

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020 BOARD MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, May 14, 2020, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center via teleconference beginning at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (VIA PHONE)

Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth, and Suzan Boden

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, Dawn Snyder, Theresa Kruid, and Dawn Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Bennett called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

MOTION by Suzan, second by Chris.

To approve the consent agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett,
& Suzan Boden

Nay: None

Absent: Neil Stockfleth

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

ITEM C1. Approve Minutes of the April 9, 2020 Monthly Meeting.

ITEM C2. Approve the April 2020 Claims and Expenditures.

ITEM C3. Receive and Place on File the April 2020 Financial/Budget Report and 3rd Quarter FY20 Reserve Fund Report.

ITEM C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations

- Woodbury County Soil and Water Commission for 50 Arrowwood shrubs
- Karen K. Juhl Memorial Gifts:
 - Dawn Snyder \$25.00
 - Terry Rheutan Robben \$50.00
 - Jean L. Day \$40.00
 - Linda Thompson/Emory Graffis \$30.00
 - Gary & Anne Shaner \$25.00
 - Jim & Barb Redmond \$25.00
- Karen K. Juhl Bequests:
 - Hilltop Securities Inc. \$14,410.93
 - Lincoln Financial Group \$42,891.72
- Nature Calls More Help: (WCCF)
 - Rick & Angie Schneider \$500
 - John C. Gray/Heidman Law Firm \$250
 - Great West Casualty Company \$250
 - John D. Kiernan, OD \$100
 - Stee Maxwell, DVM \$75
 - Gregory G. Giles \$18

(Neil Stockfleth joined the meeting at 4:05 p.m.)

ITEM R2. Acceptance of Karen Juhl Bequest

Dawn reported that two sizeable bequests and several memorial gifts had been donated in memory of Karen Juhl who passed away in December 2019. She had a twenty-year relationship with the Nature Center, was active with the Sierra Club, and had a love for children, education and the prairie. Discussion was held regarding the best use of these funds. Dan will talk to the Treasurer about rules before deciding where to deposit.

MOTION by Neil, second by Chris.

To gratefully accept the Karen Juhl bequests and invest them wisely until a worthwhile project is decided upon.¹³⁻²⁰

ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth & Suzan Boden
Nay: None
Absent: None

ITEM R3. COVID-19 – Park Facilities Closure Extension

Dan thanked the board members for their email responses and reported that the majority of the board agreed with extending the park facilities closure until May 21st. He reported that the first shipment of PPE masks had not been received until today, and the rest are expected to arrive on Monday. A press release was sent out today and posted on the websites and social media announcing that parks will be opening on May 21st at Level 1 with restricted camping and some facilities closed. Campgrounds will be open at 50% capacity to self-contained units only, with restrooms, showers, playgrounds, cabins and shelters remaining closed.

Discussion was held regarding sanitizing procedures and the need for additional steps to keep visitors and staff safe. Because the Nature Center has many hands-on surfaces that are more difficult to clean, a misting machine for sanitizing is being considered. It would provide a finer mist suitable for fabrics and carpets, etc. Tom Crawford has one reserved for the Nature Center and is going to donate his normal Nature Calls sponsorship to cover part of the purchase.

Brian has adapted campground and facilities management protocols for COVID-19 that were developed by the state association and the DNR to make them specific to Woodbury County which has become a hot spot for the virus. Dan has been communicating with Kevin Grieme, Siouxland District Health Director. Kevin will be developing a model to incorporate with our protocols allowing decisions to be made based on actual case number data. South Sioux City, Nebraska, and

¹³⁻²⁰ To gratefully accept the Karen Juhl bequests and invest them wisely until a worthwhile project is decided upon.

Sioux City, Iowa, is being viewed as one unit and has had case levels higher than anywhere in Iowa, with over 3,000 cases in a two or three-week period.

Theresa reported an incredible 43% response rate with 100 replies to an online survey which was sent out to gauge comfort levels for summer camp participation. Most responders weren't comfortable with in-person programming until at least mid-July, and then only with smaller numbers and extra precautions. Dawn stated that there would be no group rentals in the foreseeable future. Naturalist staff will be providing live and recorded virtual programs including nature story times, crafts, outdoor skills, and hikes. Weekly self-guided scavenger hunts will be added on the Nature Center trails, with information and activities at each stop. After lengthy discussion, it was decided to announce no in-person programming through June subject to change and reevaluate in a couple weeks.

Dan stated that the cabins are currently closed through May, as the Governor of Iowa requires them to remain closed at least through May 27th. He will be looking to the Department of Health and other counties for guidance regarding when to open.

ITEM R4. Acceptance and Approval of Hay Bids

Brian reported that hay bids were let on two areas. Little Sioux and Shagbark consists of 32.93 acres and is a three-year contract. The high bidder is Tim Petersen at \$126.50 per acre, a total of \$4,165.65. Oak Ridge consists of 31.43 acres and is a two-year contract. The high bidder is Dennis McCall at \$97 per acre, a total of \$3,048.71.

