

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 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, June 20, 2024, at Southwood Conservation Area 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, Erik Lindsay, Brodie Skinner, Tanner Petersen, and Dawn Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Bennett called the meeting to order at 4:05 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 May 9, 2024, Regular Meeting
- C2. Approve the May 2024 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the May 2024 Financial/Budget Report
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:
 - Gregory Ellerbroek Memorials (Total = \$212.22)
 - Shellie Lorenzen \$48.51
 - William & Judy Boust \$50.00
 - Angie Ellerbroek \$38.71
 - Charles & Linda Lanphier \$75.00
 - \$1,000 from Linda Healy for Connie Bledsoe memorial (for Tale Trail books & supplies)
 - \$50 from Dawn Snyder for Dr. Paul Fee & Connie Bledsoe memorials

ITEM R2. Fiber To Little Sioux Park

Dan reported that internet service through Starlink was researched and found to not be feasible for the park. He contacted Lance Martin at Schoon and started the process with them. They were able to run cable through the top of the fence and will start working on it next week. They are going to bore from the hub inside the city of Correctionville, put a box next to the trail entrance, and then plow along the trail until they get to the bridge. Dan got some sweeps from Cardis to hook up to the bridge. The cost for work inside the city limits will be \$18,000, but Long Lines has agreed to cover half of that, and then it will be an additional \$21,000 to plow in and complete all the hookups to the shop and the residence. Staff member will secure their own internet provider for the residence. The project cost will be approximately \$30,000.

4:09 p.m. Tom arrived.

Dan noted that a camper complained recently that they couldn't get weather alerts on their phone and had to ride out the storm in the campground. Having the internet service will be helpful for staff also to access payroll system and the county shared network.

Dan was advised by the installer not to use Long Lines for the Wi-Fi, but they have suggestions to beam it to the campgrounds from the shop. It wouldn't be practical to run fiber to each campsite. The Wi-Fi is expected to be installed this year. Neil suggested looking at increasing camping rates to cover the new service.

4:10 p.m. Chris arrived.

ITEM R3. Capital Improvement Projects Update

Dan reported on the following projects.

Little Sioux Park:

a. Sewer Projects

The sewer system is up and running. There are some final contingencies for the contractor to finish, as well as some dirt work. After July 1st, staff will work on getting a poured landscaping edging that is mowable and fill the area with river rock and landscaping. The contractor was supposed to finish on Monday but will have to wait until it dries out again. Staff will seed and landscape the area after the edging is installed.

b. Bellamy Campground

Bellamy campground is still a work in progress. The design work is close to 90% done but has been put on the shelf until funds are available to start the project. The project will include a total overhaul, removing & redesigning campsites, and putting in electric, water, and sewer at all campsites.

c. Well Information

It is looking like a new well may need to be drilled, as Bellamy well has not come back yet. If it doesn't come back soon, the DNR will require it to be closed. Brian stated that the well must be pumped at least once a year to keep it open. It was last pumped in the fall.

Brian reported that he went with Michelle from the DNR to inspect Brown's Lake, Snyder Bend, and Little Sioux, and nothing much needs changed. Hydrogen peroxide has been used in the past,

but he was told that can't be used unless chlorine is also added, and it must be daily. So, chlorine will be used instead. He gave her information on the Snyder Bend equipment for arsenic treatment, but she hasn't gotten anything back on it yet. Some DNR campgrounds have the same exact system.

Mike Barkley replaced the 1½ HP motor with a 3 HP motor, which hopefully will cover for as long as the well holds up. Another pressure tank was added at Riverside campground because there should be two for that volume. The pond has come up, so hopefully the well will come up also. Not much will be known until the DNR returns with their initial findings. Southwood and Fowler are exempt because of their usage level.

ITEM R4. Board Member/Staff Reports

1. Administrative Items (Dan)

Dan reported on the following items:

a. Set July Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on July 18, 2024, at Little Sioux Park.

b. Salary Schedule for Fiscal Year 24-25

Dan reported that the fiscal year 24-25 wage matrix has been adjusted for the 3% increase approved by the board of supervisors. He asked for approval of the salary schedule.

MOTION by Aaron, second by Tom.

To approve the fiscal year 24-25 salary schedule as presented.²⁴⁻²⁰

VOTE:

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

c. Equipment Replacement

Dan referenced an email sent to board members on Tuesday regarding equipment purchases.

Brian explained that since the F150s weren't going to come in prior to the end of the fiscal year, a skid loader and a trailer from the equipment replacement schedule were purchased instead. The skid loader was purchased at Sooland Bobcat for \$5,000 less than the unit purchased two years ago. He had looked at pickups available on the lot, but they had more accessories than usually desired and would have been \$10,000 more than the bid. The Case skid loader will be traded in. The dealer-installed accessories will be purchased and added after July 1st. Dan noted that bids are not required for anything under \$100,000, but he strongly encouraged the board to do so whenever possible.

