

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2023, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, July 20, 2023, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth, and Tom Limoges

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Aaron Gehling

STAFF PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Zant called the meeting to order at 4:17 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

MOTION by Tom, second by Cindy.

To approve the consent agenda.

VOTE:

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

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

- C1. Approve Minutes of the June 15, 2023, Regular Meeting
- C2. Approve the June 2023 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the June 2023 Financial/Budget Report and 4th Quarter FY 22-23 Reserve Fund Report
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:
 - \$50 Lee Goodwin Memorial from Mark & Susan Nielsen for trails or education
 - Iowa's Natural Heritage book from Brian Stehr
 - Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas II from Iowa Ornithologists Union
 - Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas II from Rex & Maria Rundquist
 - Newspapers from Neil Stockfleth & Linda Bockelman

ITEM R2. Approval of Corrected Wages/Salaries for Full-Time and Part-Time Employees for FY 23-24

Dan explained that an error was made on the FY 23-24 wage matrix approved by the board in June. The cost-of-living increase was calculated at 4.00%, but the Supervisors approved 4.25%. A corrected matrix was presented for approval.

MOTION by Neil, second by Tom.

To approve the corrected salaries and wages for fiscal year 2023-2024 as presented.²³⁻²²

VOTE:

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

ITEM R3. Capital Improvement Projects Update

1. Brown's Lake Beach and Concessions

Dan reported that staff has received multiple compliments on the beach improvements and that usage has been picking up every weekend. The Square point-of-sale shows what items have been selling well and provides low stock alerts. The bacteria problem has resolved. There were only two weeks when it was high, and it has been normal since. Having the beach staff and extra people on the beach has helped keep the geese away. Arctic Ice has provided a chest freezer for the concession stand and is delivering ice for less cost than buying it elsewhere. Dan is working to find a bait dealer.

2. Little Sioux Park Campgrounds - Sewer

Dan reported that he has been tracking down the information requested by the engineers. He believes the engineering plan is excessive, so he asked Mike Barkley for input. Mike stated that his costs will double if he needs to cut through the road at each campsite.

Dan stated that Riverside campground will be done in the spring, and Bellamy will be completed the following fall and spring. The A.R.P.A. funds must be expended by fiscal year 2025.

Campground usage has been down about 75% due to the beach being closed. Dan received the water data from Ben Kusler and sent it to the University of Iowa. They will decide if a water study is warranted. Mark Nahra is willing to help with a water study to dispel rumors that their digging has lowered the water level.

Tom asked if there are any needed improvements that could be completed while the water is low. Dan said that Nate would like to add a rock jetty, which would be appropriate for a fish habitat grant. He stated that the shoreline and water control structure are in good shape. Board members asked for an annual revenue comparison for the next board meeting to discuss ways to bring the water level back up.

²³⁻²² To approve the corrected salaries and wages for fiscal year 2023-2024 as presented.

3. Nature Center Shelter & Restroom

Dan reported that the outdoor learning shelter is complete. Staff needs to do a little dirt work and then sod will be laid. Cardis Fencing will install fence by the retaining wall to provide safety until the rest of the retaining wall is added.

The inside of the restroom is finished and ready for the plumber, but there are a few things that need to be addressed by the contractor first. A decision needs to be made on the flooring.

4. Nature Center Foundation & Retaining Walls

Civil engineers will be completing a water study at the nature center to determine if anything is leaking as there seemed to be water in Dan's office and the resource room when soil samples were obtained. Gutters were buried underground several years ago. Certified Testing Services took video in the back storeroom and a classroom showing that there is a 4-6" void where there is no dirt under the floor and is concerned that it wasn't compacted properly before the floor was poured. Those areas will probably need to be foam jacked which will stop the problem but not raise the floor. It hasn't been determined if pillars will be needed on the outside yet. The water feature has leaked, and there are plans to renovate it as one level rather than three and with a poured wall instead of blocks.

