

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2021 BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, November 18, 2021, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant (via Zoom), and Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Suzan Boden

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, Dawn Snyder and Dawn Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

Valarie Uken, Winnebago Tribe Representative

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gehling called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

Dan reported that the October 14, 2021, minutes have been corrected to reflect that Chris Zellmer-Zant left the meeting prior to going into closed session for the director's annual evaluation.

MOTION by Cindy, second by Neil.

To approve the consent agenda as presented.

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

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

- C1. Approve Minutes of the October 14, 2021 Regular Meeting as corrected.
- C2. Approve the October 2021 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the October 2021 Financial/Budget Report and the 1st Quarter FY22 Reserve Fund Report
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:
 - Jeff & Becky Wahlberg for pumpkins
 - Bob & Phyllis Nickolson for bird tiles and geode

- Swanson family for Dutch oven cooking demonstration
- Tyler Flammang for pet dishes and pet carrier
- Stacey Pecaut Gerhart for gift of stock for WCCF Endowment
- Gayle Palmquist for \$765 cash donation for Indian Paintbrush kinetic sculpture (Carl Palmquist Memorial)
- Big Give Total \$4,516 – Donors below
 - Dawn Bostwick \$25.00
 - Colin Brandt \$20.00
 - Judy Church \$50.00
 - Katie and Ron Colling \$50.00
 - Elizabeth Dahl (Wiltgen) \$10.00
 - Barb and Dale Graham \$300.00
 - John Helms \$50.00
 - Richard Kunz \$100.00
 - Gary LeMoine \$100.00
 - Denise Lopez \$25.00
 - Harriett Marsh \$10.00
 - Robert Meis \$50.00
 - Marilyn Milbrodt \$50.00
 - Jared & Carol Myers \$100.00
 - Mark & Susan Nielsen \$200.00
 - Scott & Cyndy Patten \$100.00
 - Pam Pfautsch \$25.00
 - Michael Prosser \$100.00
 - Kevin & Linda Renner \$100.00
 - Pamela Ridgway \$140.00
 - Dave & Alisha Riemenschneider \$2,200.00
 - Steve Sanford \$50.00
 - Mary Shuey \$300.00
 - Dawn Snyder \$35.00
 - Lucinda M. Tryon \$100.00
 - Tim Van Der Maaten \$25.00
 - Kathleen Weisz \$25.00
 - Anonymous \$176.00

ITEM R2. War Eagle Park & Monument Area – Valerie Uken, Winnebago Tribe Representative

Valerie Uken, Winnebago tribe representative and Urban Native Center director, was present to inform the board of her ideas to better serve the native community in Woodbury County and specifically to improve War Eagle Park. She described the rich native history of the park and surrounding area. In her research, she discovered that in the late 1960s the WCCB leased War Eagle Park for the purpose of making improvements, but that it is currently owned and managed by the City of Sioux City. She provided copies of a proposal presented to the Sioux City Parks and Recreation department detailing her three-phase improvement plan. She said she was looking for guidance on next steps to take.

Dan explained that the WCCB is funded by county tax dollars and hasn't had anything to do with that property since approximately 1976. He suggested she pursue city historical grants, as well as REAP, MRHD, and Gilchrist grants. He added that a case of medallions created for fundraising was recently rediscovered at the nature center, and he will pass them along to Valerie.

ITEM R3. Southwood Assistant Resource Manager Update

Dan reported that interviews had been held the last two days for the assistant resource manager position at Southwood. Five candidates were interviewed and narrowed down to three, none of which already have the law enforcement required for the position. Physical testing has been set up for Tuesday afternoon at Snyder Bend. An offer will not be extended unless this testing has been successfully completed. Dan stated that the person hired will most likely not attend the academy until next September.

ITEM R4. Budget FY 22-23 – Final

Dan presented the final FY23 budget proposal noting two small additions for drainage taxes and computer software. He did not add academy expenses to the budget, because he is not sure when the new Southwood employee will be attending. He stated that he can amend for that in the spring if necessary. The budget entry deadline is December 3rd.

