

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2016, 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 1, 2016, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth, and Suzan Boden

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**STAFF PRESENT**

Schneider, Peterson, and Bostwick

**OTHERS PRESENT**

None

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Bennett called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**ITEM R1.      APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION** by Zellmer-Zant second by Dixon.

To approve the consent agenda.

**VOTE:**    Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth, & Suzan Boden  
              Nay: None  
              Absent: None

Consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

**ITEM C1.    Approve minutes of the January 30, 2016, monthly meeting.**

**ITEM C2.    Approve February 2016 claims and expenditures.**

**ITEM C3.    Receive and place on file the February 2016 financial / budget report.**

**ITEM C4.    Acceptance and approval of new Mission Statement created at the January 30, 2016 Strategic Planning Session.**

**ITEM C5.    Acceptance and approval of Cooperative Grant Agreement.**  
              1. Wildlife Habitat Stamp Fund Grant #16-07W in amount of \$85,501

**ITEM C6.    Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:**  
              1. The Nature Conservancy Broken Kettle Grasslands – Use of trailer  
              2. Sioux Valley Sports Club, Inc. – Monetary donation (\$250)  
              3. Van Osdel Plastering & Drywall – Use of scissor lift  
              4. Northwest Iowa Group Sierra Club – Monetary donation (\$200) for animal adoption of turtles and snakes

**ITEM R2. Consideration and approval of contracts for garbage service for parks. (Peterson)**

Peterson presented the bids received for non-hazardous waste pickup for the parks.

- Western Disposal, Inc. is our current vendor and the only bidder for Brown’s Lake/Bigelow Park and Snyder Bend. The proposal is for a three-year contract at a cost of \$5,652/year with the use of their dumpsters. This includes a \$150 increase for Brown’s Lake/Bigelow Park over the previous contract due to a two-yard increase in the number of yards picked up.
- C.H.N. Garbage Service, Inc. is our current vendor and the only bidder for Southwood Conservation Area, Fowler Forest Preserve and Little Sioux Park. The proposal is for a two-year contract at a cost of \$7,303.92/year with no dumpsters provided. This is the same amount as our previous two-year contract.
- Stockfleth asked about recycling efforts in the parks. At this time, only the Nature Center has recycling pickup. The Boy Scouts have a collection cage for cans and bottles at Little Sioux Park. It was agreed that a recycling plan for the parks should be explored.

**MOTION** by Boden second by Zellmer-Zant.

To approve the garbage service contracts with Western Disposal and C.H.N. Garbage Service as presented.<sup>4-16</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth, & Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: None

**ITEM R3. Approval of resolution making application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition of 120 acres expanding Curtin Timber area. (Schneider)**

Schneider reported that he is in the process of writing a grant application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) for a federal grant in the amount of \$200,000 to assist with the acquisition of the Roberts Property – Curtin Timber Addition. He presented the project proposal resolution form for the Board’s approval.

**MOTION** by Zellmer-Zant second by Dixon.

To approve and sign the LWCF Resolution on Acquisition or Development for Outdoor Recreation authorizing the Director to make application to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for financial assistance in the acquisition of the Curtin Timber Addition.<sup>5-16</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth, & Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: None

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<sup>4-16</sup> To approve the garbage service contracts with Western Disposal and C.H.N. Garbage Service as presented.

<sup>5-16</sup> To approve and sign the LWCF Resolution on Acquisition or Development for Outdoor Recreation authorizing the Director to make application to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for financial assistance in the acquisition of the Curtin Timber Addition.

**ITEM R4. Consideration and approval of proposed adjustments to Wage Plan Matrix. (Schneider)**

Schneider stated that he had completed a review of the WCCB Wage Plan matrix and presented a proposal for the Board’s consideration. He compared WCCB salaries with several similar Iowa county conservation boards and found that eight positions needed adjustments and three positions needed no adjustment. The proposed adjustments would become effective July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**MOTION** by Boden second by Dixon.

