

GrassWorks board meeting  
5/7/2015  
Schmeeckle Reserve, Stevens Point

Board members present: Kevin Mahalko, Cheyenne Christianson, Laura Paine, Julie Engel, Wally Sedlar, Dave Heidel; Larry Smith, Andy Jaworski, Peter Arnold  
Absent: Dave Vetrano

GrassWorks staff: Jill Hapner, Heather Flashinski

Advisors: George Reistad, MFAI; Brian Pillsbury, NRCS; Jerold Berg; Vance Haugen (UWEX); Paul Daigle, Marathon County LCD

Agenda/Minutes

Call to order at 10:15 am.

Review and approve minutes from March 7, 2015  
Wally/Dave H. motion passed

### **Financial report**

Grant report (see notes).

\$1196 in the FCDC grant from OV. Used these funds for display and brochures. Have about \$300 left for conference exhibitor fees.

\$1500+ in CROPP gift for Grazing Ambassador grant.

NSAC SIG grant in cooperation with MFAI. Assessment of CSP in WI. Working on finalizing the report. \$204.86 remaining.

GrassWorks has about \$69,848.76 in assets including \$2937.37 in restricted funds from a grant. The GrassWorks foundation fund has a balance of \$14,341.00

Motion to accept: Cheyenne/Julie. Motion carried.

### **Executive Director report**

We have an application in to OV for about \$10,000 for grazing sticks.

United Natural Foods, Inc. a distributor of natural and organic foods has a grant program. They fund operating expenses. Submitted grant for \$10,000.

ClifBar foundation: \$10,000. Farm Aid: \$10,000 both to support the Grazing Ambassador program.

SARE PDP grant proposal: \$75,000

NRCS Grazing Technical Assistance; \$293,250 per year for 3 years. 12% for Marathon County. 1% for GrassWorks administration. Some \$\$ for the conference. See proposal for details. About 70% of the plans will be EQIP plans. Marathon County will administer the program. They will review plans and pay grazing specialists, then submit the plans to NRCS for payment.

GrassWorks will be subcontracting with Marathon County to do the administration.

Grazing ambassadors: Three talks by grazing ambassadors to date this year and two more scheduled so far.

Still phasing out Lanice's duties. She is still doing some website stuff.

Website: Jill has been trying to post materials on the calendar pages. She is working with the website administrator to work out the bugs. She has put in a grant to update the website.

Looking for someone to be the social media volunteer. Laura asked George if he knows someone who could volunteer to do the work. George said that he has found communications interns through the Life Sciences communications department at UW. He will look into it.

Dan Olsen's farm day is now on June 27th. This is the general public event. Wally and Andy will lead pasture walks. Jerold and Dave will bring the GrassWorks display.

GrassWorks now has 84 members. Jill's goal is to have at least 100 members.

Motion to approve ED report Andy/Dave H. Motion carried.

### **2016 Grazing Conference.**

Discussion was held regarding the sponsor presentations at the 2015 conference. There were some negative comments about the presentations being too long and being too much of a sales pitch. Sponsors paid \$2000 for a 5 minute presentation. The Board suggested that it be continued, but need to be specific about time limit (maybe 2 minutes instead of 5 minutes) and maybe be able to preview what the sponsor is going to present. Heather might want to emphasize with the sponsors that the audience is interested in hearing from people who are supportive of the conference and the organization. Should emphasize both at the conference and in the program that the sponsors keep attendee costs down.

Heather: Question: should there be a keynote speaker at each meal, or have one meal with no keynote and have it be a networking time? Board thought that we liked the keynotes at each meal, but maybe cut it down to 30 minutes instead of 45 min.

Auctioneer: need to find an auctioneer who understands GrassWorks and stirs people up and gets people to buy. Jerold knows the auctioneer that was at the conference a few years ago who was very good. We might want to check with him again.

Brian: have the banquet and auction be a separate event where donors and others could come to that and have it be a fundraiser beyond conference attendees. There may not be room in the banquet facility to bring in additional people. Heather and the planning team will look into this.

