

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 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, April 13, 2023, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center 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, Theresa Kruid, and Dawn Bostwick

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Mark Nelson, County Supervisor/Conservation Board Liaison

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairperson Bennett called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

**CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**

None

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda**

**MOTION** by Neil, second by Aaron.

To approve the consent agenda.

**VOTE:**

Aye: Aaron Gehling, Cindy Bennett & Neil Stockfleth

Nay: None

Absent: Chris Zellmer-Zant & Tom Limoges

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

C1. Approve Minutes of the March 21, 2023, Regular Meeting

C2. Approve the March 2023 Claims and Expenditures

C3. Receive and Place on File the March 2023 Financial/Budget Report and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter FY23 Reserve Fund Report

C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:

- \$200 Memorial donation from Don Brown Trust honoring Marv Berenstein
- Photo frames donated by Mark Peterson

**ITEM R2. NCIC, Taser & Body Camera Policy Updates and Addition to Law Enforcement Policy**

Brian reviewed the recommended department law enforcement policy revisions and additions to address the newly acquired equipment, including the WCCB Law Enforcement Policy, Disciplinary Policy for Iowa System Violators, Policy for Utilization of BodyVision Body Worn Cameras and the Woodbury County Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement Policies and Procedures for Conducted Electrical Weapon (TASER).

**MOTION** by Aaron, second by Neil.

To approve and adopt revised Woodbury County Conservation Board law enforcement policies and procedures as presented.<sup>23-9</sup>

**VOTE:**

Aye: Aaron Gehling, Cindy Bennett & Neil Stockfleth

Nay: None

Absent: Chris Zellmer-Zant & Tom Limoges

**ITEM R3. Little Sioux Park Septic – ARPA Funds**

Dan reported on his request to the Board of Supervisors for additional ARPA funds for a wastewater treatment system at Little Sioux Park. They granted an additional \$279,000 of ARPA funds for the increased costs of a wastewater treatment system, in addition to the original \$800,000 committed to the campground water and sewer project. Dan reviewed the two options which are a 2–3-acre retention pond or an enclosed tank system, such as the system available from BioMicrobics. The engineers recommend going with the enclosed tank system, and the DNR supports it for the park. If a retention pond is used, it would need to be permitted under Chapter 64 with the DNR which would delay construction for a year and a half. The ARPA funds need to be expended by 2025 which may not be possible with a retention pond.

*(Tom arrived at 4:13 p.m.)*

Neil requested that Dan call and/or visit at least two other campgrounds utilizing this system. Dan stated that this newer system would have less liability, no need for fencing, no certified operator requirement, and minimal maintenance. It would need to be pumped out annually, and the motor will eventually need to be replaced. Brian added that when the system discharges to the leach field, it is clean water. It has lifetime media in it and no filters. It does have a fan that will need to run during operation but can be shut off when the campground is closed. The Bio Microbics representatives recommended a 10,000-gallon tank which will provide plenty of capacity for future expansion.

Dan, Brian, and Nate met to plan the campsite layout for Bellamy campground. Bellamy currently has 40 sites which are very short and cannot accommodate most campers today. They were able to lay out 28 angled sites that are about 60' long. Tyler will go down with GPS to map it out. Dan told the engineering firm that they don't need to design the campground which will lower costs.

Dan discussed the possibility of delaying the septic work at Southwood if there aren't enough funds available. Delaying the playground replacement at Brown's Lake was also mentioned but may not be feasible due to the condition of the playground, which will be discussed later.

*(Chris arrived at 4:30 p.m. and assumed the duties of chairperson.)*

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<sup>23-9</sup> To approve and adopt revised Woodbury County Conservation Board law enforcement policies and procedures as presented.

Dan anticipates an increase in revenue of \$30,000-38,000 with the extra \$5/night for each full-hookup site. He also noted that usage will likely increase because sewer hookups are available. Dan stated that the Correctionville city clerk, who is also a business owner, sent an email to each of the supervisors about the impact that Little Sioux Park has on the city of Correctionville. She said that when the beach was closed and usage was down, they noticed the impact.

**MOTION** by Neil, second by Aaron

To proceed as recommended in pursuing bids for the wastewater treatment system for Little Sioux Park, with the contingency that at least two other campgrounds using this type of system are contacted for reference.<sup>23-10</sup>

**VOTE:**

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

**ITEM R4. Brown's Lake Beach Rules – Approve Opening/Closing Times**

Dan reminded board members that the Brown's Lake beach hours had previously been changed to close at 6:00 p.m. rather than 8:00 p.m. in the hopes that it would take care of some of the problems being experienced but it did not help. He asked that the hours be returned to 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with the new beach and concession stand and added staff presence. It will then match the hours at Little Sioux Park beach again also.

