

Monroe County Land Conservation, Forestry & Parks Committee Minutes

Date and Place:

Monday July 20, 2015 at the Monroe County Ag Services Center, Sparta, WI

Call to Order:

Chairman Chapman called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m. Present were: J Rasmussen; D Wegner; N VanWychen; B. Micheel, LCD; B. Richardson, LCD; J Wilk, LCD; C Ziegler, Monroe Co. Forestry; K Antwi, DNR; and public. **Olson absent.**

Minutes Approval 6/16/15 meeting:

Motion by Van Wychen, second by Wegner to approve the June 16th minutes as presented. Motion carried 4-0-1.

Public Comment Period:

None

Conservation Camp Scholarship Winners- Presentation:

Tarilyn and Tayla Mikel were the 2015 conservation scholarship winners and gave the LCC a report on attending the WLWCA Trees for Tomorrow and Sand Lake Conservation Camps. Both reported they had a great time and enjoyed the many activities provided to them.

Review Land Conservation Bills:

Micheel previewed bills.

Tri-Creek Structure- gate valve inspection:

Micheel discussed DNR inspection of Tri-Creek Dam and resulting concern regarding the faulty pond drain valve. Micheel contacted J.F. Brennan Company, Inc. of La Crosse and met with their consultant on site last month. Based on the site visit the LCD received a quote of \$8,710.00 to inspect and hopefully repair the valve in that time frame. This requires the use of a 3 person dive team for a minimum of 2 days. Contractor is not sure if the project can be completed in that amount of time or not. Micheel will check with Vernon Co. regarding this contractor as well as any others that may be available. Micheel noted that there is room in the 2015 LCD budget to cover the cost. A budget adjustment would be needed to make funds available.

Motion by Van Wychen, second by Rasmussen to approve repair of pond drain valve for \$8,710.00 or less if Micheel finds a different suitable contractor. Motion carried 4-0-1.

CREP Area Expansion Request:

Micheel discussed the CREP program and existing eligible townships, as well as a history of how boundaries were determined. A letter of support is needed to add 5 additional townships (Lincoln, Scott, La Grange, Byron, & Oakdale in the Northeast part of Monroe County).

Motion by Wegner, second by Rasmussen to approve letter of support to increase CREP boundary. Motion carried 4-0-1.

County Conservationist Report:

Micheel reported on:

NOD funding for the S. Ziese farm near Kendall, Herrick's Field Day, STEM Academy Curriculum, Farmland Preservation signup, Agriculture Enterprise Area designation later this year for Wells, Portland and Jefferson Township. Manure Storage Permit, Manure Insurance, Status of Clerical Position.

Soil and Water Conservationist Report:

Wilk discussed completed and ongoing projects, Richardson discussed completed and continuing projects, nonmetallic mining audit on 7/23/15, and handed out Tree Farm Field Day brochures.

Staff and Supervisor Open Discussion:

Micheel inquired about effectiveness of Department presentations to the entire County Board.

Proposed Fulltime Park Position:

Ziegler re-explained the need for a Park Manager at McMullen Park. McMullen Park has increased in attendance and revenue on an annual basis by about 6% (attendance) and 10% (revenue). The day to day maintenance duties are handled by park LTEs, the oversight, scheduling, supply purchases, planning, etc. are completed by the Forestry & Parks Admin. The operations at the park have reached a point in which a park manager is needed to provide the

necessary services for the public. Several options were presented; an LTE Park Manager would cost approximately \$35,000 annually including the fringe benefits offered to LTEs and unemployment. A full time county Park Manager would cost the county \$55,421 annually at pay grade 16 (\$16.18/hr.). The Park Department has enough revenue to fully fund the Park Manager position.

Ziegler spoke with the Highway Commissioner regarding utilizing the Park Manager within their Department for the months of December through February each year. The Highway Commissioner spoke with the highway committee regarding a shared position and is interested in having an additional snow plow driver for the winter months. The position would require a Class B Commercial Driver's License; the tasks would include plowing snow on public highways, hauling sand to shops and cutting trees & brush if winter maintenance isn't needed. The payback to the Park Department would be approximately \$20,400.00 for January through February.

Ziegler spoke with the Child Support Director. She has a need for additional resources January through February each year at a lesser pay rate per hour (\$13.00/hour plus benefits). The additional resources would be off of the levy funded 33% by department revenue and 66% through state funding.

The committee discussed the options presented.

Supervisor Rasmussen left at 10:35 a.m.

Motion by Van Wychen, second by Wegner to approve hiring a fulltime County Park Manager and working with the Highway Department during the winter months to help fund the position. If working with the Highway Department fails; then fully funding the position with park revenue. Motion carried 3-0-2.

Forestry & Parks Updates:

Some repairs to the tractor have been completed and the boat launch approach was reconstructed at McMullen Park. There are two active timber sales on the county forest. The County Forest Liaison has accepted a position in Crawford County as a DNR Private Lands Forester.

Town of New Lyme-Land Discussion:

Ziegler met with Troy Lambert to discuss options. Troy is going to continue to try to work something out with the neighbor; if that falls through, discussions with the county will continue. The county will work with Troy to have temporary limited access in the meantime.

Land Use Agreement ACT:

Ziegler explained that a contractor for ACT would like permission to perform a few resistance borings to determine some preliminary work for the transmission line. They have not provided

the county with the document; it may be available at the next meeting. Supervisor Chapman asked if they would pay the county to perform the borings. Discussion occurred.

Park Policy:

Ziegler proposed a policy regarding golf carts at McMullen Park. The use of golf carts is only allowed for persons with disabilities. The disabled person parking placard must be displayed on the cart while operating. Only persons with disabilities may be on the cart.

Motion by Van Wychen, second by Wegner to approve the policy addition. Motion carried 3-0-2.

Arctic Road Fire:

Ziegler sent an invoice to Rick Garber for \$3,865.22. He met with Rick to look at the damaged timber. Rick explained that he didn't have money to pay for the damages, but maybe his son would help him out if the county gave him the timber. The committee discussed different options regarding needing liability insurance, etc. The committee directed Chad to work something out with Rick; but make sure the county gets paid for the damages.

Review Forestry & Park Bills:

Ziegler reviewed the past months bills.

NRCS Report:

John Fields – NRCS acting District Conservationist from Juneau County gave an update on the Sparta Field office staffing plan. He also invited the LCC to the local work group meeting on July 30th at the American Legion in Sparta. The local work group of Monroe, La Crosse and Juneau County will define funding pools and practices available to landowners for the upcoming year.

DNR Private Lands Report:

Antwi explained that the DNR Private lands foresters are working on approving cutting notices and CRP sign up along with general forestry tasks. The DNR has positions open for lateral transfer; the Private Lands position in Jackson County may be filled and provide relief for the Monroe County Foresters.

Set next Meeting Date:

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, August 18, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. in the Monroe County Ag Services Center.

Adjourn:

Motion by Wagner, second by Van Wychen to adjourn at 10:30 a.m. Motion carried 3-0-2.