

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Neil Stockfleth, and Tom Limoges

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Cindy Bennett

STAFF PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Zant called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

MOTION by Neil, second by Tom

To approve the consent agenda.

VOTE: Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth, & Tom Limoges

Nay: None

Absent: None

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

- C1. Approve Minutes of the February 9, 2023, Regular Meeting
- C2. Approve the February 2023 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the February 2023 Financial/Budget Report
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:
 - Rosie Kuehne - Animal statues (6) - value: \$200
 - Megin Jacobson - Children's books (15) - value: \$50
 - Dr. Robert & Phyll Powell - American Wigeon mount

ITEM R2. Capital Improvement Projects Update

1. Little Sioux Park – ARPA Funding

Dan reported that in reviewing the Little Sioux campsites, the engineering firm has determined that our current flow rates exceed what the leach fields can legally handle. A 2- to 3-acre retention pond would be built to handle current use, as well as an additional 50 sites for future expansion to the north. A wastewater treatment operator will be required, so Nate will get certified. Brian will install flow meters at the parks that don't currently have them to monitor the amount of water being used. Borings will need to be done to see what material is there and whether a liner would be needed. Based on the engineer's estimate, Dan recommended requesting an additional \$350,000 in ARPA funds to cover the added expense.

He noted that the permit for the septic system at the Brown's Lake concession stand was received last week.

MOTION by Aaron, second by Neil.

To request an additional \$350,000 in ARPA funds from the Board of Supervisors for a retention pond at Little Sioux Park.²³⁻⁷

VOTE: Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Neil Stockfleth
& Tom Limoges

Nay: None

Absent: Cindy Bennett

2. Brown's Lake Concession & Beach

Dan reported on progress of the Brown's Lake concession & beach project. Final payment is being made to the contractor. The pop cooler has been delivered. Display cabinets and walk-through door are being built by the contractor. There is a little landscaping to be done and cement to be poured. Fencing will be installed with a walk-through gate at the sidewalk and an access gate for equipment. Rules signs still need to be ordered.

3. Nature Center Shelter & Restroom

Dan has confirmed with the vendor that the shelter should arrive by May 1st. A contractor has been obtained to pour cement and put up the shelter.

The contractor is expected to begin working on the outdoor-accessible restroom in the first week of April and will also cut a grate trench through the parking lot to facilitate drainage and reduce icing. Staff will hook up the dog fountain this spring.

4. Nature Center Foundation & Retaining Walls

Building Services will be getting bids on the foundation work needed at the nature center. Dan will take care of the bids for the retaining walls and water feature. Work will probably take place in late summer to early fall and will be coordinated with the education program schedules. The Supervisors' building fund will cover the cost of the foundation, but the conservation department will need to cost share on the water feature since it wasn't part of the foundation issue.

²³⁻⁷ To request an additional \$350,000 in ARPA funds from the Board of Supervisors for a retention pond at Little Sioux Park.

ITEM R3. Board Member/Staff Reports

1. Administrative Items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. April Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on April 13, 2023, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

b. Naturalist II Replacement

The Naturalist II application deadline was March 6th, and there were seven applicants. Three candidates were chosen to be interviewed, but one declined because of a family commitment. Interviews are scheduled for Thursday. Brian, Theresa, Kari and Dan will serve on the interview committee.

Brief discussion was held about the lack of applicants across the state in education and seasonal positions.

c. Woodbury County Fair

Theresa spoke with Dan about the struggle to staff a fair booth and that it always falls on the naturalists and interns which keeps them from providing programs at the nature center or parks. She suggested doing a daily program at the fair Old Town in lieu of having a booth. Typically, people just pick-up the freebies offered and keep walking. Programs would provide more interaction with the public. Brochures and other information could be made available at the programs. They are tentatively scheduled for 2:30 p.m. every day during fair week. Board members agreed that daily programs would be more valuable than a booth.

d. Old Business

• Izaak Walton League Property

Dan stated that although he had intended to submit a LAWCON grant request, once he considered all the requirements and restrictions, he decided it wasn't worth it for this project. He would rather request a Gilchrist grant for the purchase of the shoreline etc. The limit is \$100,000, but he would be requesting \$75,000. The letter is due April 1st.

