

## MINNESOTA FOREST RESOURCES COUNCIL

### Personnel and Finance Committee

1:00 – 3:00 pm, Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2021

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Meeting ID: 817 333 1342

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**Members present:** Rick Horton, Jim Manolis, Kim Berns-Melhus, Mike Kilgore

**Absent:** Pete Aube, Forrest Boe

**Staff present:** Eric Schenck, Sadie Mathison

Eric opened the meeting by announcing that Pete and Forrest are unable to attend. He drew attention to the one action item on the agenda (MAD Consultant Proposal) and reported that Pete supports this proposal and Forrest has not had an opportunity to weigh in.

Eric then provided an update on the state telecommuting and COVID policies and potential topics of discussion for the November meeting of the full Council.

Due to MFRC's multiple vacant positions, there is an approximate salary savings of \$200,000 available. This provides an opportunity to invest in projects. Eric then asked the group for project ideas.

Ideas discussed include:

- Information needs are yet to be revealed by the forest carbon strategic scoping project.
- Concern over staff and staff support for projects. Staff is the number one priority.
- Lidar-related support would be an easy way to spend the money.
- The counties (especially the 14 northern counties) could use assistance. County land commissioners need access to someone to help them develop quantitative forest management planning and help updating growth and yield models.
- Counties expressed a problem of the cost of the completing the Lidar ground proofing plots.
- Do not overlook the potential resource needs for the carbon work.
- IIC funding should be worked out before committing MFRC funds.
- Look at a cross-ownership data system, for landscape planning. Counties might not be interested in data other than their own.

There was discussion around what would make good topics for a free-flowing conversation as part of the November Council meeting. Possible topics include information needs, landscape program focus, and biomass/biofuels. There was a suggestion to have (Nate Ide) someone from one of the counties and someone from landscape planning speak at the meeting. There was a suggestion to separate private landowners into small, medium, and large as a means to better engage with them.

Eric mentioned the Forest Carbon focus group, and asked that the committee bring forward names that should be added to the list. Eric agreed to send more information on the natural and working lands group to the committee members.

Eric has been working with Matt Reynolds on a potential communication staffer to be shared between UMN Extension Forestry, MFA, and MFRC. This might include a private landowner database. Concerns were raised by the committee and Eric stated that he will confer with Matt and Sadie about those concerns.

Eric announced that MFRC has funded SFEC workshops at Cloquet Forestry Center and the next Council meeting has been built into this program.

Mike Kilgore stated that the meeting with MACLC solidified what the IIC information needs are. Pete, Eric, and Mike also met with CFANS Dean Brian Buhr, and Greg Cuomo. There was concern as to why the money appropriated to the IIC is no longer passed through by the DNR. There will be investigation into this matter.

Eric then opened up the discussion around the IIC Findings & Recommendations document that was included in the meeting packet. Mike stated that it is a good document and recent meeting with MACLC has clarified the direction the IIC should take to fill their needs. A next step is for MFRC Regional Landscape Committees to articulate what information would help them accomplish their work. There was also discussion around how IIC could assist the Arrowhead Pilot Project.

Eric presented a proposal from the MN Management and Budget (MMB) Management Analysis and Development (MAD) team to consult on the revision of MFRC staff position descriptions. The proposal also includes guidance tools for the hiring process.

There was some discussion around the titles of the open positions as well as adjustments to the position descriptions. The committee agreed to move forward with the MAD contract.

Meeting adjourned.