

1000 ISLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

1000 ISLANDS COMMITTEE

City of Kaukauna

Nature Center Building

1000 Beaulieu Court, Kaukauna



Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 6:30 PM

MINUTES

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

Not Present Rumbuc and Timmons

Also Present Brad Garrity and Cassie Kohls

Jakel called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM. A quorum was present.

Public Appearances None

February 19, 2026, Committee Meeting Minutes

VanBerkel requested the following revision to the February 19, 2026, minutes:

- Change “endowment interest” to “endowment earnings” in the December Financial Report.

Manion moved to approve the minutes with this correction, seconded by Breitzman. Motion carried.

February Financial Report

VanBerkel reported that most February spending from the restricted 5898 account was for purchasing seedlings for the seedling sale. Garrity noted that Kaukauna Utilities reimbursed the seedling expense, recorded under donations and contributions (4802). Manion asked about revenue in the 4911 fundraising account, and Kohls confirmed it was from seedling sale proceeds. White moved to approve the report, seconded by Manion. Motion carried.

Correspondence None

Friends of 1000 Islands Report

Hietpas reported that the Pancake and Porkie Breakfast is scheduled for March 21, with supplies prepared and all donations received. Eggleston asked about parking concerns following recent snowfall; Garrity noted Street crews cleared the lot and the track is also open for volunteer parking. Hietpas added that maple sap is flowing, with Garrity and Gonnering collecting sap and Kurt Dorow cooking. Jakel commended the team’s efforts this season.

February Naturalist Report

Garrity reported that he and Benson attended the Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association (WPRA) conference in Wisconsin Dells with other City staff and found it beneficial. In response to Hietpas, Garrity noted the City holds a group membership to the WPRA.

The intern position has been posted; 39 people applied, and Garrity will conduct phone interviews with a dozen applicants. The position will be filled in early April, with the intern starting in May.

Garrity attended the NEWNA meeting at the Neville Public Museum, where the kids' room was recently updated.

Ordinance 1952-2026, clarifying the 1000 Islands Committee as an advisory committee, passed on March 3, 2026.

Hunter Safety classes concluded, with Kohls handling administrative duties.

Benson created a self-guided program for the Great Backyard Bird Count.

Paula and Brian Jacobs and Megan Knuth led two near capacity Valentine's Day Lip Balm make and take workshops.

Junior Naturalists will assist with Maple Syrup Saturday on March 21 during the Pancake and Porkie Breakfast.

Off-site programs were held at Park Community Charter.

SOAR volunteers cleaned the Nature Center and sugar shack for maple syrup season.

Garrity noted that field trip fees will be applied to organized groups using gear and space for crayfishing.

Gonnering built a new enclosure for Gonzo the tortoise, and painted turtles were moved to a new aquarium.

The solar water heater developed a leak; one quote was received for a \$6,000 replacement, with a 10year cost recovery period. The backup electric water heater is functional. The solar system has no shutoff, and \$500 was spent to replace leaking valves and divert water from the leaking tank. White asked about repurposing the solar panels; Garrity will inquire. Garrity noted the panels are older but operational. VanBerkel raised a question about panel lifespan. Hietpas suggested removing the existing tank while keeping the panels.

The company that provided software and support for the solar generation data is out of business. Gonnering is seeking quotes, and Garrity will consult Kaukauna Utilities about posting a static display explaining the system.

Eggleston moved to approve the report, seconded by Hietpas. Motion carried.

Sub-Committee Meetings

Admin-Finance Sub-Committee

The Admin Sub-Committee meeting scheduled for March 17 has been canceled and will be rescheduled. Garrity reported that the eagle camera for Phase 1 will be mounted at a distance from the eagle nest. In response to VanBerkel, he noted that leaf out should not affect visibility due to a clear sightline and camera zoom capability.

The project will be completed in two phases:

- **Phase 1:** Install a habitat camera on the Kaukauna Utilities (KU) building/dam.
- **Phase 2:** Install a camera in a tree above the nest, requiring solar power and a battery backup.

The camera costs \$5,000, with total costs estimated at \$10,000. Expected camera lifespan is about seven years. Funding is anticipated through community fundraising and grants.

Manion asked about access; Garrity stated the site can be reached via the spillway in summer. A forester assessed the location; KU offered use of a bucket truck. Wire Tech provided a camera quote and suggested mounting on the KU hydro building roof. Ongoing costs are expected to be covered by website donations. Jakel is coordinating with the Fox Cities Firecracker and other groups for fundraising.

Eggleston noted this as a strong promotional opportunity for 1000 Islands and the City. Garrity will bring a site map to the next meeting.

Education Sub-Committee – Garrity will set the meeting time.

Building and Grounds Sub-Committee – Has not met yet. Will meet in June after the busy field trip season.

Old Business None

New Business

The Pancake and Porkie Breakfast will be held on March 21. Volunteers may arrive between 7:30-8:00 AM and receive a complimentary breakfast. Portion sizes will be demonstrated to reduce food waste.

Garrity reported Rumbuc's resignation from the 1000 Islands Committee. Two citizen positions are now open; the committee requires 11 members and has no residency requirement.

Garrity is also working to recruit new Friends of 1000 Islands Board members following two recent resignations. Fencil will post an interest form on the City's website.

West announced the passing of Sue Gertz, a long-time member of both the Friends and the 1000 Islands Committee. West noted she will also be missed in her role with the Kaukauna School Board.

Good for the Center

Garrity shared the Center was closed for two days due to Winter Storm Elsa. Only one tree was reported down on the trails.

Next Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 6:30 PM in the Nature Center building.

Adjournment

There being no further business, VanBerkel moved to adjourn the March 19, 2026, Committee Meeting at 7:26 PM. Seconded by Hietpas. Motion carried.

Cassie Kohls