MOTION by Neil, second by Chris

To approve the FY23 operating budget as presented.³⁰⁻²¹

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

ITEM R5. Capital Improvement Projects Update

1. Brown’s Lake Projects

a. Campground – Sewer, Water, Electrical

Brian reported that Mike Barkley has made good progress on the Brown’s Lake campground sewer project. Each site has been hooked up to the central locations, and two of the pits have been placed and are now waiting for concrete. He will be getting the high pressure line put in place. Dirt that was available onsite from the shoreline project was hauled in by staff using department equipment. Several trees have been moved. The electrician came to evaluate what will be needed to move pedestals, raise pedestals, and hook up the tanks. One more tank needs to be placed, but it won’t be delivered for possibly four weeks. There is still more dirt work, pad work and tree removal to be done. Brian showed drone photos of the project.

b. Park Roads Bid

Dan stated that bids will be let for the Bigelow Park roads project next month with the engineer’s office. They are hoping to get it done for \$41-\$50/cubic yard.

c. Beach & Concessions Bid Letting

Dan reported that bids have been let for the Brown’s Lake beach and concessions project. Three contractors have requested bid packets so far. The deadline is December 3rd.

ITEM R6. Board member/staff reports

1. Administrative items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. December Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on December 9, 2021, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

b. Oak Ridge Hungry Canyons Grant

Bids were let by the engineer’s office for the Oak Ridge dam repair. Holly Brown Construction was awarded the contract for \$66,078.50 with a 15% match required by the board. The contract wasn’t received in time for the Supervisors meeting Tuesday, so it will be on next week’s agenda.

³⁰⁻²¹ To approve the FY23 operating budget as presented.

c. Briese Property – Memo of Understanding

Dan presented the Memorandum of Understanding prepared by the engineer and reviewed by the county attorney which states the intent and agreement by the Board of Supervisors to give the Conservation Board first right of refusal on the Breise farm property upon completion of gravel operations. He acknowledged concerns raised by board members that the agreement is not worded strongly enough to be binding. Dan shared those concerns with Mark Nahra and was reassured of their continued cooperation. Dan stated that the Secondary Roads management staff have all been involved in the discussions and understand the intent to turn the property over to the WCCB when graveling is complete. Dan will follow up with an email to Mark Nahra detailing their conversations and put it in the board file for future reference. He recommended that the board accept the Memorandum of Understanding as presented.

MOTION by Cindy, second by Chris.

To approve and authorize the director and board chair to execute the Memorandum of Understanding between the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors, Woodbury County Conservation Department, and the Woodbury County Secondary Roads Department regarding the future use of the Breise farm purchased for gravel production by the Secondary Roads Department.³¹⁻²¹

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

d. REAP Grant

Dan announced that the DNR Commissioners approved the REAP grant for the Salsness property in the amount of \$777,500. He should receive the grant agreement in time to be approved at the December meeting, and then the reimbursement process can be started.

Dan stated that it still looks favorable for the Breise property to be in line for the Habitat grant funding without competition.

e. Law Enforcement Computer Equipment Costs

Brian reported that the law enforcement laptops have been received and need to be mounted into the vehicles. The mounts and docking stations will be \$9,737. Additionally, printers and scanners will be needed to use the TraCS system for writing citations and scanning licenses. The cost will be \$3,823 for the printers and \$2,800 for the scanners, bringing the total cost to \$16,358.30.

Dan recommended moving forward with mounting the equipment and purchasing the printers and scanners all at once. He stated that the \$10,300 reimbursement from Crawford County for ILEA training can be allocated to cover these expenses since the new Southwood employee will not be able to attend the academy within this fiscal year. The remaining \$6,000 can easily be made up over the budget period.

MOTION by Neil, second by Cindy.

³¹⁻²¹ To approve and authorize the director and board chair to execute the Memorandum of Understanding between the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors, Woodbury County Conservation Department, and the Woodbury County Secondary Roads Department regarding the future use of the Breise farm purchased for gravel production by the Secondary Roads Department.

