

Meeting Minutes
Board of Directors
Loess Hills Alliance
1:00 PM –June 7, 2023
Loess Hills Brent S. Olson Visitor’s Center–Pisgah, Iowa

Members signing the attendance log:

John Straight-Director	Kody Wohlers	Jeff Seago-Director
Renea Anderson-Director	Patty McCall-Director	Gary Horton-Director
Rich Pope-Director	Brett Bengard-Director	Daniel Bittinger-Director
Bob Benton-Director	John Meis-Director	Craig Patterson-Lobbyist
Lance Brisbois-Director	Cara Morgan	Brian Shea-Director
Wesley Fopma (Representative Randy Feenstra’s office)		Alan Dale-Director
Brittany Rockwell (Senator Joni Ernst’s office)		

Chairman, Rich Pope called the regular meeting of the Loess Hills Alliance to order at 1:14 pm, with no quorum declared. Introductions and signatures on travel documentation followed.

MINUTES: No Motion was made to approve the March 1, 2023 Minutes due to no Quorum.

AGENDA: No Motion was made to approve the June 7, 2023 Agenda due to no Quorum.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Renea Anderson presented the Treasurer's Report to the Full Board Committee.

The Loess Hills Alliance Profit & Loss Report-January through March 2023

Total Project Funding Income-\$19,616.75

Expense:

Contract Labor-\$1,500.00

Dues & Subscriptions-\$40.00

Professional Fees-Auditing-\$350.00

Special Projects Program Expense-\$15,000.00

Promotion Public Awareness-\$2,726.75

No Motion was made to accept the June 7, 2023 Treasurer’s Report due to no Quorum

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee – Rich Pope stated that the Executive Committee met this morning at 11:00 am. Information discussed at the Executive Committee meeting will be discussed at the Full Board meeting.

Stewardship Committee – Rich Pope stated that Graham McGaffin is stepping off the LHA Board and down from his position as Chair of the LHA Protection Committee. Approval was made to temporarily combine the Protection and Stewardship Committees and pool their resources. Formal approval will be made at the next Full Board meeting, September 6, 2023. A copy of a report on Native Pollinator Demonstration Garden, Pottawattamie County was presented to the Committee Members. Cooperative Burn Week was held on April 24th – 28th. Approximately, 135 attendees from 56 organizations and 8 different states and the province of Saskatchewan, Canada participated in the prescribed fires for 24 Burn Units. A special presentation by Brad Elder, Professor at Doane University was held on Monday, April 24th. Suggestions were made to host a presentation for the local Legislatures, Fire Departments, etc. to build advocates for the Loess Hills.

Economic Development Committee – Chairman, Renea Anderson reported that the Loess Hills Birding, RVing, and Motorcycling brochures are being distributed to the Iowa Welcome Centers and will be presented at the Clay County Fair, Spencer in September. The Southern Loess Hills Welcome Center, Fremont County will be opening soon. The Western Iowa Tourism Alcohol Division Semi was seen in Harrison County. The State Tourism Office has reorganized new travel regions. Woodbury and Plymouth Counties are not included in this reorganization. The “Loess Hills and Beyond” area includes Carroll County, Osceola County, and areas on the East side of Interstate 35. The Loess Hills Alliance State Legislators were not informed at the time of the reorganization. This will be a mixed message for the public concerning the Loess Hills. Conversations for marketing the Loess Hills will need to stay the same.

No Motion was made to accept the Committee Reports due to no Quorum.

OLD BUSINESS: No “Old Business” at this time.

NEW BUSINESS:

Legislature Report: Lobbyist, Craig Patterson reported that the Senate filed their amendment to the Ag/DNR budget bill and the LHA is funded at status quo in the Amendment (\$40,000.00). Major tax reforms were done. IWILL Bill is still being discussed, but funding will get tighter. With 53 new Legislators, Craig and Amy will be traveling more to advocate for the Loess Hills. The Loess Hills Alliance Members need to engage with their local State Legislators to keep them informed about the different projects throughout the Loess Hills. Brittany Rockwell, Senator Joni Ernst’s office and Wesley Fopma (Representative Randy Feenstra’s office) were visitors at today’s Full Board meeting. Discussion was held concerning bonds for farm equipment, domestic manufacturing, 2023 Farm Bill, and Ad Education in the local school districts. The Loess Hills Alliance thanks the State Legislators that are here today and for their reports. The Loess Hills Alliance thanks Craig Patterson for the continued LHA Legislative Updates.

Consideration of Merger of the Protection & Stewardship Committees: At today's joint Stewardship & Protection Committee meeting, approval was made to temporarily combine the two Committees. The goals for both Committees are similar and both allocate funding for beneficial projects for the Loess Hills. A change in the Loess Hills Alliance Bylaws will be needed. More discussion will be held at the next Executive Committee meeting on August 2nd.

Golden Hills/LHA Fiscal Management: The Cooperative Agreement between Golden Hills Resource Conservation & Development and the Loess Hills Alliance ends on June 30, 2023. A letter was received by Golden Hills RC & D stating that they will not be renewing the contract. At today's Executive Committee, an ad hoc Committee was approved to work on an alternate LHA fiscal agent.

FY23-24 State Budget: At this time, the FY23-24 State Budget has not been finalized or formally approved. More discussion will be held at the next Full Board meeting on September 6th.

FY23-24 Committee Budget Allocation: At this time, the FY23-24 State Budget has not been finalized or formally approved. More discussion will be held at the next Full Board meeting on September 6th.

Announcements:

Next Meeting: September 6th, 2023 at 1:00 PM

Adjournment: Chairman, Rich Pope adjourned the meeting at 1:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeannette Riesberg,
LHA Office Secretary