The Prairie Enthusiasts
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Board of Directors Meeting
Sunday, February 15, 2026: 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Members Present: Matt Dettlaff, Peter Fritz, Katie Hahn, Greg Heberlein, Alice Mirk, Jerry Newman, Jon Rigden, Jim Rogala, Nancy Gloe, Harvey Halvorsen, Peter Hartman, Addie Theis Paradis, Shawn Kadlec, Rich Henderson, Kay Wienke, and Gary Eldred

Members Not Present: Jay Rutherford

Staff Present: Jessica Bizub, Dan Carter, Mark Van Der Linden, Sarah Barron

Guests Present: Willis Brown

Agenda

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
   Board President, Jim Rogala, calls the meeting to order.

2. Adopt Meeting Agenda

   Alice Mirk makes a motion to adopt the agenda. Harvey Halvorsen seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

3. Approve Consent Agenda
   Jon asked if the easement for the Sime property was also transferred to MVC. That was talked about, but we're not pursuing it at this time. We need to investigate the Doctrine of Merger; we're discussing this with our attorney.

   Kay Wienke makes a motion to approve the consent agenda. Rich Henderson seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

4. Treasurer's Report – Jessica Bizub (in the absence of Jay Rutherford)
   ACTION: December 2025 Financial Reports – Dashboard and Details

   We're running about $47k behind budget. There is still a need on the Operations Team (understaffed since Jessica moved into the Acting Executive Director role). There are no intentions to replace that role this fiscal year though.

   Overall, contributions increased compared to the prior year. In total, we also have more cash on hand this year than previous year; however most of it is restricted.

   The balance sheet: there is still a $507k deficit at this time. This causes a challenge in the Chapter reports in looking at their balance sheets because the deficit isn't appearing for the

Chapter's balance. The Finance Committee will be looking at how to change the reports to show what Chapters truly have in each account.

Our assets are higher than they were last year, but we have a challenge with unrestricted cash.

Jerry asked why and how some Chapters balances went up from the last board meeting. This was from Chapter donations, which will adjust their cost share in the future based on the cost share formula.

Rich Henderson makes a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Alice Mirk seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

5. President's Report – Jim Rogala

Jim recommended that donations be made directly to Chapter Support for Board member's lodging at the Forney for the Board Retreat. The recommendation was $160/room to cover costs.

Jim also stated that he, Sarah and Jessica are working on a document to provide ways for Board members to help fundraise. This document will also be helpful for chapter leaders as well. That will be coming out shortly.

No other questions or comments.

6. Acting Executive Director's Report – Jessica Bizub

No additional comments. Report was the Board Retreat background packet.

7. New Business

Executive Committee
ACTION: FY2026-27 Q1-4 Board and Committee Meetings Schedule

Jerry Newman makes a motion to approve the meeting schedule. Matt Dettlaff seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

Finance Committee
ACTION: Accounting Policy Revision

The revision is to add that release of funds from restricted to unrestricted upon receipt occurs at the Chapter level. This was always the intent and practice but had inadvertently been left out of the policy. This revision corrects that.

Rich Questions: Cost share: capital outlays are excluded from restricted (land protection projects). To clarify: yes, the mention of vehicles in the policy includes UTVs.

Question to clarify: The policy appears to read that donations cannot be restricted to the Chapter (as unrestricted) unless it is a bequest. **The Finance Committee will review this.**

Question to clarify: How should fundraising and administration costs be determined for land protection budgets. Currently, Chapter Support is direct 10% of all the closing fees upon closing. Then, once the entire land protection project is funded, Chapter Support is direct 5% of the total left (10-year active land management and endowment funds). **Finance Committee will review this.**

Correction to make page 16 of the policy regarding bequests: Land protection funds go to the Chapter, but it should actually be Chapter Support. **Finance Committee will review this.**

Kay Wienke makes a motion to approve the revision presented. Peter Fritz seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

ACTION: Release Operating Fund

This is in relation to the quasi endowment. The donor wanted his donation to be in support of operations. The intent is to have the funds available should we need them, for example in the fall months when our cash on hand dips low.

Rich Henderson makes a motion to approve the release of the quasi endowment as needed. Matt Dettlaff seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

ACTION: Investment Policy Revision

Current
Proposed

Jon Rigden provided an overview.
Harvey Halvorsen asked how much the account manager is managing for us. Jon replied that it's roughly $4M; these are funds that are mostly designated for land management. Rich stated that the Chapter decides if they want to take the release or keep the account growing.