**MOTION** by Tom Limoges, second by Cindy Bennett.

To set the Brown's Lake beach hours back to 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.<sup>23-11</sup>

**VOTE:**

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

**ITEM R5. Capital Improvement Projects Update**

**1. Nature Center Shelter & Restroom**

The shelter kit is on its way and will arrive by the end of the month. The contractor for the restroom project is also erecting the shelter. They will be showing up tomorrow or Monday to look at the project site to see how things have settled and how much dirt needs to be moved. The pad was intentionally overbuilt to accommodate settling. They will cut it down, pour concrete and then set up the shelter.

The contractor will start on the restroom next week. The biggest issue will be to coordinate with CW Suter for the plumbing and Williams for the electrical. They are aware that this is a busy time at the nature center with educational programs.

Neil asked about the plan for stabilizing the slope. Dan explained that when the retaining walls are taken out for the foundation project, the dirt that is cut down will go over the edge and will be

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<sup>23-10</sup> To proceed as recommended in pursuing bids for the wastewater treatment system for Little Sioux Park, with the contingency that at least two other campgrounds using this type of system are contacted for reference.

<sup>23-11</sup> To set the Brown's Lake beach hours back to 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

sloped down towards the nature center, the woods, and the retaining walls. It was suggested that the new retaining wall be extended to the shelter. Dan will look into the cost of dirt versus extending the retaining wall.

## 2. Nature Center Foundation & Retaining Walls

Dan reported that additional issues have been found that weren't noticed on the initial inspection of the nature center foundation problem. Theresa found a half-inch gap in the library between the bookshelf/counter and the outside wall. The library door frame is also bending.

The contractors think they can just polyjack it to take care of the problem, because they don't think it is a foundation issue. Dan thinks they will need to do pillar work. Terry Glade with CMBA, the original architect, is coming out to meet with Kenny Schmitz, the two floor-jacking companies, Dan, and Brian next Tuesday meeting. Dan will make sure they do due diligence.

Additionally, the sidewalk is pulling away from the building, and the water feature railings are leaning. The water feature repairs will come from the WCCB budget since it is not part of the foundation project. The three levels will be eliminated, and water won't be directed through the wall, but will just have one drop. The moving water is important as the sound attracts birds and animals.

Drainage is also being added by the dog-friendly fountain. A grate will be added and concrete poured around it. This will help with the water coming down the hill toward the building.

## ITEM R6. Board Member/Staff Reports

### 1. Administrative Items

Dan reported on the following items:

#### a. May Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on May 11, 2023, at Brown's Lake/Bigelow Park.

#### b. Land Acquisition Discussions – Closed Session

Dan asked to enter closed session pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 21A to discuss a land acquisition possibility.

**MOTION** by Chris, second by Aaron

To go into closed session for land acquisition discussions pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 21A at 4:28 p.m.

#### **ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

Discussion was held regarding a possible land acquisition.

**MOTION** by Chris, second by Tom.

To come out of closed session at 5:13 p.m.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

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

**MOTION** by Chris, second by Aaron

To decline the land offer as presented by the landowners but offer conservation easement programs they can explore.<sup>23-13</sup>

**VOTE:**

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

It was noted that this offer was not practical to manage, but the board would like to keep the door open for future possibilities.

**c. Naturalist II Position**

Dan stated at the last board meeting that they were ready for naturalist II interviews, but two candidates withdrew their applications for various reasons leaving only one. Dan opted to open it up again with a deadline of April 7<sup>th</sup> or until filled. Six applications were received, and four were chosen to interview on the April 24<sup>th</sup>.

He also noted that positions for concession stand workers and summer security guards are open until Friday, and the part-time office assistant application deadline is April 21<sup>st</sup>. The resource technician position will be posted soon also.

**d. Old Business**

• **Budget Amendment for Motor Vehicles**

Dan updated board members that he will be submitting a budget amendment for the restricted reserves carried over from last year's budget upon approval of the board of supervisors to cover two vehicle purchases in the amount of \$72,511. This was approved at previous board meeting.

• **Technician Position at Southwood**

Dan reported that a motion was made by a supervisor to withdraw approval of the new technician position at Southwood. Dan called each supervisor prior to the supervisors meeting to reinforce the need for the position. He also gave a presentation at the meeting, and the motion failed for lack of a second. He expressed appreciation to Mark Nelson for

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<sup>23-13</sup> To decline the land offer as presented by the landowners but offer conservation easement programs they can explore.

the supervisors' support. This position will be advertised soon and interviews will be done in time to start someone shortly after July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**e. Other Business**

Dan stated that Supervisor Nelson had approached the board regarding setback limits for wind turbines, but the board never took a formal stance on it even though there was discussion and consensus. Mark stated that there will be three hearings for the ordinance change, with the first being on May 9<sup>th</sup>. They are looking for resolutions supporting their recommendation of a setback of a half mile or 4 ½ times the tower height, whichever is greater. The ordinance will include a waiver process to allow requests to shorten the setback to come before the supervisors, but there are certain things that will not be subject to having a variance granted, such as conservation areas, cemeteries, rights-of-way, and property lines. He talked to the MidAmerican representative for Woodbury county and was told that as a policy MidAmerican wants to stay away from conservation areas and towns, but there is nothing binding and there are also two other companies working in the area. MidAmerican has no concerns with this ordinance. Dan reiterated that he wants to keep the good partnership with MidAmerican. Dan read an email request he had received from Dan Priestly regarding the ordinance.