The trucks will be built in July and should arrive in August. They will replace a truck at Little Sioux and the Traverse at the nature center.

²⁴⁻²⁰ To approve the fiscal year 24-25 salary schedule as presented.

d. Old Business

Discussion was held regarding the approval of the Winnebago Land Transfer Act which will transfer approximately 1,600 acres in Monona and Woodbury counties back to the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. Dan will contact Grassley's office and the Dept. of Interior. Nothing can be done, but the goal is to keep the boat ramp, shoreline, and campsites that might be lost if they use the Corps of Engineers' boundary line versus the state line. Mark Nelson saw the article and sent it to Dan. Dan will send it to board members.

2. Nature Center Activities

Theresa reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors report for May was presented.
- The field trip season was good. Sioux City schools have been coming with 5-6 classes at a time which does require two naturalists to cover.
- Summer camps have started.
- Naturalists have been doing lots of library programs – Danbury, Woodbury County, Lawton.
- Nature Calls:
 - Theresa has received \$10,000 of pledged sponsorships.
 - Kari & Theresa went to the ribbon cutting at the convention center, which included a taste testing. The service was excellent, and the food was good. Theresa will meet with Katie there next week.
 - The next committee planning meeting is July 1st.
- Theresa is applying for a Gilchrist grant to help with exhibit additions including an update to the forest diorama (the last original display) to add the donated black bear, replica fish, and snapping turtle, the addition of an interactive pollinator mural, and replacement of discovery drawers which have been missed from the original exhibits. The bison calf donated by Blackhawk County is being mounted will be added to the prairie diorama.
- Nature center Sunday hours have started with a lot of great comments from guests. This will continue through October and start again May 1st next year.
- The new log bench on the Bur Oak Bluff trail has been completed by Tyler Flammang and volunteer, Gary LeMoine.
- Flowers have been added around the entrance sign.
- A rough-legged hawk will be placed at the nature center by SOAR, but repairs to raptor house are needed first. Some raptor care donations are available to help with the repairs.
- Theresa is working on a new permit through the USDA which is now required, in addition to the current state permits and federal salvage permits. The department is exempt from federal live permits due to being county government. The USDA permit will cost \$100-200 annually and require an inspection. The nature center is currently inspected by conservation officers only.
- The Foundation met in May and adopted a new slate of officers. Pam Ridgeway, long-time volunteer, will serve as the new treasurer. Theresa is meeting with her tomorrow.
- An ad placed in *Explore Siouxland* for WCCB and the nature center was presented.

3. Park Activities

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Park visitation numbers have been pretty good.
- Storms have caused damage in some areas of parks. Little Sioux had wind damage, and Brown's Lake and Snyder Bend had some tree damage. No property damage or injuries.

- Most food plots are in. Owego has been a challenge, and some may not be planted because of how wet it is.
- Erik reported on Southwood activities:
 - Food plots were finished up a few weeks ago and are looking good. There are some washed out areas from heavy rain, but it's doing well overall.
 - Staff has been working on Canada thistle and crown vetch spraying and mowing.
 - Spring burn season went very well with good effects. It was a longer burn season and there was time to spread out the units.
 - Timber stand improvement work will be starting shortly.
 - There are a couple small units to burn maybe this summer, and staff is getting ready for fall season. They will be smaller burns because of deer season.
 - A CCI crew will be here again in July for year 2 of a 5-year oak savanna plan.
 - Erik was asked to fill a position on the Loess Hills Alliance committee which meets quarterly. Dawn Snyder was the former representative and is now president of the executive committee. The stewardship committee is separate now.
 - Camping is going great. Memorial Day weekend was busy but there were no issues.
- Brian submitted a LAWCON grant application last Friday for a new playground at Brown's Lake. Results will be available in July or August, but it will be a year before funding is received. It is an inclusive playground with half of it being ADA accessible. The cost is \$255,000, and the grant would be a 50% cost share. He might pursue a Gilchrist or MRHD grant to help with it also.

4. Board Information

Neil stated that with all the recent tornados and storms, storm shelters need to be added in the parks. It has been talked about every year but hasn't gotten done yet.

He also announced that CF Industries corporate office has established a foundation in addition to the local grants done by the Port Neal plant.

5:07 p.m. Chris left the meeting.

5. Other Business

Introductions were made between the Southwood field staff and board members.

ITEM R5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Aaron Gehling

Board Chair, Cindy Bennett