MOTION by Aaron, second by Neil.

To pursue a Gilchrist grant for the Izaak Walton property purchase.²³⁻⁸

VOTE: Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, & Neil Stockfleth
Nay: None
Absent: Cindy Bennett
Abstain: Tom Limoges

²³⁻⁸ To pursue a Gilchrist grant for the Izaak Walton property purchase.

- **Bylaws Signatures**

Dan stated that it was discovered that the Bylaws which were amended in 2018 had never signed. Neil will sign tonight, and Cindy can sign next time. The signed copy will be kept on file.

- e. **Other Business**

None

2. **Nature Center Activities**

Theresa reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors report for February was presented.
- Programs have been rebounding from 2020. Because it isn't known when the naturalist II position will be filled, programs have been limited to what Theresa and Kari can handle. Some of the commitments were made before Dawn announced her retirement.
- The Expo Center has an interim general manager. Theresa spoke with someone they pulled out of retirement, but they haven't gotten back to her yet. Kathy and Theresa had been playing phone tag, but finally connected. They are potentially committed for the Boys and Girls Club steak dinner and possibly a wedding. Staff is leaning towards staying at the convention center for this year and reevaluating next year. There is a right of first refusal at the convention center, no deposit has been made yet. Sharon really wants to make things right after last year. Dan stated that he will work with Theresa to make decision.
- Positions were offered to four applicants for summer naturalists, one of which will be the AmeriCorps position. One of those individuals also applied for the full-time naturalist II position.
- Kari & Theresa attended IAN Spring Workshop.
- A screech owl aviary quote was obtained from BrownKnows Design for \$20,000. They did the exhibits at the Adams Nature Preserve. Earlier quotes were \$80,000-\$100,000. Grants will be pursued. An Audubon mini grant of \$1,000 and a couple private donations have already been received.

3. **Park Activities**

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Parks are looking for seasonal employees. Kari did social media posts that received a lot of shares and likes. The naturalists also made a plug at Morningside University during a program.
- Southwood staff has been working on burn plans and prepping for the cooperative burn week. The burn week filled up for participants almost a month early with 120 people signed up. The area includes some of Woodbury, Harrison and Monona counties, and Southwood is part of that district. Erik is taking a leadership role on that committee and doing a good job representing Woodbury county.
- Staff has been working on converting the old shop at Brown's Lake for cold storage. Overhead Door was supposed to be there last week but haven't heard from them.
- The Conex container is ready to go for the electrician, but it has been a problem getting them there. Williams Electric is the one who quoted. Josh will contact them. Then it will need spray foamed before it's ready to go.

- WCCB just finished hosting the CCPOA western spring workshop with help from the sheriff's office on some of the training. Woodbury is one of only a couple counties with Narcan or naloxone in officer's trucks for opioid overdose. It was good to get the word out. One of our Resource Managers has already used two rounds earlier when first on scene of an overdose situation. The naloxone was obtained for our officers, as well as for the public, because an overdose can happen through contact and be deadly.

4. Board Information

Neil asked for an update on several land projects that have been in the works. Dan reported that he will be meeting with the owners of the Shagbark property on Friday. He stated that the Oto property apparently had a buyer but the loan fell through. Erik has been staying in contact with the owner, and the INHF still has an offer on the table at \$4,000 an acre.

5. Other Business

Discussion was held regarding the New Lake offer from MidAmerican and some concerns raised by CF Industries. Neil expressed a personal conflict of interest as a CF Industries employee.

Dan is working with the county human resources department on a new child sexual abuse reporting policy. HR is taking it to their committee and then to the Supervisors. The policy protects the county but has not been implemented yet. Full-time and seasonal staff will need to go through training. The policy will prohibit adult staff members from being alone with a minor in areas that aren't easily visible.

ITEM R4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Tom Limoges

Board Chair, Chris Zellmer-Zant