Rich Henderson makes a motion to approve the revision of the Investment Policy. Peter Hartman seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

ACTION: Sunrise Chapter Budget Request

Proposal is to provide the Chapter up to $15k as a loan. Shawn Kadlec stated that they are planning on conducting fee-for-service burns to assist the Chapter in bringing in money. He suspects they will have $21k in revenue this year. The bulk of which is coming from the soil and water districts from their CRP programs. The Chapter would be getting roughly $500/acre.

Rich noted that the Chapter should use The Prairie Enthusiasts radio frequencies, and encouraged Shawn (and others in the meeting) to reach out if they need more information.

There were additional discussions about how much Chapters should be charging for burns. **Move this to the parking lot to discuss at a later time.**

Rich Henderson makes a motion to approve the $15k loan to the Sunrise Chapter. Greg Heberlein seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

Land Protection Committee

ACTION: Monitoring and Legal Defense Fund Deposits (email)

Topic is approval to release acquired funds and deposit those to the legal and monitoring funds to cover the needs of our recent land acquisitions: Agaski Bluff, Uren Trust Addition to Erbe Grassland and Mukwonago River Oak Barrens. Per property, it would be $1500 for legal and $3500 for monitoring.

Matt Dettlaff makes a motion to approve the release of funds. Shawn Kadlec seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

ACTION: Benedict Prairie Land Management Agreement

This agreement is on a 5-year cycle, so we're renewing the agreement with the University of Wisconsin Systems.

Rich Henderson makes a motion to approve the Benedict Prairie Land Management Agreement. Jerry Newman seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

Peter Hartman asked if our volunteers are covered by our insurance. Jim noted that yes they are as long as they are following the policy (a chainsaw policy will be coming soon).

ACTION: Withdrawal from Legal Defense Fund for Schluckebier

This was in relation to a boundary dispute. We did not have a survey on file, so we needed to get a survey. This was submitted too late to be covered by Terra Firma. Request to be withdrawn is $7855 to cover the costs.

Katie asked if the placeholder also wasn't made in time. Jessica stated that was correct. Someone in the Chapter was aware of the issue, but did not inform the Chapter Support Team in time to place the placeholder claim. We've placed claims with Terra Firma for all other issues we know of.

Alice Mirk makes a motion to approve the release of funds. Kay Wienke seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion carries.

Parking lot discussion: Do we have enough in the legal defense funds? It does cover LTA standards, but we might decide to set a higher threshold.

Additional question from Gary Eldred: Asked about a sand mining quarry proposed near Bush Clover Prairie. Mark stated that we did look into the matter and shared the information with the Chapter. The guidance from the Chapter was to monitor the situation, but not to oppose the proposal during the public hearing.

General Board

ACTION: Employee Handbook Revision

Did not discuss or vote on this item due to time constraints. **Will revisit.**

ACTION: Endowment Variance Request

Rich provided an overview of the topic. Typically land management endowments are for easements or fee title properties owned by The Prairie Enthusiasts. There is an individual donating to an endowment (substantially). That person has been working on smaller properties that are remnants (e.g., .2 acres and 3 acres). We do not own or have an easement on those sites. The Prairie Enthusiasts has done work on the properties, but the donor is concerned about the future of those places. The donor is proposing that the endowment that's set up for the nearby TPE-owned property be used on these sites as well.

However, it also seems the variance is for a planted prairie as well. **The board agreed to table this topic for now with the action of Rich speaking to the donor to clarify if the variance would also cover the planted prairie.**

ACTION: Minnesota Driftless Revised Bylaws

Current
Revisions
Proposed

Rich Henderson stated that this format doesn't follow the new guidelines proposed of using "chair" language as opposed to "president." Also an issue with the lands owned going to TPE if the chapter is dissolved. In reality, chapters don't own any property.

The board agreed to table this topic for now with the action of Jim Rogala following up with the Chapter to propose the language change.

Greg Heberlein asked if all changes to Chapter Bylaws need to be approved by the board. Jim Rogala stated that if there aren't substantial changes, then the Board doesn't need to review and approve. More substantial changes would need to go before the Board.

Kay Winke moves to adjourn the meeting. Harvey Halvorsen seconds the motion. All in favor. Jim adjourns the meeting.