

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, May 9, 2024, 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, Kari Sandage, and Dawn Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

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 Tom.

To approve the consent agenda.

VOTE:

Aye: Aaron Gehling, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth & Tom Limoges

Nay: None

Absent: Chris Zellmer-Zant

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

- C1. Approve Minutes of the April 11, 2024, Regular Meeting
- C2. Approve the April 2024 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the April 2024 Financial/Budget Report
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:
 - Puppets for education from Tiana Kruid
 - Box of suet from Dawn Snyder
 - Band-Aids for summer camps from Sylvia Kuennen
 - Haiku Box (wifi birdsong recorder) from Rebecca Williams in memory of her brother
 - \$40 from Dawn Snyder for Kev Koskovich and Bob Morrissey memorials
 - \$185 from Dan & Sally Hartley for Turtle & Barred Owl adoption

- \$40 from Gary LeMoine for Corn snake adoption
- \$100 from Gary LeMoine for battery leaf blower

Dan asked to move the Nature Center report to the beginning of the meeting because Kari needed to lead a public program tonight. (*See Item R5.2.*)

ITEM R2. Fiber To Little Sioux Park

Dan explained that there is not reliable internet at Little Sioux Park for staff to use the timecard system or access the shared network drive and that Brian has been working with Long Lines to try to get fiber access in the park.

Brian reported that he contacted Long Lines to see where they have fiber and found that the nearest vault is in town by the Co-Op. Long Lines would like to continue their fiber in town over to the transfer vault by the park trailhead. They agreed to split the \$25,000 cost of installation and will supply the fiber and duct, but it would be weeks before they can get it done. Lance Martin said Schoon Corporation could get it done in two weeks. One extra hand hole would be needed near the trailhead for \$1,000, so the split would be \$9,433 (WCCB) and \$8,433 (Long Lines). To lay fiber from the trailhead into the park would be an additional \$21,000, including hooking it up to the residence for \$875. They plan to run the fiber through the bridge railing to cross the river.

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

Dan added that Schoon was planning to try attaching a conduit to the bottom of the bridge railing, but Brian came up with the idea of actually running it through the bridge railing which will save the department \$20,000 on the project.

Dan stated that a wireless company contract will be needed to provide public Wi-Fi access for the park. Aaron suggested looking into Starlink satellite system as he has heard great reviews about it and no infrastructure is needed. He would like the board to investigate it to see if it would work. Questions were raised about if weather would affect the service.

Dan stated that he would need to do some research to see if Starlink could handle the park and would also need to talk to the county IT department about the security. He added that he does not want to manage checking out individual boxes to the campers. He also noted that he had been considering getting a fiber phone through Long Lines for the park office because the current phone service isn't great.

MOTION by Aaron, second by Neil.

To research Starlink as a possible option for internet service at Little Sioux Park. If Starlink is determined to not offer the right capacity or does not meet county internet security standards, then the board approves and authorizes the director to contract with Schoon Corporation to install the fiber as discussed.²⁴⁻¹⁴

VOTE:

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

²⁴⁻¹⁴ To research Starlink as a possible option for internet service at Little Sioux Park. If Starlink is determined to not offer the right capacity or does not meet county internet security standards, then the board approves and authorizes the director to contract with Schoon Corporation to install the fiber as discussed.

ITEM R3. Budget Amendment

Dan presented the department budget amendment that was submitted last week. The amendment, totaling \$67,189.6, breaks down as follows:

- Motor Vehicle & Machinery: \$26,430.61 for the totaled truck insurance reimbursement which was deposited into the general fund.
- Drainage Taxes: \$3,232 due to increase over last year.
- Motor Vehicle Repair & Maintenance: \$25,000 for the unexpected skid loader motor replacement.
- School of Instruction: \$4,089 for CDL testing, pesticide recertifications, CPR training, & CCPOA training.
- Law Enforcement Equipment: \$8,438 for rifle vests for officers.