2016 Conference. Brian writing a letter to Jimmy Bramblett to request that we have Ray Archuletta as a speaker.

Chula Vista contracted January 14-16, 2016. NSAC SIG grant could help fund the speakers. Conference committee Wally, Laura, Theresa, Jim Quick, others? One main theme might be Silvopasture. Heather is looking for speaker and topic suggestions. Heather is very interested in having the conference promoted through Facebook and Twitter.

Does GrassWorks want to think in terms of starting to think about doing an RFP for 2017? If we go out farther in advance, we will have to commit some \$\$ but there will be more choices and more flexibility on dates, etc.

Heather is in contact with Grassfed Exchange for speaker ideas. Is there a conference for dairy grazing that she should be working with? Dairy Farmers of America does a big conference in Missouri or somewhere else? Ohio and Pennsylvania have grazing conferences. Laura suggested that Heather talk to Joel McNair about speaker possibilities.

Kevin suggested that board members keep potential sponsorships in mind as they go to field days and events over the summer (e.g. Farm Tech Days, etc.). Let Heather know if you have any ideas for sponsors and trade show participants.

Conference budget: Heather shared her draft budget for the 2016 conference. Proposed budget is \$66,300. Income projected at \$68,000. This is a budget without any grants. There may be some grants coming in to help cover some of the costs. Motion to approve the conference budget: Larry/Andy. Motion carried.

**Grazing Advocate award.** Randy Cutler has been recommended, but Heather asked if we should honor Mike Rogan (grazing farmer who died recently in a car accident). Arnies Farm Care was the company he ran. No one was sure whether the company will continue without him. Historically, his company has had a booth at the conference and/or donated things for the auction.

Motion for GrassWorks to donate \$100 to the foundation that has been set up for Mike Rogan's family. Wally/Peter. Motion carried. Julie will take care of this.

### **Spring newsletter**

Julie has been working on the spring newsletter. This goes into Graze Magazine. Power mail is sent out to 550 email addresses. About 35% of the power mails get read and clicked on. The newsletter deadline is May 15th. Julies ideas for topics: review the conference (including costs and why registration is what it is), talk about our other programs like the grazing ambassador program. Julie is looking for topics and suggestions from people.

### **Meadow fescue update**

Larry Smith gave the group an update on Hidden Valley Meadow Fescue. He is working with Bryon Seed who has offered \$0.25 per pound. Vance knows growers in northern Minnesota that will produce the seed for us.

Motion for GrassWorks to request a written agreement from Byron's with a deadline of May 28, 2015. During that time, Vance will persue other options. Wally/Dave H. Motion carried.

### **Ag Coalition update**

Kevin and Julie updated the group on Ag Coalition business. Primary topics were primarily related to budget changes. One topic was related to the Governor's proposal to shift the Veterinary Diagnostic lab from UW to DATCP. Most of the affected farmer groups oppose this change.

Laura Paine left meeting at 2:10 P.M.

### **2015 annual GrassWorks picnic**

Kevin will host the annual picnic which will be held on June 26 or July 1. Kevin will check his schedule and send an email with the date and time. Julie will include that information in the Spring GrassWorks Graze Newsletter.

### **Other business**

NSAC update from George Reistad. The value of being a member of NSAC. NSAC is a lobbying group. Being a member of NSAC gives GrassWorks access to federal policy makers. George gave examples of how NSAC has influenced policies to benefit WI conservation goals. NSAC annual meeting is in Iowa City on August 3-5 this year. GrassWorks reps should try to attend. Kevin expressed interest in attending. Can GrassWorks help cover travel expenses?

Motion to allocate funding for mileage and registration for a GrassWorks board member to attend the 2015 NSAC conference. Julie/Larry. Motion carried.

Next 2015 board meeting dates: Thursday, 9/24 and Tuesday 11/17. Schmeckle Reserve

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn: Dave H., Julie. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:38 p.m.