

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2021 BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, at Brown's Lake-Bigelow Park shelter beginning at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Cindy Bennett

STAFF PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Mark Monson, County Supervisor

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gehling called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

Dan reported that the April 15, 2021, meeting minutes have been amended to add Theresa Kruid as being in attendance.

MOTION by Neil, second by Suzan.

To approve the consent agenda.

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

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

- C1. Approve Minutes of the May 11, 2021 Regular Meeting.
- C2. Approve the May 2021 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the May 2021 Financial/Budget Report
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:
 - Vickie Trobaugh for gardening books
 - Rosie Kuehne for children's books

- Anne Shaner for oriole feeder
- Knife River Midwest for \$1,500 cash donation for nature center programs

ITEM R2. Approval of FY 22 Wages/Salaries for Full-Time and Regular Part-Time Conservation Department Employees – Action

Dan presented the FY22 Salaries/Wages for full-time and regular part-time employees, which include a 2.75% increase as approved by the Board of Supervisors for the FY22 budget.

MOTION by Suzan, second by Chris.

To approve the FY22 full-time and regular part-time conservation employee salary and wage schedule as presented.¹⁹⁻²¹

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

ITEM R3. Hungry Canyons Grant – Oak Ridge Water Control Structure – Update

Dan expressed appreciation for the work done by Ben Kusler and his staff in putting together the Hungry Canyons grant application for the Oak Ridge water control structure. Ben had to lobby for it with the grant review committee, but the grant was approved at \$75,000 with a \$15,000 match.

ITEM R4. Capital Improvement Projects Update

1. Brown’s Lake – Beach & Road/Campground Projects and Survey

Dan reported that the preliminary survey of the Brown’s Lake beach boundary was received this morning. The surveyor had a hard time finding information on a couple of the pins. There was a slight boundary change in the neighbor’s favor.

(Mark Monson joined the meeting.)

The board agreed by consensus that development should not take place in that area and that the entire survey process and board decision should be noted in detail in the files for future reference.

Dan stated that the beach project had been pushed back due to lost revenues with COVID, but it will be part of the revenue bond. Bids will be let for the beach house this summer for construction this fall into next spring. The beach and sidewalks will be done separately so they can be completed this summer while the water is low. The projected cost for the beach is \$30,000 or less.

(Theresa Kruid joined the meeting.)

Dan reported on the campground redesign project stating that Brian has drawings done for the layout, and Mike Barkley is drawing up plans to get water and sewer to each site. The project will be started at the end of the season once the bond goes through. Staff will start moving sites in the fall. Eight to ten sites will be removed. Most electric and hydrants will stay, but a few hydrants will need to be moved. The roads project is on track to let bids this fall with completion in the spring.

¹⁹⁻²¹ To approve the FY22 full-time and regular part-time conservation employee salary and wage schedule as presented.

2. Brown's Lake – Shoreline Phase II - Update – Informational

Dan stated that Phase II of the Brown's Lake shoreline project is complete, and the final payment had been made to the contractor. Staff has hydroseeded the area, and it has gotten a couple rains on it. An additional fall hydroseed can be done if needed.

3. Brown's Lake Water Levels – Informational

Dan recently participated in a meeting with three representatives each from the DNR and MidAmerican Energy regarding the Brown's Lake water level. MidAmerican will pump water and plan to put in a pump that is independent of the plant. They will also pay for the electricity on the pump. The DNR will complete a water study and provide information as to the size of pump needed. The outlet pipe was full of dead zebra mussel shells. They are considering a black light system or heating the water to avoid pumping invasive species from the river into the lake. They stated that the pump is now locked so only certain personnel have access to turn it on or off. Dan asked for a management plan in writing and is pushing for a press release to be put out.

Neil asked about the status of the Isaac Walton League property. Dan reported that contrary to rumors, the state has not purchased it. Aaron will look for a contact to let them know that the board is interested in the property. Dan will also make a contact.

4. Snyder Bend Status – Informational

Dan reported that there is very little water in Snyder Bend Lake. There was another summer fish kill last week, but some fish are still alive. The DNR is coming tomorrow to test and treat with Rotenone on Tuesday and kill remaining fish. The situation has saved the DNR \$100,000 in chemicals.

Dan asked Doug Chafa if dirt could be moved before the lake is refilled. Doug checked with the Army Corps of Engineers and got approval. Dan met with Johnston Excavating today regarding dredging the shoreline along the campground. They estimated it at 62,000 cubic yards and stated that it would require an excavator. If too cost prohibitive, the focus will be on just the southern area where people fish. This would have to go through the normal bid process. Standard timing for this type of work would be winter. If the dredging isn't going to be done, the DNR would fill the lake this fall. Fish have been ordered.

5. Nature Center Drainage Issue – Update

Dan presented pictures of the finished nature center drainage project. They were able to get the expected slope. Another storm water drain was discovered that had not been eroding. They installed geotextile fabric and rip rap down to the bottom. Hydroseeding was done with a pollinator mix and fescue. An area was leveled for a future small shelter.

ITEM R5. Board member/staff reports

1. Administrative items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. July Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 14, 2021, at the Snyder Bend Park.

b. Little Sioux Park, Engineer & Gravel Plans

Dan stated that the engineer's office has changed plans for their gravel removal and will be mining gravel on the north end of the property they own rather than the south end closest to the park.

Dan stated that he met with Keith Radig to discuss his proposed housing development project. Dan told him that he wasn't trying to undermine his project but is just following through on the agreement that was thought to already have been done. Dan also stated that it was planned to be developed into a recreational area, and he doesn't support a housing area there.

