

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2022, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, June 9, 2022, at the Brown's Lake-Bigelow Park shelter beginning at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, Josh VanVoorst, and Dawn Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Stockfleth called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

MOTION by Chris, second by Cindy.

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 May 12, 2022, Regular Meeting.
- C2. Approve the May 2022 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the May 2022 Financial/Budget Report
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:
 - Mark Wetmore for \$1,791 for wildlife viewing scope at Nature Center
 - Missouri River Historical Development (MRHD) for \$15,000 grant for outdoor learning shelter at Nature Center
 - Gene & Ginger Martin for \$1,000 for red-tailed hawk adoption
 - Steve & Ashley Schmillen for \$400 donation for bird feeders in honor of Jack & June Perrin
 - Bruce & Jeanette Hopkins for \$100 toward trail bench project

ITEM R2. Acknowledge the appointment of Seasonal Park Security Guard as Temporary Peace Officer for summer season: May 27 – September 5, 2022

Dan announced that an additional individual has been hired to work as seasonal security guard in the parks on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. He asked that this individual be officially appointed by board action as a temporary peace officer for the department.

MOTION by Tom, second by Aaron.

To designate the following seasonal park security guard as a temporary peace officer for the 2022 season (May 27 – September 5): Noah Engel-Cartie.²²⁻¹⁷

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

ITEM R3. Approval of FY23 Wages/Salaries for Full-Time and Regular Part-Time Conservation Department Employees

Dan presented the FY23 salaries/wages for full-time and regular part-time employees, which include a 4% increase as approved by the Board of Supervisors for the FY23 budget. He noted that the increase for salaried employees will be calculated based on their hourly rates due to there being 27 rather than 26 pay periods.

MOTION by Chris, second by Aaron.

To approve the FY23 full-time and regular part-time conservation employee salary and wage schedule as presented.²²⁻¹⁸

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

ITEM R4. Capital Improvement Projects Update

1. Brown's Lake Projects

a. Road Project

Dan reported that the Brown's Lake road project is mostly complete. There is a little bit of hand seeding yet to be done. The county engineer's office will be measuring to determine how much concrete was poured, and Knife River will send the final bill. There are a couple small drainage issues with adjoining landowners that were previously known, and Secondary Roads will be helping conservation staff address the problems.

²²⁻¹⁷ To designate the following seasonal park security guard as temporary peace officer for the 2022 season (May 27 – September 5): Noah Engel-Cartie.

²²⁻¹⁸ To approve the FY23 full-time and regular part-time conservation employee salary and wage schedule as presented.

b. Campground Project

Brian reported on the Brown's Lake campground project. Rock has been placed on the pads, and a roller was rented to pack them in well. Most of the seeding has been done. Some remaining tasks include installing grills, cutting down sewer caps to final height, setting up lift stations with floats, and installing registration posts. The plan is to open the campground by July 1st, but if the grass isn't well established, only the center section may be opened initially. Dan commended the staff for the great team effort in getting this project done.

c. Concession Project

Dan stated that the concession stand project is way behind due to various supply chain issues. The drywall has been completed in the main part. Most interior bathrooms have been done with perlite board. The contractors have been installing things as the parts show up. The engineering firm is working with the DNR on the wastewater treatment permitting issue. They are trying to get permission from the DNR to hook up to the old system until the issue is worked out. Outstanding tasks include placing sidewalks, seeding grass, laying sod, and landscaping with field stone and barberries.

Brief discussion was held regarding the drought and low lake level. MidAmerican has been pumping but the level has not been improving. Aaron noted that when the pipe was designed in the seventies, there was no lake study done, and it was not intended to raise or lower the level. There will be a public meeting on June 21st at which time the DNR will share the study results and their thoughts.

d. Izaak Walton League

Dan reported on a call he received from the president of the Iowa Izaak Walton League regarding their desire to sell their property in Salix to the conservation board, noting their similar mission statements. They want to reinvigorate the chapter without a building and use the sale proceeds as seed money to help conservation-minded organizations. The property is listed at \$109,000, but they are asking \$75,000. Dan asked about any covenants or restrictions on the building and was told that there would be none. Their property insurance expires in the fall, so they would like to complete the sale by then to avoid the need to renew. No action can be taken at this time, but a special meeting can be held later for that purpose.