**MOTION** by Tom, second by Aaron

To approve support of the Board of Supervisors ordinance change of setback limits for wind turbines near conservation areas of ½ mile or 4 ½ times the tower height.<sup>23-14</sup>

**VOTE:**

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

Mark asked Dan to attend one of the hearings also.

*(Tom left the meeting at 5:30 p.m.)*

**2. Nature Center Activities**

Theresa reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors report for March was presented.
- The programs schedule is full of field trips beginning next week and through the end of the school year. There is a wait list for groups which cannot be accommodated. Many are from outside of the county, so Theresa is keeping track to make sure the Woodbury county schools are reached. The scheduling process may need to be adjusted in the future. Schools outside of Woodbury county pay \$1/child with \$15 minimum. Theresa would like the board to review this pricing, as well as the nature center room rental fees. Rental rate information is being collected from surrounding counties.
- The big bluestem root bundle has been received.
- The designers at BrownKnows Designs are working on a scale model of the screech owl aviary. Both the aviary and the root bundle should be installed by the end of June.

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<sup>23-14</sup> To approve support of the Board of Supervisors ordinance change of setback limits for wind turbines near conservation areas of ½ mile or 4 ½ times the tower height.

- Theresa is working on the Nature Calls committee volunteers list. Sponsor packets (letters, envelopes, and a digital letter to email) will be ready soon. She will send board members an updated list before finalizing the packets.
- The Nature Calls event will be held at the convention center again this year. They are trying to keep costs close to what it was last year.
- Offer letters have been sent to interns, and they are set to start on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The AmeriCorps intern came in to fill out paperwork yesterday.
- Theresa and Kari did a Project Wild and Aquatic Wild session with 30 teaching students at Morningside. Theresa will also be doing a session at Briar Cliff.
- The volunteer clean-up day is April 22<sup>nd</sup> (Earth Day).
- The volunteer recognition event will be on May 18<sup>th</sup> with grilled hotdogs and popcorn. Unfortunately, Mark Peterson will not be able to attend, but Karen South will be there.
- Summer camp registration began last week for Foundation members, and numbers were way down. However, general registration opened yesterday, and camps are now 67% full with 150 kids registered.
- Mark Nelson complimented the social media posts about the union bridge and the eagle. He noted that whenever you put a spotlight on local parks, the people in that area will share it, giving extra exposure. Theresa asked members to thank the local Audubon and camera club people for sharing their photos.
- Next week is national volunteer week. Social media posts will highlight volunteers.

### 3. Park Activities

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- This is the busiest time for field staff, getting campgrounds ready and doing burns. Brian commended the WCCB field staff for always knowing what is needed and getting it done.
- Small burns have been done in the parks, and plans are underway for bigger burns at Oak Ridge Unit 1, the Breise property, and Owego. Brian will ensure there will be enough staff, equipment, and water for those burns.
- As of now, the cooperative burn week is still on for the last week of April. Pottawattamie county is now in a burn ban, and Harrison county might also be in a ban by then. More burns will be done in Woodbury county if not in a ban and the others still are.
- The Conex container in place at Brown's Lake but waiting on the electrician.
- The fence is being installed on the Brown's Lake beach tomorrow.
- Brown's Lake and Snyder Bend staff have also been doing playground repairs and installing some new slides. There is some cracking around bolt holes, paint peeling on posts, and metal exposed where the plastic coating has worn off steps and platforms. Equipment was installed over 25 years ago and should be replaced soon.
- Mark Nelson asked if information is included in campground kiosks about amenities in nearby towns. He suggested working cooperatively with those towns to list nearby restaurants, stores, etc., and build alliances with those towns.
- Brodie Skinner is graduating from the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy on April 21<sup>st</sup>. Dan, Brian, and Erik will attend to support him.

### 4. Board Information

Neil mentioned that a group from CF Industries will be conducting a volunteer day to treat parking posts with linseed oil at Snyder Bend in observance of earth week.

### 5. Other Business

None

**ITEM R7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

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Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

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Board Secretary, Tom Limoges

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Board Chair, Chris Zellmer-Zant