

1000 ISLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

1000 ISLANDS COMMITTEE

City of Kaukauna

Nature Center Building

1000 Beaulieu Court, Kaukauna



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

MINUTES

Members Present Breitzman, Eggleston, Timmons, Hietpas, Manion, Jakel, and VanBerkel

Not Present Rumbuc, White, and West

Also Present Brad Garrity and Cassie Kohls

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

Public Appearances None

January 15, 2026, Committee Meeting Minutes

Jakel requested the following revisions to the January 15, 2026, minutes:

- Remove Pautz from the list of members present.
- Update the record to show that Jakel, not White, called the meeting to order.

VanBerkel moved to approve the minutes with these corrections, and Eggleston seconded. Motion carried.

December Financial Report

VanBerkel reported that program fee revenue increased in 2025, while interest income declined due to the closure of the CDs and the transfer of those funds to the Community Foundation endowment. He noted that endowment earnings are calculated using a three-year average. In response to Jakel's question about the 5499-miscellaneous income account, VanBerkel explained that those funds were added to the accounting logs when the CDs were closed to balance the books. VanBerkel moved to approve the report, and Timmons seconded. Motion carried.

January Financial Report

VanBerkel noted that the Committee has discretion over the 4810-interest income account, including whether to allocate funds to the endowment principal or the 201 restricted account. Garrity reported that interest income had been budgeted at \$7,500, but actual revenue fell short due to the closure of the CDs, which eliminated that source of interest income. He also explained that the Common Council approved an ordinance replacing Section 1.44, changing the Committee structure to an advisory committee and superseding existing 1000 Islands operating procedures. Garrity further clarified that the annual endowment distribution cannot be returned to the principal and must instead be used to support 1000 Islands' operational costs, which was the original intent when the Community Foundation endowment was established. Breitzman moved to approve the report, Manion seconded, and the motion carried. VanBerkel voted nay.

Correspondence

The Committee reviewed the Community Foundation endowment year-end statements, as well as the January statement. Eggleston was pleased with the totals. VanBerkel moved to approve and place the endowment reports on file, and Breitzman seconded. Motion carried.

Friends of 1000 Islands Report

Hietpas reported on Eagle Days, noting a \$450 profit from the food stand. Planning continues for the March 21, 2026, Pancake and Porkie Breakfast, with donation requests and flyers underway. Hietpas also provided an update on spring maple syrup plans. Volunteers cannot operate city-owned vehicles, so the Friends will explore alternative sap-collection methods this year. Staff expressed interest in assisting, and a trailer may be secured to hold the sap tank. Eggleston noted she may be able to donate a trailer. VanBerkel thanked the Friends for their monetary contribution to 1000 Islands.

January Naturalist Report

Garrity reported that January programming was slower, and the building closed twice due to extreme cold. Jabber's memorial raised \$400 in donations. He noted that a Migratory Bird Salvage permit from U.S. Fish and Wildlife is no longer required under new regulations. In response to VanBerkel's question about donated animals, Garrity explained that federal law allows the public to bring a deceased wild animal to an authorized facility within 24 hours. The public cannot transport endangered species. The Wisconsin DNR scientific collectors permit authorizes 1000 Islands to intake and maintain their collection. Garrity is continuing work on cataloging the collection. No permit is required for migratory birds or the eagle specimen.

The Eagle Nest Group continues progress on the habitat camera. Donations have been received, and habitat camera installation is planned for 2026. Gonnering is researching additional needs, and volunteers are considering a fun-run fundraiser. Kaukauna Utilities suggested installing the habitat camera on their building for a hardwired connection.

Eagle Days attendance matched 2025 levels. Garrity thanked the Friends for sponsoring the National Eagle Center presentations. Kaukauna Public Library's cultural presentation had a high attendance. He also thanked volunteers including the Bald Eagle Nest Watchers at the viewing stations, where more eagles were seen later in the day.

Inquiries were raised about slippery trails and liability. Garrity stated that staff work to keep the boardwalk clear and will explore purchasing a snow thrower. Weekly trail updates are posted on Facebook.

The Year in Review showed increased income, more programs, and rising participation from outside schools. Highlights included the completed boardwalk, new trail-crossing signage, and a grant awarded to the Friends to support the full-time assistant naturalist position.

The goat program is now in its tenth year and continues to be a successful outreach effort. The Goat Team will continue discussing its future direction. Manion moved to place the January Naturalist Report on file; Hietpas seconded. Motion carried.

Sub-Committee Meetings

Admin-Finance Sub-Committee – next meeting on March 17, 2026, at 1000 Islands.

Education Sub-Committee – no meeting planned.

Building and Grounds Sub-Committee – Garrity reported Streets Department has begun removing dead ash trees behind the sugar shack, and the area will be replanted with maple seedlings. The wood is being chipped for trails. Hietpas stated Grignon may need some logs. VanBerkel stated some logs could be nurse logs or habitat. Garrity expressed there are many logs remaining for that purpose.

Old Business

Plans for the nature center's front entrance project were reviewed. In response to Jakel's question about the timeline, Garrity reported that the project has been approved to go out for bid but has not yet been advertised. The anticipated completion timeframe is late summer to early fall 2026.

New Business

Garrity reported that the solar water heater is leaking and a plumber has been contacted. In response to Hietpas's question about replacing the system, Garrity stated he intends to keep the current setup, possibly with an updated graphic.

Kaukauna Utilities will refurbish the hydroelectric display.

Good for the Center

Friends will be purchasing two thermometers to temp food at food stands and at the annual Pancake and Porkie breakfast.

A book signing with author and former Kaukauna High School environmental science teacher Ron Vander Velden will be held at 1000 Islands on March 20, 2026.

Next Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 6:30 PM in the Nature Center building.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Manion moved to adjourn the February 19, 2026, Committee Meeting at 7:42 PM. Seconded by Breitzman. Motion carried.

Cassie Kohls