

1000 ISLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

1000 ISLANDS COMMITTEE

City of Kaukauna
Nature Center Building
1000 Beaulieu Court, Kaukauna



Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 6:30 PM

MINUTES

Members Present West, White, Breitzman, Eggleston, Manion, Pautz, Jakel, and VanBerkel

Not Present Rumbuc, Timmons, and Hietpas

Also Present Brad Garrity and Cassie Kohls,

White called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM. A quorum was present.

Public Appearances Evan Jahnke (Eagle Scout – Kaukauna Troop 104)

Manion made a motion to move Item 11 up on the agenda and proceed out of order. VanBerkel seconded. Motion carried.

Jahnke presented his Eagle Scout project to build a staircase at Konkapot Creek for safer crayfishing access. The design includes a shore platform on swamp pans, similar to the boardwalk, with steps to the streambank. A fallen tree will protect the structure from debris. The platform will sit above the ordinary high-water mark, requiring no DNR, state, or federal permits.

Jahnke raised \$1,300 through troop members, GoFundMe, Friends of Scouting, and Friends of 1000 Islands. Estimated cost: \$1,000–\$2,000; leftover funds will be donated to 1000 Islands. Jakel praised the handrails; West asked if the project would keep the streambank from eroding into the creek—Jahnke confirmed. Garrity noted the plan improved accessibility and eliminated a large step down to access the creek.

Eggleston asked about timing to construct the project; Jahnke estimated 1–2 days in spring with help from Scouts and a woodworker friend.

Berge suggested adding non-slip stair strips. Neumeier raised concerns about logs floating in the river causing damage to the project; Jahnke said the existing fallen tree will act as a barrier. VanBerkel questioned spring high water impact; Garrity clarified only steps will be below shoreline and advised the project to be constructed to allow water to flow. Neumeier asked about future shoreline restoration—and noting this project may be relocated if needed. Committee thanked Jahnke; Garrity will follow up on next steps.

September 18, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes

Manion motioned to approve, seconded by Eggleston. Motion carried.

September Financial Report

VanBerkel asked whether restricted funds are under the Committee's authority or if the City can reallocate them. He suggested including the Donation Report within the Financial Report, then moved to approve the meeting minutes. Breitzman seconded. Motion carried.

October Financial Report

The Committee discussed the donation funds moved to the Community Foundation Endowment. Jakel motion to approve, seconded by VanBerkel. Motion carried.

VanBerkel asked whether restricted funds are under the Committee's authority or if the City can reallocate them. He suggested including the Donation Report within the Financial Report, then moved to approve the meeting minutes. Breitzman seconded. Motion carried.

Correspondence

A thank you card from Penni Pautz was shared with the Committee.

Friends of 1000 Islands Report

Garrity, absent from the previous Friends meeting, summarized prior topics from the October Friends meeting. Friends is developing guidance for administering the bus subsidy program, which will now include all schools, with priority for Kaukauna. Their 2026 budget will include a \$5,000 donation to support 1000 Islands, decreasing in future years. Friends will serve as a fundraising arm for 1000 Islands, while the City covers operating costs. Friends will also sponsor the National Eagle Center's program for Eagle Days on January 31, 2026.

September Naturalist Report

Garrity reported Lilah, a co-op student from Kaukauna High School (KHS) AP Environmental Science, has assisted with various tasks at 1000 Islands. The papermaking drop-in program led by KHS students drew 40 participants and was a success. Attendance for the Grounded and Resilient wellness-in-nature program has grown from 2 to 10, with both men and women participating. The fall goat program was also successful; Garrity thanked the Goat Team and discussed future goals, team support, and recruitment. Steve Keller's memorial was held at the Nature Center.

October Naturalist Report

Jayden, a KHS Job Exploration student, has been helping with various tasks at the Nature Center. Randee Mooney earned Eagle Scout rank. Volunteer and Friends member Deb Searfoss joined, bringing experience as a former Bubolz Naturalist. Staff attended a team-building event at Maribel Caves followed by lunch. Garrity appeared on the *In the Know 920* podcast. The 1000 Islands website is now integrated with the City's site, featuring fillable field trip forms. Staff worked with Andrea Fencel to update links and digitize forms. Numerous field trips occurred this month; teachers requested Plant and Animal Adaptations, and staff adjusted formats for different grade levels. The Haunted Trail and Campfire was hosted at 1000 Islands with Kelsey at KPL managing the event. Over 450 people attended. 1000 Islands provided s'mores and a campfire. Motomart sponsored pizzas for the actors. Breitzman and White attended and thought it was great. The event was geared towards ages 12+ and filled the need for a teen program.

Usage Report: Building rentals included the Clear Approach Optometry "Giving Sight" Chili Fundraiser and River View ELS Fall Fest. Attendance is on track to exceed last year, though overall rentals are down, likely due to no private party bookings. Pavilion rentals have also declined, possibly influenced by other quality facilities in the City.

Admin and Finance Sub-Committee - No report

Education Sub-Committee – No Report

Building and Grounds Sub-Committee – No Report

Old Business - None

New Business

Chair Nomination: Jakel was unanimously appointed as Chair for the 2025-2026 term. Motion carried.

Vice-Chair Nomination: Jakel nominated Breitzman as Vice-Chair for the 2025-2026 term. West seconded. Motion carried.

VanBerkel raised a question regarding member terms, leading to a discussion on staggering terms. One committee position remains open but cannot be filled until 2026. There is no residency requirement for the 1000 Islands Committee.

Good for the Center

- Jabber, the Nature Center's beloved blue-fronted amazon parrot, passed away on November 20, 2025. Jakel suggested notifying former staff of Jabber's passing.
- New signage has been installed on the Nature Center.
- The Wingspan display was relocated to the play area.
- Staff will participate in the Electric City parade.
- Truck 19 will be replaced with a City fleet truck in approximately four months.
- Volunteer Appreciation Holiday Party will be held on December 3, from 3:00–5:00 PM at the Nature Center.

Next Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 6:30 PM in the Nature Center building.

Adjournment

There being no further business, VanBerkel moved to adjourn the November 20, 2025, Committee Meeting at 7:55 PM. Seconded by Breitzman. Motion carried.

Cassie Kohls