Dan stated that without the amendment, the operating side of the budget, not including salary lines, probably wouldn't last through June 30th. He explained that there will be balances remaining in the salary lines due to open positions and retirements, but he doesn't want to dip into that.

MOTION by Neil, second by Tom.

To accept and approve the budget amendment as presented.²⁴⁻¹⁵

VOTE:

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

Dan asked to address the cabin rates at this time because Tom needed to leave early. (*See Item R5.1.c*)

(*Tom left at 4:45 p.m.*)

ITEM R4. Capital Improvement Projects Update

Little Sioux Park:

1. Sewer Projects

Brian reported that the BioMicrobics treatment system tanks are in, the pumps are in, and the wiring is run to the system. They still need to get power to the system which is supposed to happen on Saturday. Some backfilling needs to be done before the BioMicrobics system can be completed. The backfilling will be done tomorrow so electricians can set the transformers on Saturday. Once there are breakers for the lift stations, the floats will need to be set. Hopefully they will be able to test and commission it by Tuesday or Wednesday.

Dan stated that Brian ran a skid loader down there for a couple days. He also rented a packer for a week to lock the rock in place on the camping pads. Most of Riverside campground is expected to open on May 15th.

2. Bellamy Campground

Dan stated that Bellamy campground opened as scheduled on May 1st. The engineering for Bellamy is not at 90% yet, but the project is being shelved until funding is identified.

²⁴⁻¹⁵ To accept and approve the budget amendment as presented.

3. Well

Dan reported that he has been trying to get price for drilling a well. The DNR requires a test well to be drilled first to make sure the water will work. Then the test well is closed and the actual well is drilled next to it. JEO has reached out to Mike Barkley and Middendorff Well Co. to get an estimate.

Dan stated that he had received a call from sanitarian Ivy Bremer who informed him that he would need to fill out surveys for each of the other parks for public water supply also. They will need to be tested more than once a quarter. If tests fail and the problem cannot be remedied with treatment, a new well would need to be drilled. Usage of more than 50 people per day is considered a public water supply. They consider the size of the well, number of connections, etc. He was also informed that the DNR would not be paying for the quarterly testing anymore.

ITEM R5. Board Member/Staff Reports

1. Administrative Items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. Set June Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on June 20, 2024, at Southwood Conservation Area. The July meeting was tentatively set for July 11th at Little Sioux Park.

b. LAWCON Grant – Playground – Brown’s Lake

Dan reported that the LAWCON grant deadline was moved from March 15 to June 15, and he would like authorization to apply for a grant to replace playground equipment at Brown’s Lake. He explained that the playgrounds at Brown’s Lake and Snyder Bend are well past their prime. Expansion has caused the plastic to crack and expose sharp metal at Snyder Bend, so that playground has been temporarily closed while looking for some replacement parts. He stated that he would like to install new equipment at Brown’s Lake and replace the wood chips with poured rubber. The Brown’s Lake roads loan payment was just made, so the CIP fund balance is down to \$110,000 which won’t be enough to cover the Little Sioux fiber project and the playground. The grant would cover 50% of the cost. Brian will be writing the grant with Dan’s help.

MOTION by Neil, second by Aaron.

To approve and authorize the submission of a LAWCON grant application to cover the replacement of playground equipment at Brown’s Lake for a maximum \$200,000 cost share.

VOTE:

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

c. Cabin Rates

Dan presented proposed changes to the cabin rental rates as follows:

Park	Current Weekday Rate	Current Weekend & Holiday Rate	Proposed Daily Rate
Little Sioux Park	\$50	\$55	\$65
Snyder Bend Park	\$85	\$125	\$125
Southwood Conservation Area	\$70	\$90	\$100

The new rates will be the same for any day of the week.

Dan mentioned that he and Brian participated in a free demonstration for a service that uses AI to provide demographics about customers through cell phone data. While the information would be helpful for marketing, it was too expensive use at the parks.

MOTION by Aaron, second by Neil.