To approve the proposed salary adjustments to the Conservation Department Wage Plan Matrix as presented.<sup>6-16</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth, & Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: None

**ITEM R5. Consideration and approval of budget for marketing and advertising. (Schneider/Snyder)**

Schneider asked the Board to consider authorizing a budget or line item for marketing and advertising. Past marketing and advertising expenses have been allocated to various line items, mostly within the Reserve Fund budget. Schneider recommended that a budget amount be established for marketing and advertising from the tax-supported funds. This would include amounts spent with the Sioux City Journal and other publications, website advertising, other print advertising, and promotional items for events such as the camping kick-off weekend and the county fair. The Board agreed to consider this and address it at the next regular meeting. Schneider will provide more detail on past expenditures in this area at the next meeting.

**ITEM R6. Approve action to change merchant account provider to Heartland Payment Systems. (Schneider)**

Schneider informed the Board of a change to the merchant account provider for credit card processing. In preparing for implementation of online cabin reservations and comparing credit card processing fee structures, it was determined that a considerable amount could be saved by switching to Heartland Payment Systems through our account at Kingsley State Bank.

**MOTION** by Dixon second by Stockfleth.

To approve the switch to Heartland Payment Systems through Kingsley State Bank for credit card processing.<sup>7-16</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth, & Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: None

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<sup>6-16</sup> To approve the proposed salary adjustments to the Conservation Department Wage Plan Matrix as presented.

<sup>7-16</sup> To approve the switch to Heartland Payment Systems through Kingsley State Bank for credit card processing.

**ITEM R7. Capital Improvement Projects Update (Schneider)**

**1. Southwood Cabins**

Schneider reported that the contractor should be starting on the concrete soon now that the frost is gone. The furniture maker has not yet started, but staff will follow up again in a week or so. Sofa sleepers will also be ordered.

**2. LED conversion projects**

Schneider reported that the LED conversion is nearing completion at the Nature Center. The new lamps were too large for the up-light fixtures in the exhibit area and still need to be addressed. Conversion in the parks will begin soon.

The parking lot and outside up-lights not yet converted at the Nature Center are being considered a first priority for any contingency funding. Schneider recommended converting all park area night security lights not included in this conversion project. The fixtures would cost \$166.75, plus the cost of installation, and MidAmerican offers a \$75 rebate per fixture.

An inventory of replacement lamps for the old fixtures was completed, and Echo was contacted about a possible refund or exchange.

**3. Nature Center improvements**

Schneider stated that the drywall repairs and painting have been completed in the Nature Center classroom and exhibit area.

Brief discussion was held regarding the Nature Center HVAC system. A compressor and fan will need to be replaced soon. The Baker Group is evaluating the heat pump units which are over 20 years old and past their life expectancy.

**ITEM R8. Board member / staff reports**

**1. Nature Center activities (Snyder)**

Schneider distributed the monthly programs statistics report. He noted that there were over 90 people in attendance at the WCCF annual meeting and program on Sunday. He also reminded the Board of the upcoming volunteer banquet on March 29<sup>th</sup> and encouraged them to attend.

**2. Park activities (Peterson)**

Peterson reported that the staff has been working on fire plans, scheduling seasonal employee interviews, preparing equipment for the season, cutting firewood and attending training sessions. Chemicals have been ordered and delivered. Supplies have been ordered and should arrive in the next week. The old Brown's Lake docks have been taken to Southwood and are being refurbished to be used as fishing and canoe docks for the pond. The new docks for Brown's Lake are scheduled to arrive the first of April.

a. **Update on hay contracts, proposed renegotiation**

Discussion was held regarding plans for hay ground rental. Peterson recommended the following plan.

- Oak Ridge Conservation Area (28.02 acres) – All acres need to be renovated and will not be included in request for bids this spring. The renovation plan would include roundup ready beans in spring of 2016, dormant seed roundup ready alfalfa with a light cover crop in November 2016, and a first cutting in July 2017. In the spring of 2017, 22.68 acres will be available for bid with the remaining 5.34 acres available in the spring of 2018.
- Little Sioux/Shagbark Hills (32.93 acres) – There are only 6.75 acres of good alfalfa and 26.18 acres of brome. Jeremy Beeson has expressed interest in renegotiating another three-year hay contract at \$100/acre on all 32.93 acres. Renegotiating this contract would provide a three-year buffer to spread out the expense and labor required in renovating the Oak Ridge and Little Sioux acres.
- Oak Ridge Conservation Area (44.84 acres) – This area is all brome hay which was bid out at \$65/ton for 40.01 acres in 2013. It is recommended that this area be bid out at a minimum of \$80/acre this year.

