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BRAINERD LAKERS UNITED FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (BLUE) NOVEMBER 11th, 2022, MEETING MINUTES

Brainerd Lakers United for the Environment (BLUE) held our monthly meeting on Thursday, November 10 at 7 p.m. The meeting took place online via the Zoom website. Dean Borgeson, Judi and Richard Schiller, and Doug Olson joined the online BLUE meeting

BLUE treasurer Pat Scott, who could not join the meeting, informed BLUE chair Dean and BLUE secretary Doug before the BLUE meeting she mailed a check for \$17.50 to the IRS to pay a late form filing fee. The prompt payment demonstrated BLUE's commitment to resolve the tax issues with the IRS. [BLUE members will continue discussing the tax issues with the IRS at BLUE's online meeting on Thursday, December 8. Pat's tax accountant Mary Farmer informed her the issue can be resolved either by BLUE legally dissolving or BLUE donating the money in our treasury to a legally recognized non-profit organization. BLUE members will decide the best course of action at the December BLUE meeting].

Meeting participants discussed the successful Fall Brainerd Area Coalition for Peace (BACP) Adopt a Highway cleanup held on Saturday, October 15. Dean, Doug, Judi, Richard, and Doug's dad Joe Olson volunteered for the cleanup. Cleanup volunteers used 12 bags to clean the BACP Adopt a Highway section located north of Little Falls off Highway 371. The next BACP Adopt a Highway cleanup will be held in April or May 2023.

Meeting participants discussed BLUE possibly hosting a presentation of the 2019 documentary *The Story of Plastic* in the Brainerd public library or at Central Lakes College (CLC). The Brainerd public library might be a better venue to host the film presentation because the library, unlike CLC, does not charge for renting a room. The film presentation could be held on a Saturday morning or early afternoon in the Brainerd public library's large conference room. (The Brainerd public library is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday). BLUE hosted several film presentations in the Brainerd public library in 2018. The film presentations, organized by BLUE member Larry Fisk, had good turnouts. *The Story of Plastic* film presentation would probably be held next Spring, around Earth Day (April 22).

Meeting participants discussed the outcomes of the 2022 mid-term elections. Democrats did much better than expected. They retained control of the U.S. Senate and lost fewer seats in the U.S. House of Representatives than expected. In Minnesota, Democrats won all four state constitutional offices (Governor, Secretary of State, State Attorney General, and State Auditor). Democrats retained control of the Minnesota House of Representatives and won control of the Minnesota Senate. This means Democrats will control the governorship and legislature for the first time since 2014. Republicans dominated in the partisan elections held in the Brainerd Lakes Area. Progressive candidates Sarah Speer, John Ward, and Michelle Brekken won seats on the Brainerd school board. Steve Barrows, a liberal member of the Crow Wing County Board, won re-election. Commissioner Barrows is strongly pr-

environment. He opposed the construction of Line 3. Environmentalists should demand Congress and the state legislature pursue pro-environment policies. These include strengthening existing environmental laws, making a commitment to transition from fossil fuels to renewables, fund clean energy projects, reject proposed environmentally damaging projects, and shut down pipelines like Line 3, the Dakota Access Pipeline, and Line 5.

Meeting participants reviewed the discussion held at the October BLUE meeting by Brainerd Lakes Area Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) co-chair Julius Kapushinski about DSA's public transit initiative. DSA will try to persuade the Brainerd city council to improve the Dial-A-Ride bus system. Suggested improvements include a set bus route, reusable rider cards, and working with businesses and CLC to promote the Dial-A-Ride bus system. DSA would like to build a broad coalition of organizations to support their public transit initiative. BLUE would probably support the DSA public transit initiative because public transit is good for the environment. A decision about BLUE endorsing DSA's public transit initiative will be made after DSA begins work on the initiative in 2023.

Doug mentioned Wadena County District Court Judge Doug Clark dismissing gross misdemeanor and misdemeanor charges against five of the seven Shell River 7 defendants on Monday, October 31. The Shell River 7 are a group of Water Protectors arrested by police in July 2021 while peacefully protesting Line 3 construction near the Shell River. The Shell River 7 are Honor the Earth co-founder and Executive Director Winona LaDuke, independent photojournalist K. Flo Razowsky, Kelly Maracle, Trish Weber, Mary Klein, Barbara With, and Cheryl Barnds. Judge Clark dismissed charges against all of the Shell River 7 but Winona LaDuke and K. Flo Razowsky. An article about the charges being dismissed against most of the Shell River 7 can be found at: <https://wcmcoop.org/2022/11/01/line-3-charges-dismissed-against-five-of-the-shell-river-7-water-protectors/> [Sometime after the publication of this article, criminal charges against K. Flo Razowsky were dismissed. Winona LaDuke is the last of the Shell River 7 defendants facing criminal charges in Wadena County. LaDuke also faces criminal charges in Aitkin County related to peacefully protesting Line 3].

Pat sent an email to Dean and Doug informing them the BLUE treasury has \$334.50. This is a new amount after Pat paid \$17.50 to the IRS for the late form filing fee.

BLUE's next monthly meeting will be held on Thursday, December 8 at 7 p.m. The BLUE meeting will be held online via the Zoom website. The BLUE meeting will last 40 minutes, the maximum amount of time Zoom allots for free meetings. BLUE meetings will be held online through at least April. A link to the December BLUE meeting will be sent out in the meeting notice.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m. BLUE Meeting Minutes Submitted by Doug Olson