follow to request that Dave be notified if the river level needs to be lowered again. Roland discussed the Aquatic Management Plan. The DNR will never allow any chemicals; harvesting is our only option.

- b. Dave Schleusner read a report from Isaac Wiczorek about the CBCW grant, which involves checking boats and monitoring at the Lincoln Landing to help prevent aquatic invasive species spread. They had another successful summer of boat watching. As of July 31st they had contacted 79 boats and talked to 153 people. Updated numbers as of mid-August are over 90 boats and almost 200 people. A big thanks to Allie and Aiden Schleusner for completing the 200 hours needed to keep the grant. Also thank you to everyone who donated time to keep the river clean. The boat washing stations implemented this summer at Lincoln Landing and in town have been a success so far. Thank you to those setting a good example and cleaning their boats properly. As of this summer, there are still no zebra mussels in the Apple River Flowage and no new invasive species. Dave stated that the CBCW inspectors are very polite when speaking with boaters and can ask but not enforce. There was a Lake and River Organization meeting at which a Polk County Sherriff's Department representative emphasized remind people only do not try to enforce. On a landing somewhere there was an assault related to CBCW. Clear evidence on camera is needed to report any violations.
- c. Tom Sheffel reported on the Apple River Flowage Water Quality. Quality started out a little down but has been improving almost a foot per month. The bad initial report was due to the heavy rain and unusual winter conditions. The DNR has a question about perceptions that Tom must answer each year. Tom plans on sending out a perception questionnaire for residents to answer, or possibly post the question at arprd.org so he can see what other residents perceive. There has been a massive increase in kayaks on the river. Twelve to thirteen years ago the water quality was consistently around two, now it is five and a half to six. With the weeds being harvested, the water can flow better, keeping the channel cleaner.
- d. Derrick Carlson gave the Aquatic Invasive Species report. He has taken 48 samples so far this year. He goes to different sites and uses a strainer to get the samples. To date he has found only the species we already know are in the flowage; Curly-leaf pondweed, Banded Mystery Snails, Chinese Mystery Snails and Rusty Crayfish. Eurasian Milfoil and Zebra Mussels are what Derrick is particularly watching out. Claspig-Leaf Pondweed has been really high this year but is a native species. Coontail is ferocious this year. Derrick has not seen any Eurasian Milfoil or Zebra Mussels. Milfoil would be very difficult to combat in moving water. We would need to report it to the DNR and see what the protocol would be. South Twin has been dealing with it for the last two years. The protocol is different for a river than it is for a lake. Barricades and chemicals would not work. Zebra Mussels damage boats and motors if left in the water, and will climb up docks, boats, motors... There was one place where some buoys had been pulled out of the water for the winter and put in a garage. There must have been Zebra Mussels on the

buoys, and they somehow climbed all the way from the buoys and up into the soda machine. Derrick keeps a brick in the water and looks at pulled docks to check for Zebra Mussels. Check your own dock when pulling it from the water.

- e. Chairman Roland Peterson stated that the Apple River Flowage is unlike nearby lakes in that we have 111,000 acres of watershed. If the weeds are not removed, they would continue to release nutrients when they die, leading to more weed growth.
7. The action items were as follows:
- a. By unanimous ballot, Billie Jo Schleusner was elected as Treasurer for the ARPRD Board of Commissioners term for 2025, 2026 and 2027.
 - b. It was moved, seconded, and carried to submit a grant application to the DNR for the 2025 Clean Boats Clean Water Project.
 - c. It was moved, seconded, and carried to submit a grant application to the DNR for the mechanical harvesting of weeds in 2025.
 - d. It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the proposed 2025 Budget including the \$10,000 tax increase adopted in 2022 with the provision that it be reviewed annually.
 - e. After much discussion, and with one objection, the proposed \$10,000 tax levy increase to be effective 2026 was moved, seconded, and carried. Fran Duncanson had spoken with the assessor, clerk, chair, and treasurer from the Town of Lincoln. The Town is reevaluating property values and an average increase of 48% is expected. Assessments in Wisconsin are driven by sales prices, and a hot real estate market leads to an increase in values. Other factors such as the condition of the home can also impact the value. Fran provided a handout showing what the additional levy amount might be based on the property value of your home. A 48% increase in property value does not mean that your taxes will automatically go up 48%. And the \$10,000 tax levy increase is a flat dollar amount, divided up among all the ARPRD special tax district residents, not a percentage increase for everyone. Carryover from this year was estimated to be only \$1,212.67. This amount leaves very little margin for repairs and other contingencies. Also, if funds run out harvesting would end, even if it was only July. ARPRD harvester operators currently earn \$16 per hour but on other nearby lakes harvesters get as much as \$23 per hour. Skilled harvesters are needed, not volunteers. Dave Schleusner does a lot of work at no cost already. It would be good if we could eventually acquire our own place to store equipment, which does need to be kept inside. We are currently renting storage for \$1100 a year, but that property is going up for sale. When the harvester is fully paid Dave may try to get someone to contribute some land so ARPRD can build a shed to hold all the equipment. One resident asked if the city contributes since they also get the benefit of a cleaner river. City of Amery residents within the ARPRD special tax district do pay the tax, not just Town of Lincoln residents. The resident also asked if we could wait for the new tax assessments to be available prior to voting on the new \$10,000 levy. However, there are time limits for requesting the levy, and if we waited the levy might not become effective until 2027. And an additional meeting would also need to be called.
8. One concern was some junk docks in the river. Should the City require them to be taken out? Another concern is that some persons who are not residents may have put in docks and not be paying property taxes. If any of the docks are on public land they should not be there, and if they are on private land taxes are being paid by someone. Dave and Fran will investigate this issue further.
9. Another resident asked if we could have a camera at the landing and start requesting fees like they do at some other landings. Maybe offer yearly stickers, and one-time launch fees. One concern is having the camera and/or the fee box stolen. When good quality brushes were used for the cleaning stations they were promptly stolen. This request could be brought up at a Lincoln town meeting. The next one is the second Wednesday of September. City of Amery meetings are the first Wednesday of every month. The ARPRD board may hold an additional meeting this year to discuss launch fees.

10. Tom Sheffel asked if there is still a grant for planting gardens? The gardens are a shoreline buffer of ten feet from the water. Many homes especially some of the newer ones have bluegrass running down to the shoreline, which can allow fertilizer to run off into the water. 27 gardens were previously established. Tom is willing to run a new gardens project, and Fran will help him with grant requests.
11. Roland Peterson thanked all who have helped the ARPRD, including the Weed Harvesting Operation Team, the Clean Boats Clean Waters Inspection Team, other board members, and the ARPRD residents for their continuing support. It is a very concerning time with invasive species in lakes all around us.
12. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kitty Miller, Secretary