To approve and authorize the purchase of the complete system for the law enforcement laptops as presented, including mounts, docking stations, printers and scanners.³²⁻²¹

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

f. Solar Information – Woodbury County Ordinance

Dan stated that he has been asked to serve on a committee organized by David Gleiser to create a solar ordinance for Woodbury County. David is gathering sample ordinances and will then convene the committee to prepare an ordinance to be presented to the Supervisors.

g. Southwood – Equestrian Camping Site Fees Increase

Dan stated that during a discussion at last month's meeting, the board had asked to discuss the possibility of designating several Southwood campsites as equestrian or premium sites and raising the fees accordingly in an effort to keep them available for the equestrian campers. Dan said that he discussed it with staff, and they do not think it will be a deterrent as those are preferred sites. It was suggested that the equestrian people could do what everyone else does and come in a day or two earlier to get their sites. After brief discussion, the topic was tabled until next month. Brian will have drone video of the sites and more information available at the next meeting.

h. Old Business

Dan announced that he was contacted by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation about the Erik O'Connell property as he has come back to the table with an offer to sell 116 acres. The INHF already has approval from their board and needs to know if the WCCB is interested in making another offer. It was noted that if an offer is not made, it would negate the right of first refusal obtained when seller was released from the purchase contract earlier in the year.

MOTION by Neil, second by Cindy.

To approve and authorize the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to negotiate a purchase offer on the O'Connell property at a maximum price of \$3,200 per acre.³³⁻²¹

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

2. Nature Center Activities

Dawn reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors report was presented.
- The Iowa Association of Naturalists Fall Workshop hosted at the nature center was very successful with 95 people registered. Formal evaluations will be collected online and shared

³²⁻²¹ To approve and authorize the purchase of the complete system for the law enforcement laptops as presented, including mounts, docking stations, printers and scanners.

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with the board when received. The keynote speakers were excellent, and recordings are available on the nature center YouTube channel.

- The annual foundation membership appeal letter has been sent to the printer.
- Winter Fun Day will be held on December 11th.
- Winter break youth programs are also being planned.
- Increased school contacts have been made, especially in the county schools.
- The Tale Trail stands have arrived, but a few components are still missing. The reading stations most likely will not be installed until spring.
- Iowa PBS did a video shoot at the nature center for their Fun Investigating New Discoveries (FIND) Iowa project. This is an online program designed to encourage 2nd - 5th grade students to investigate the state using immersive and interactive learning content.
- The nature center's 1,000 Hours Outside campaign will be wrapping up soon. Prizes are being gathered.
- Aaron commented that the Facebook posts being done on a regular basis have been great. Dawn noted that Kari has taken that on the last few months and has been doing a great job.

3. Park Activities

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- With the campgrounds closed, staff has been winterizing facilities.
- Brown's Lake and Snyder Bend staff have been busy with the Bigelow Park campground renovation.
- Erik Lindsay has been frost seeding areas that are being converted from brome to pollinator prairie.
- Contractors have started to remove overburden from the gravel pits north of Little Sioux Park and are on track to get it done this fall for the first phase.
- Brian showed drone photos of the excavating and reshaping work done on the Breise ponds by Johnston Earthmoving. Structure was added for habitat, and the road separating the two ponds was widened.
- Little Sioux Park staff has been working on preparing and sealing the cracks on the Union Bridge trail using the recently purchased crack repair machine.
- Josh VanVoorst will be hosting a hunter education field day on Saturday.
- The new trucks approved at last month's meeting have been ordered.

4. Board Information

None

5. Other Business

Brian presented two design options created by Avery Brothers to replace the Legacy Greenwing monument plaques that were stolen at Owego. The signs will be made of metal and plastic layers with vinyl over the top. The total replacement cost will be \$448 versus \$8,000 for the original bronze signs. The board agreed on the new design option and approved the purchase by consensus.

ITEM R7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Neil Stockfleth

Board Chair, Aaron Gehling