

**BOARD OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
MINUTES**

January 28, 2021

The Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (Board) met via videoconference on **January 28, 2021**. The meeting was preceded by public notice as required by Wis. Stat. § 19.84.

Call to Order

Board Chair Miranda Leis called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Members Present

Miranda Leis, Paul Bauer, Andy Diercks, Patty Edelburg, Kurt Hallstrand, Paul Palmby, Doug Rebut, Dan Smith, and Carla Washington.

Minutes

Motion

A motion was made by Paul Palmby and seconded by Paul Bauer to approve the December 17, 2020 DATCP Board minutes. Motion was approved unanimously.

Public Appearances

No public appearances.

**Climate Change Task Force Update
Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes**

Secretary Randy Romanski introduced Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes to the Board. Lt. Governor Barnes is honored to speak about the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change. In our first year in office Governor Evers took several steps to move us forward to address the climate crisis. He started by joining the US Climate Alliance which is a bipartisan group of Governors who are committed to upholding the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. Then the Governor established new clean energy bills for our state and created the Wisconsin Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy to craft and implement a plan to achieve a goal of 100% clean energy by 2050.

The Task Force on Climate Change was charged with developing policy recommendations on the impacts of climate change in Wisconsin. The task force united a diverse coalition of stakeholders, including farmers, our native community, environmental groups, utility companies, and large and small businesses. Between December 2016 and October 2020 this group attended a series of public meetings, discussed policies, attended presentations, and held public listening sessions. We learned that Wisconsites from every community, all backgrounds, and every age group are concerned about the impact of climate change on their lives and livelihoods. Our work on climate change must include the impact and input from our state's agriculture industry because they play a vital role in providing food, fiber, and fuel. Our state's economy rests on farmland and we were

lucky to have 4 representatives from the agriculture community serve on the task force, including Doug Rebut.

Thanks to the valuable voices and input from the task force, we were able to develop recommendations that continue to build on the work that our farmers and local governments are already doing in their communities. Last month, the task force released a report which included 55 potential climate solutions that span 9 different sectors. In addition to climate justice and agriculture sustainability, the recommendations touch the areas of energy, transportation, resilient systems, creating a clean economy, education, food systems, and forestry. There is something in this report that will benefit every person in our state.

The DATCP related recommendations in the report are to increase funding to two of our state's existing local food programs, Farm to School and Buy Local Buy Wisconsin. We know these programs strengthen our local economies by connecting the dots with our farmers, businesses, schools, and consumers. The task force also recommended supporting our farmer-led watershed groups, paying farmers to increase soil carbon storage in agricultural and working lands, avoiding conversion of natural working lands, and to make managed grazing livestock production systems an agricultural priority.

People are ready for change and for us to be bold leaders. Farmers are already choosing more sustainable practices, utility companies are already investing in renewable energy, and our local communities are already forming their policies to promote cleaner, greener economies. We can only be successful if we develop partnerships and build strong sustainable communities.

**Secretary Dawn Crim
Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services**

Secretary Randy Romanski introduced Secretary Dawn Crim of the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) to the Board. The mission of DSPS is to promote economic growth and stability while protecting the citizens of Wisconsin as designated by statute. Secretary Crim connects the dots in her work by connecting with the community, through the rotary, campus, state government and city organizations.

DSPS was born in 2011 out of the deconstruction and merger of the Department of Commerce and the Department of Regulation and Licensing. DSPS has 270 employees and 5 locations around the state with our main headquarters in Madison. The four divisions in our agency are, industry services, credentialing, management services, and our legal team. These divisions administer one million licenses per year. They also oversee 100 boards, committees and councils that come together to work with industry to make the best policy possible for governing professions. Our legal services division focuses on complaints and investigations, to help oversee the work of those license holders. Connecting the dots between DSPS and DATCP, both agencies are steeped in the rule making process and inspectors.

Secretary Crim is a big proponent of equity and inclusion. Her leadership staff is in a minority majority where 18 of 13 leaders are in a diverse category. DSPS has an implementation plan set to roll out which has been a top priority. Secretary Crim also spent last year with the industry

service areas to completely overhaul their plan review process. Now all our reviews are at a 6-week guarantee. We accomplished this change by meeting weekly, revamping processes, and putting together teams that looked at lean principles. Finally, when the pandemic began, Secretary Crim convened a Healthcare Task Force to talk about what abilities there were in the rule making process to respond better to the pandemic. In this process we were able to create temporary licenses, bring people back into the health field that were retired less than five years, and bring people in from other states. We have also been able to keep the building industry going with investigations and inspections completed at a distance.

Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee Update **Annie Collier, Committee Chair**

Annie Collier, Committee Chair for the DATCP Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee presented an update to the Board. The Governor's Executive Order #59 (EO 59) relating to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in State Government's intent is to shift focus and have a renewed purpose to create policy recommendations, along with continued representation by divisions and partnerships with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Office of the Secretary. The members of this committee are nominated by co-workers, self-nomination, or appointed by the Secretary.