MOTION by Aaron, second by Chris.

To approve and accept the bids for brome hay removal at Little Sioux Park and Shagbark Hills from Tim Petersen at a rate of \$126.50 per acre for three years and at Oak Ridge Conservation Area from Dennis McCall at a rate of \$97.00 per acre for two years. ¹⁴⁻²⁰

ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth & Suzan Boden

Nay: None

Absent: None

ITEM R5. Further Discussion of Snyder Bend Park Flood Plan

Brian stated that the projections for flooding potential are down as the Corps has been able to release enough water so far. Sand bags are in place around the cabins, but plastic needs to be replaced. Dan has requested an estimate from the engineer for the berm.

ITEM R6. Capital Improvement Projects Update

1. Brown's Lake – Concession Stand & Beach Plans

Dan stated that this project may have to be pushed back because of decreased revenues due to COVID-19 closures.

2. Southwood Storage Building Update

Dan reported that they did a walk-through of the Southwood storage building to develop a check list. Floors and aprons have been poured. The overhead doors are in, and the electrician is there

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to hook up the doors. Lights and electrical will be added in July. Some things were found that needed addressed. Dan is meeting with the contractor in the morning who stated that he will make it right. Final payment will be held until all fixes are made. Dan will provide pictures at the next board meeting.

ITEM R7. Board member/staff reports

1. Administrative items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. June Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on June 18, 2020, at Southwood Conservation Area.

b. Budget Amendment

Dan submitted a budget amendment request totaling \$21,647 to cover some unexpected expenses without a revenue offset. Those expenses include the HVAC maintenance agreement, Iowa Law Enforcement Academy for Derek Bean, the rifle purchase for Derek Bean, and increased equipment repairs. He noted that the revenue from Don Haahr's rifle purchase should be able to be used to offset the rifle purchase.

c. COVID-19 Employees (3) Sick Leave Prior to April 1, 2020, Accrued Back, Mirror Supervisors Actions

Dan explained that the Supervisors had chosen to return sick leave taken due to COVID prior to the April 1st implementation of the Federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act for employees in several departments. Three conservation employees had hours that would also qualify under these guidelines, but the HR Director checked with the County Attorney's office and was informed that the conservation board had to make that decision for these employees. These sick hours were used because employees were asked to stay home due to county COVID guidelines in place at that time. The three employees affected were Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, and Dawn Snyder.

MOTION by Neil, second by Susan.

To approve the return of COVID-related sick time used by conservation department employees listed above prior to April 1st.¹⁵⁻²⁰

ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett,
Neil Stockfleth & Suzan Boden

Nay: None

Absent: None

d. Southwood Residence Update

Dan reported that the Southwood residence remodel is complete and looks good.

2. Nature Center Activities (Snyder)

Dawn reported on the following Nature Center activities:

¹⁵⁻²⁰ To approve the return of COVID-related sick time used by conservation department employees prior to April 1st.

- Theresa has been busy planning for summer.
- Interns will be starting on May 26th.
- A Zoom meeting with the website design team will take place tomorrow to review the first draft of content.
- The Nature Center has received a nearly \$14,000 MHRD grant for a wildlife viewing camera interactive exhibit, iPad minis, exhibit monitor and other security camera items. A virtual award presentation ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 21st, at 2:00 p.m. Dawn recorded a thank-you video for YouTube.
- Nearly \$1,200 in Nature Calls donations has been received.
- Revisions were made to the Nature Center bee hive, and new bees were added on Monday.
- Dawn was interviewed on Facebook live by Siouxland Magazine regarding the Nature Center and parks.

3. Park Activities (Stehr)

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Most of the seasonal help is on board, except one who has been deployed with the National Guard and one with a health issue.
- Park staff has been using the extra time while parks are closed to paint, stain tables, and trim trees.
- A burn was completed on Owego. Some areas had not seen fire for 7-8 years. Staff from all parks worked together on this burn. It was a mosaic burn so snakes and amphibians would have a place to go. Tillage and spraying for cattails may be able to be done now.
- Food plot planting is being done early due to later opening date.
- Bigelow Park and Snyder Bend staff have graded and reseeded the road shoulders at Snyder Bend.
- Little Sioux staff has seeded a prairie mix in the entrance area where the hedge row was removed.
- Derek Bean has officially received his certificate from the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy and will qualify with his rifle sometime this month.
- New trucks have been equipped with lights and sirens. Josh took the initiative to wire his truck and create a custom center console. He then helped Nate do the same in his truck. The Sheriff's Department installed the radios.
- Brian has been acquiring personal protective equipment for the parks and Nature Center.
- The Zook property has been sprayed and will be seeded with pollinator mix in the next week or two.

ITEM R7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Suzan Boden

Board Chair, Cindy Bennett