To approve cabin rental rate changes as proposed effective June 1st.²⁴⁻¹⁷

VOTE:

Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth & Tom Limoges

Nay: None

Absent: None

d. Bellamy Campground Rates

Dan stated that the current nightly camping rate for Bellamy campground is \$23 rather than \$25, because it doesn't have water to each site like the other campgrounds. He explained that the odd amount has been a nuisance for both staff and campers in having the right amount of cash or making change. And when using camping coupons, which are valued at \$25, campers want to get credit or cash back for the difference. Dan proposed raising the rates at Bellamy to \$25 to make it consistent with the other parks and to help build up funds to eventually convert Bellamy to full hookup sites.

MOTION by Chris, second by Neil

To approve and authorize increasing camping fees for Bellamy campground to \$25 per night effective June 1st.²⁴⁻¹⁸

VOTE:

Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, & Neil Stockfleth

Nay: None

Absent: Tom Limoges

e. Nature Center Hours

Dan reinitiated the discussion from last month regarding reopening the nature center on Sunday afternoons. He confirmed with the human resources director that the receptionists

²⁴⁻¹⁷ To approve cabin rental rate changes as proposed effective June 1st.

²⁴⁻¹⁸ To approve and authorize increasing camping fees for Bellamy campground to \$25 per night effective June 1st.

would not have to reduce their hours during the week when working the extra Sunday hours. He proposed Sunday hours of 12:00-4:00 p.m. instead of 1:00-4:00 p.m. to make it a standard half-day shift. Sunday hours would coincide with the park season of May 1 through October 31 to avoid the need for snow removal.

MOTION by Aaron, second by Neil.

To add nature center open hours on Sunday afternoons from 12:00-4:00 p.m. May 1st through October 31st.²⁴⁻¹⁹

VOTE:

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

2. Nature Center Activities

Kari Sandage reported on the following nature center activities.

- The programs and visitors report for April was presented.
- In April, Theresa, Mariah & Kari attended the NAI National Conference in Council Bluffs on scholarships provided through REAP.
- Naturalists have been busy with field trips. In 2 ½ weeks, 1600 students were reached with groups of up to 120 kids per day.
- On Saturday, Kari is leading a migratory bird program with Audubon, and Mariah has programs at the Pickled Palette and the Sioux City Art Center.
- Kari is helping with a sound bath program tonight put on by the Expansion Center with 40 people registered.

3. Park Activities

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Camping kickoff attendance was about average with the parks being 25-50% full.
- Southwood staff spent a lot of time prepping for and participating in the cooperative burn week. Only 140 acres were on WCCB property, but those pieces were very technical burns that require a lot of people. Staff will be conducting two more burns for the year.
- Little Sioux staff continues to work on Riverside camping pads to get ready to open. Sewer caps need to be installed also.
- There have only been three seasonal staff on board, but three more were finally added this week. Additional positions still need to be filled.
- Brown's Lake and Snyder Bend staff are preparing to plant food plots and getting the beach ready.
- The bumper hitch trailer came in.
- The gooseneck trailer approved last month has been ordered from Marx Trailer Sales. The upgraded tires came in at \$1,310, which is below the allotted \$2,000. It should be ready sometime in July.
- Only one of the four concession stand positions has been filled so far.

²⁴⁻¹⁹ To add nature center open hours on Sunday afternoons from 12:00-4:00 p.m. May 1st through October 31st.

Aaron asked about a 50' section along Brown's Lake without rock. Brian explained that it was left open until the final beach footprint was determined as they didn't want to armor it and then need to remove it later. It is ready to be done now but will have to wait for winter.

Brief discussion was held regarding the Izaak Walton League property and what needs to be done with it. Dan stated that he would have staff start cleaning up the grounds, but the board needs to determine what to do with the building. He will add it to the June meeting agenda.

4. Board Information

None

5. Other Business

None

ITEM R6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Aaron Gehling

Board Chair, Cindy Bennett