**MOTION** by Stockfleth second by Zellmer-Zant.

To approve the hay ground renovation and bidding plan as presented.<sup>8-16</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth, & Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: None

Schneider stated that he received a request from Jonathon Patton of Smithland to rent out a 1.48 acre brome field in Unit 4 for a one-time cutting of hay in early summer. This is one of the areas identified to be used next year for the monarch initiative project.

**MOTION** by Boden second by Zellmer-Zant.

To authorize the rental of a 1.48 acre brome hay field in Unit 4 to Jonathon Patton at a rate of \$100 per acre for a one-time hay cutting in the summer of 2016.<sup>9-16</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Don Dixon, Neil Stockfleth, & Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: None

Discussion was held regarding the Monarch Initiative Grant. Peterson reported that he and the staff have identified six sites totaling 20 acres in Shagbark Hills, Little Sioux Park, Oak Ridge Conservation Area, and Southwood Conservation Area to be used for the Monarch Initiative Grant program. The proposed sites were sent to the Fish & Wildlife Service for review. Agreements have been requested and should be available for the Board to review at the next meeting.

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<sup>8-16</sup> To approve the hay ground renovation and bidding plan as presented.

<sup>9-16</sup> To authorize the rental of a 1.48 acre brome hay field in Unit 4 to Jonathon Patton at a rate of \$100 per acre for a one-time hay cutting in the summer of 2016.

**b. Equipment items**

The 2016 Chevy Silverado truck is ready to be picked up this week and radio equipment will be transferred from the old truck. Once the remaining equipment budget is determined, additional equipment purchases can be addressed. The most urgent need at this time is a 1-ton truck, a slip-on fire unit, and a disk for food plots.

**3. Administrative items (Schneider)**

**a. FY 17 budget update**

Schneider reported that all budget items were approved, including the requests for increased hours for the three receptionists and the addition of a full-time Resource Technician position for Little Sioux Park. Electricity line items were decreased significantly in anticipation of cost savings with the LED conversion. A request was also approved to add line items more specific to our needs in the Reserve Fund under Nature Center Programs and Gift Shop.

**b. County vehicle commuting resolution adopted by Board of Supervisors**

Schneider provided a resolution passed by the Board of Supervisors covering commuting with county vehicles to assist with federal IRS reporting requirements. This only applies to the Director since the Deputy Director, as law enforcement, is not subject to the IRS fringe benefit commuting rule. Nothing will change except that the mode of tracking will be online.

**c. Official department logos**

Schneider presented information regarding recent action taken by the Board of Supervisors to ensure the consistent and appropriate use of the official Woodbury County logo. Schneider asked the Board to consider whether official WCCB logos should be designated.

**d. Long range plan ideas submitted by staff**

A compilation of all long range planning ideas submitted by staff was distributed for review. The list will need to be evaluated and prioritized.

Chris Zellmer-Zant left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

**e. Timetable for hiring new Resource Technician**

Schneider presented a hiring timetable for the new Resource Technician position at Little Sioux, with an expected start date of Friday, July 1<sup>st</sup>, or Tuesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>. With the addition of a second full-time employee, the Little Sioux Resource Manager will go to exempt status year round.

**f. Park Rules and Regulations update**

Schneider stated that the staff is currently reviewing the park rules and regulations for needed updates as it has not been done since 2000. The County Attorney's office will review any revisions and the final draft will be submitted to the Board for approval and subsequent publication.

**g. Set date/time for April meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 7, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

**h. Additional item**

Schneider stated that a landowner who had previously communicated interest in donating land to WCCB is now working with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to grant a conservation easement on his property.

**ITEM R9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

The above minutes were typed by Dawn Bostwick.

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Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

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Board Secretary, Neil Stockfleth

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Board President, Cindy Bennett