We started from scratch with this Committee and are moving from feel good diversity events to more policy focus. The three primary areas we are focusing on are: policy recommendations, trainings, and events and outreach. The policy recommendations rely on the equity and inclusion plan implementation, the Bureau of Equity and Inclusion collaboration, and feedback from other employees. The trainings we are focusing on are webinars on timely topics and providing resources for individual use. Finally, the events and outreach platforms we are using are DATCP's employee newsletter the Pulse, updating committee activities at divisional meetings, and holding discussion sessions on difficult topics.

Equity and Inclusion Plan **Tracey Caradine, Human Resources**

Tracey Caradine, Human Resource Program Officer from the DATCP Human Resource office presented the Equity and Inclusion Plan to the Board. The DATCP Equity and Inclusion Plan (EIP) was accepted by DOA in December 2020 and rolled out in January 2021 to all employees. EO 59 outlines the importance of diversity, inclusion, and equity with its focus on recruitment, intention, and culture. DATCP will focus on removing barriers and is looking to create and strengthen our department culture. DATCP will also maintain a monitoring and reporting system to ensure compliance with the equity and inclusion mandates within the plan.

To complete the plan, this workgroup analyzed dozens of policies, procedures and other documents identifying opportunities to improve content and implementation to ensure equity. Analysis was also completed to identify areas where DATCP was falling short of required enterprise goals, such as hiring Wisconsin Works (W-2) participants. DATCP's overall goals and strategies were selected from completing the workforce analysis summary, considering our current outreach, hearing from the Equity and Inclusion Plan Workgroup, and collecting feedback from staff.

Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Survey Update Greg Bussler

Greg Bussler, State Statistician from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service presented his January 28, 2021 Agricultural statistics report on Milk Production, November Prices Received, December Hog Survey, Highlights from the 2020 Final Crop Production Report, Winter Wheat Seedings, Chicken and Eggs, 2020 Wisconsin Crop Progress Review, and Storage Capacity, to the Board. See Mr. Bussler's report which is included in the Board meeting packet for more specific details.

Overview of the Budget Process Office of the Secretary

Bradford Steine, Legislative Liaison in the Office of the Secretary presented a budget process overview to the Board. The process for the 2021-2023 Governor's Executive Budget is well underway. The development of that budget involves a year long process for our agency. The official budget process began when Governor Evers sent his budget instructions to state agencies in June 2020. From there, state agencies used those instructions to guide their agencies submittals that were due on September 15, 2020 by state statute. After the Governor sent the budget instructions to state agencies, the next step you would typically see is revenue and budget projections coming out in August 2020 from the Department of Revenue and Legislative Fiscal Bureau. But due to taxes being pushed back last year, it then pushed back the budget and revenue projections deadline to mid-November 2020. State agencies then submitted their budgets on September 15, 2020. DATCP's budget included no new positions and no new spending.

Since DATCP submitted their budget, we started receiving questions from the State Budget Office (SBO) at the Department of Administration about our programs, current staffing, and our needs. The SBO is the entity that assists the Governor in drafting the statutory language within the budget. The 26th of January was the statutory required date the Governor was to submit his budget to the legislature. He requested extension to February 16th and will officially introduce his budget at that time. Between now and February 16th we will continue to receive questions from the SBO and Legislative Fiscal Bureau. On the eve of the 16th the Governor will introduce the 2021-2023 state budget bill. After that bill is officially introduced, the legislature then begins to move forward with their process. The Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) is the main budget committee and consists of eight members of the assembly and eight members of the senate. The committee will approve provisions in the budget and remove or change other provisions. They will then send the budget back to the Governor for approval or veto. The process typically has a goal of being completed at the end of June 2021.

The Capital Budget is separate from the Executive Budget and is also known as the State Building Program. This budget deals specifically with state owned buildings, construction of new buildings, remodeling, maintenance and acquisition of lands, and equipment for state agencies and the UW System. The Capital Budget follows a similar timeline as the Executive Budget, but in addition to JFC there is an additional step with the State Building Commission. The State Building Commission is a separate committee that meets and developments recommendations, and reviews requests by state agencies and recommendations by the Governor. This Commission is a three-

member panel from both the assembly and senate, the Governor serves as the chair, and there is a citizen member on the committee.

Secretary's Office Update

Secretary Randy Romanski presented the Secretary's Office update to the Board.

Thank you to Lt. Governor for his collaborative leadership to address climate issues. He has been open and receptive to input from everywhere on that plan.

Thank you to Secretary Crim. A lot of people do not know the interconnected nature between DSPS and DATCP. There are a lot of similarities between the boards, councils, and inspectors. She is enthusiastic, energetic, and a joy to work with.

Thank you to Annie and Tracey for their work with the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee. There is work to do, but we have a plan to address that and are on our way to becoming a more diverse agency.

Former State Representative Barbara Gronemus passed away recently. She was an important figure and strong voice for agriculture in western Wisconsin during her time in the State Assembly and I wanted to honor her service and memory.