Dan noted that the Briese property would be closed on in the next few weeks which will essentially deplete the REAP fund. Additionally, the CIP fund balance is down to about \$50,000, and the Brown's Lake project loan payment will be coming up in the fall. Dan stated that he may be able to negotiate a payment plan with the Izaak Walton League or possibly work with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation on the purchase. Chris questioned whether the state would be interested in buying it and expressed concerns about the conservation board owning it. Dan stated that ownership would give the board control over what is done with the property.

2. Oak Ridge Unit One Dam Repair

Brian reported that the Oak Ridge dam repair was started on Friday. A few trees had to be removed to get to the structure itself, but the pipe has been laid and bedded. They are working to backfill it now and should be done in less than a week. Brian stated that it should be more than adequate to handle that area.

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 July 12, 2022, at Southwood with a tour of Oak Ridge following the meeting.

b. ARPA Funds

Dan announced that the board of supervisors approved an allocation of ARPA funds, up to \$800,000, towards the campground water and sewer upgrades contingent on it meeting ARPA qualifications. The assistant county attorney asked for further information ensure it qualifies. Dan has been working with Jamie at ISAC and has cited several county conservation projects that have been paid for with ARPA funds. NACo provided some points to cover, as well as an overview of the final rule. He is trying to find documentation to demonstrate that it meets the water quality and recreational use that is high on the ARPA list. He stated that both Jeremy and Jamie are confident but want to be sure it can be proved. The supervisors discussed possibly hiring a consultant to provide an opinion. Dan noted that work cannot start until fall, so there is still time to work through the process and make sure it qualifies. The funds have been allocated and do not have to be used until 2026.

c. Old Business

None

d. Other Business

Discussion was held regarding a landowner's concern about ownership of the beach in front of their property. A beach survey was done previously for the fence to make sure it was correct, and the fence is on the property line. Dan found a fencing agreement from 1995 in the file and discussed it with former director, Rick Schneider. The agreement gave the landowner, and subsequent owners in perpetuity, access to the beach through a gate in the fence but did not convey ownership of the beach. The beach is state property and part of the park. Dan will be meeting with the landowner on June 18 and will inform him that it is a public beach owned by the state and private boat docks or lifts are not allowed. He will also give him a copy of the agreement and beach rules.

2. Nature Center Activities

Dan explained that Dawn and Theresa are at the nature center for the volunteer ice cream social this evening. The programs and visitors report for May was presented. He reported that Dorothy Shamblen has been hired to fill the open receptionist position and will start on Wednesday.

3. Park Activities

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- The parks had a great Memorial Day weekend with all three parks filling up for the first time this year.

- Staff have been sharing the planter and working on food plots. Josh has been working on Owego.
- Southwood staff completed a prescribed burn at Oak Ridge to help control some brome areas.
- Brian talked to the contractor for the nature center security cameras today and was told that they are just waiting on the cameras, but all other equipment has been received. FiberComm will be donating the fiber and hooking it up.
- The half-ton Chevy Silverado has been received.
- The F250 is still waiting to be built.
- The chassis cab truck was cancelled. Brian is working with the dealers to determine the best time to rebid it. He may have bids ready for the next board meeting.
- Dan suggested looking at retail versus fleet, because there isn't much pricing difference now due to high demand. He has concerns about waiting until December and risking not receiving it within the fiscal year. Dan is on the supervisors meeting agenda to request approval of restricted funds.

4. Board Information

None

5. Other Business

Tom reported a successful Pheasants Forever fishing derby at Little Sioux Park last weekend. There were approximately 55 kids in attendance, and 52 rods and reel were given out. Two nature center naturalist interns were also there.

Dan discussed a call received from an upset neighbor of Little Sioux Park. He says the county pumping the pit down so they can get gravel is affecting his well. Dan explained that it is a county engineer's project and not anything the conservation department is doing. The lake at Little Sioux Park is down because the river level is down. The county engineer has monitoring wells in place, and the pumping is not affecting the ground water level that feeds Little Sioux Park or neighboring wells.

Josh reported that one piece of Owego was drawn down to control cat tails. The rest is holding water better than in other years, but pumping will be needed.

ITEM R6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Cindy Bennett

Board Chair, Neil Stockfleth