5. Izaak Walton League

Dan announced that an \$80,000 Gilchrist grant was awarded for the purchase of the Izaak Walton League property. The purchase price was \$75,000 plus closing costs, so a portion of the grant may need to be returned. It has now been paid off, and the deed has been signed. Paperwork will be filed to take ownership. Dan asked the board to consider what to do with the property. Dan shared an email from Aaron in his absence regarding his thoughts on the property. Staff has cut up and hauled out a fallen pine tree, but additional tree cleanup will be needed. Dan's recommendation is to raze the building and develop a green space until a decision on the best use of the property can be made. Neil shared his thoughts about the building being historical and worth renovating. No decision was made at this time.

ITEM R4. Board Member/Staff Reports

1. Administrative Items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. September Meeting Date and Location

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on September 14, 2023, at either Snyder Bend or Southwood.

b. Environmental Education Fees

Theresa presented the proposed nature center program fees changes. Other than private preschools, Woodbury County schools are not charged. Out-of-county schools are currently charged \$1/child and have been since the beginning in 1988. The rates are the same whether the program takes place in our facilities or theirs. Teachers and chaperones are not charged. Theresa proposed increasing the fee for out-of-county schools, homeschool groups, and youth groups to \$2/person and charging a flat rate of \$20 for private preschools. No change was

proposed for the raptor program fees for non-school groups, but elimination of the extra raptor fee for school groups was proposed.

MOTION by Tom, second by Neil

To approve and adopt the proposed nature center program fee structure as presented.²³⁻²³

VOTE:

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

c. Old Business

None

2. Nature Center Activities

Theresa reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors report for June was presented.
- Staff has been very busy with camps and youth groups.
- Mariah is working on public programs for August and September.
- A Gilchrist grant was received to complete funding for the screech owl aviary and prairie root exhibit.
- The screech owl aviary is set to be delivered on August 7th.
- Nature Calls:
 - A total of \$6,200 in sponsorships have been received to date.
 - Auction items are slowly starting to come in.
 - Another planning meeting will be held next week.
 - Theresa learned that the event coordinator has left the convention center, but she was assured that the event is still on schedule and the menu will be sent this week.
 - The Nature Calls kestrel logo was shown to board members.
- Staff will be at the Woodbury County Fair Wednesday through Sunday. There will not be a WCCB booth this year, but naturalists will be leading programs at 2:30 each day in Old Town. Staff will also be helping some with the butterfly tents also.

3. Park Activities

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Camping numbers have been down at Little Sioux due to the beach being closed but doing well at other parks.
- The parks had all seasonal positions filled for the first time in a while, but then four seasonal staff members left early. The positions were opened back up and only one application has been received. Brief discussion was held regarding not being able to hire individuals under eighteen years of age due to workman's compensation concerns.
- Two new memorial benches have been installed at Little Sioux Park.
- Little Sioux staff has also been cleaning up the area in lakeside campground where trees were removed earlier in the year.

²³⁻²³ To approve and adopt the proposed nature center program fee structure as presented.

- Southwood staff has been focused on land management projects including spraying crown vetch, removing cedars, and chopping thistles. They have also been working on reopening several fire breaks that were used in previous years.
- Liam Bell, the new resource tech at Southwood, has been doing a great job and fitting in well. He previously worked for the Iowa DNR through the Pheasants Forever program.
- Long Lines has installed the cable giga center at the beach with wireless connections to both Snyder Bend and Brown's Lake shops. If that works well, the board and staff can consider adding Wi-Fi back in the campgrounds.
- Brian was told that Long Lines was going to run a line from Anthon to Correctionville. He talked to a rep and was told there may already a line there. Brian sent them a map of where it would be needed for Little Sioux Park.
- The Kubota UTV for Southwood was delivered this afternoon which completes all outstanding orders.

4. Board Information

None

5. Other Business

None

ITEM R5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Tom Limoges

Board Chair, Chris Zellmer-Zant