The Wisconsin Agricultural Youth Council continues to meet each month. This group is an impressive and engaged group of young minds that have thoughtful and informative conversations. We look forward to introducing them to you in the near future. We are also going to start recruitment for the 2021-2022 Youth Council, and we will get you that recruitment information when available.

It is encouraging news to see that the fiscal situation is in a little better scope than had been predicted. In the Governor's State of the State address he declared 2021 the year of broadband access. The Governor has shared some of his 2021-2023 annual budget where he said he will invest \$200 million to increase broadband access in Wisconsin. He is also going to create programs to help reduce the cost of getting connected.

We were fortunate to have the Governor join us for monthly agriculture media call. The Governor shared that he is planning to invest in the resiliency of Wisconsin's small meat processors supply chain for meat processing in his 2021-2023 budget. He is also going to provide continued funding for farmer mental health resources as we continue to see reports of the stress and mental health challenges in rural Wisconsin are real and ongoing.

We recently released a report that summarized DATCP's efforts in partnership with Wisconsin agriculture regarding our response to the challenges of COVID-19. The report itemized DATCP distributing \$80 million in emergency support through CARES Act funding, and how we pivoted to deliver services by still maintaining our regulatory approach and authorities but also maximizing flexibility and better serving our regulated entities.

DATCP has received many questions about vaccine distribution. We understand the agriculture industry's concerns and priorities when it comes to protecting our agriculture workforce. We have taken steps for safety by distributing masks and connecting food to those in need. The DHS just announced agricultural food workers will be included in group 1B for vaccinations. The goal is to have 80% of Wisconsin's adults vaccinated by June 30, 2020 and to do that we need, public demand, adequate vaccine supply, and a delivery system.

The Governor's Climate Change Task Force recommendation's included protecting productive farmland and investing in watershed protection programs. We recently announced we distributed \$750,000 in grants to watershed groups this year and designated 88,000 acres of land as agriculture enterprise areas in five counties.

Board Member Election of Officers: Board Chair, Vice Chair, Board Secretary

Motion

A motion was made by Andy Diercks and seconded by Dan Smith to nominate Miranda Leis as Board Chair for the 2021 term. Motion was approved unanimously.

Motion

A motion was made by Patty Edelburg and seconded by Kurt Hallstrand to nominate Andy Diercks as the Board Vice Chair for the 2021 term. Motion was approved unanimously.

Motion

A motion was made by Dan Smith and seconded by Doug Rebout to nominate Paul Palmby as Board Secretary for the 2021 term. Motion was approved unanimously.

Board Member Updates

Andy Diercks: The meat processing industry is swamped and in need of an expansion which is one good thing that came out of COVID. The potato world is decent. I have been focused on NR 151 which is important to our industry. The State Supreme Court is hearing a case on what the process will be for getting high capacity wells in the future. There will be lots of DNR work to follow in our industry for the next 6 months.

Kurt Hallstrand: Glad to hear that Governor Evers is supporting the butchering facilities and putting funding toward that. We recently had a meeting in which that was brought up for discussion.

Dan Smith: Things in the cooperative world are that we are continuing to keep our staff healthy and managed through COVID. I have been working with cooperatives by having virtual meetings and have seen optimism in the agriculture sector now because prices are good, there's interest in refinancing loans, and land is in increasing demand.

Doug Rebout: On the farm, we have been moving corn and having good prices there. The Corn Growers Board annual meeting will be held next week, and most likely a new president will be appointed.

Paul Palmby: Vaccines are at the front and center on business minds these days. I am grateful to see DHS included the food processing and agriculture workers in the next round of vaccinations. We have found that there is an alarming low number of folks that are interested in getting the vaccine, so we are doing a lot of internal education to provide people the facts for the need to vaccinate and the associated risks on that subject. In the industry, the demand continues to be strong. We are in the process of contracting with producers, volumes are up, and plants are at capacity.

Patty Edelburg: It is convention season and even through everything is virtual, we still have participated in over 250 hours of virtual content. The Wisconsin Farmer's Union recently participated in a series of meetings on supply chain matters and is happy to hear about the Governor's interest on the meat supply chain. Also, the National Farmers convention is in March and will be held virtually.

Miranda Leis: There has been a bump in milk production, but it is tailing off in January which is good. The milk production was up thanks to the beautiful weather we had and the high-quality feed that was produced last year. Markets continue to be flat and stable, just like they have been in recent months.

Future Agenda Items

General Counsel Jane Landretti stated that the next Board meeting will be held virtually and is scheduled on March 4th. At that meeting there will be rules from the Divisions of Animal Health, Trade and Consumer Protection, and Food and Recreational Safety for consideration.

Adjournment

Motion

A motion to adjourn was made by Dan Smith and seconded by Andy Diercks, motion approved unanimously. The Board adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m.

All reports and any associated documents presented during a Board meeting can be accessed by contacting the Office the Secretary, Legal Counsel at (608) 224-5029.