Mark Monson interjected that he was on the Board of Supervisors at that time it was set up, and the intent was always for the property to go to the Conservation Board for development.

c. Peters Pit – Gravel, Engineers Plan

Dan reported that the engineer's office wants to mine more gravel out of Peters Pit bringing it out to the road and doubling the pond area. The agreement ended in 2018, but the department will work with them on that.

d. Nature Center Rentals, #'s – Review – Action

Discussion was held regarding the current COVID capacity limitations on nature center rentals. Dan said there wasn't an uptick in rental requests after offering rentals again. He reported staff shortages due to family emergencies and vacations into July and asked that rental capacities remain limited to 30 per classroom until the end of July. The board decided by consensus to return rentals to normal capacity by July 20th or sooner if possible.

e. Year-End Expenditures – Informational

Dan stated that there was an approximate \$63,000 overage in budgeted salaries due to some summer positions not being filled this year and the Brown's Lake concession stand not being ready, and that will be returned to the general fund. Above that, there is an estimated \$29,000 remaining to be used to for some items needed but delayed until certain of funds availability. The items are prioritized by safety and efficiency first. Items on the list include a harness and scabbard for the bucket truck, computers for seven officer vehicles, wood chips for playgrounds, and an elevator for the wood splitter. All items will need to be received by June 30th to be expensed in fiscal year 2021. Dan further explained that the computers for officer vehicles will allow them to be hooked up to the Mach system as discussed in department long-range planning. The sheriff's department supports this as it will allow them to locate WCCB officers and enable the departments to assist each other more easily. The computers will require a hotspot in each truck at a monthly cost of \$50 per vehicle. The board agreed by consensus to authorize the director to make these year-end purchase decisions.

f. Mower and UTV bids – Action

Brian presented bid information for a mower to replace the 2015 Toro at Little Sioux and a UTV to replace the 2006 Polaris at Southwood. Four dealers submitted bids on a 72" zero-turn mower. The lowest bid was for the John Deere model, but it did not meet the

required specifications of having a hydraulic lift. Bids were received from two dealers on the UTV with the Kubota model being the lowest bid.

MOTION by Chris, second by Neil.

To approve and authorize the purchase of a Kubota 72” zero-turn mower at a net cost of \$13,000 and a Kubota Sidekick UTV at a net cost of \$13,000 from Midwest Kubota.²⁰⁻²¹

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

g. Old Business

None

h. Other Business

Dan stated that he had been asked to sit on the REAP grant committee, but he had declined several months ago because he is already on the Habitat grant committee. They recently asked again because they are pushing for a representative from the middle to northwest area of the state. Dan recommended Brian as he would learn a lot about writing grants and would make important connections. Tom Hazelton will take the recommendation to the state board who will then have to take it to the DNR. It will probably still have to be advertised as well.

Dan reported that the solar project at Snyder Bend was supposed to show a 20% return. He sent bills to Dolf last week for review. Dan was also approached by someone last week about doing a solar project at the nature center. They are working with nature centers in Lyon and Sioux counties, as well as Mau Marine at the lake. They have asked for 12 months of electric bills to put together a bid.

Brief discussion was held regarding the Winnebago Bend ground trade. Dan explained that it was brought up in Congress and has gone silent. The situation is being monitored.

2. Nature Center Activities

Theresa reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors report was presented.
- Programs and field trips are ongoing. A couple have even been booked for next May.
- Summer staff has begun, and camps started yesterday. Camps are 99.9% full, with only one spot remaining and some people on wait lists.
- The nature center resident kestrel, Scout, was transferred to Sioux County Conservation because he wasn't adapting well here. He will be housed with their female kestrel in an outdoor enclosure without public display which should be better for him.
- Nature Calls planning is underway.
- Donations have been received for the story walk trail.
- Volunteers have been helping replant the garden beds.

²⁰⁻²¹ To approve and authorize the purchase of a Kubota 72” zero-turn mower at a net cost of \$13,000 and a Kubota Sidekick UTV at a net cost of \$13,000 from Midwest Kubota.

- The nature center bees swarmed last week. Two boxes were put out, but they didn't use them. It was a great learning opportunity for the interns. Half the hive is remaining, but it is unknown if there is a queen.

3. Park Activities

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Overall the parks have been busy, other than Snyder Bend which is below average.
- Staff used the hydroseeder borrowed from Clay County Conservation to complete seeding projects at Brown's Lake, the Salsness property, and the nature center.
- Food plots are in for the season. A few sunflower plots were replanted due to dry conditions.
- Little Sioux staff has been working on landscaping around the swan pen using materials on hand, plus wood chips and plants. They took out an old set of railroad tie steps that were a tripping hazard, and they will also be putting up the interpretive sign. It is thought that the swans may have paired.
- AED units were obtained for the eight law enforcement vehicles through a program by the Iowa Department of Public Safety and the Iowa Department of Health. The program is made possible by the Hemsley Charitable Trust, and the trust will be supporting the units for eight years. After the fourth year, the WCCB will be responsible for replacing the batteries at an estimated cost of \$161 per unit. Staff is taking the required online training, and Brian will lead hands-on training.

4. Board Information

The Iowa's County Conservation System annual fall conference will take place September 15-17, 2021, at Story County Conservation. Board members were asked to let Dan know soon if they plan to attend.

ITEM R6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Neil Stockfleth

Board Chair, Aaron Gehling