

# Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee Minutes

5 June 2013

Members Present: Ralph Sitzberger, Chair  
Sig Hjemvick, Vice Chair  
Leon Kukanich  
Maynard Bedish

Members Excused: Charles Rayala, Jr.

Others Present: Lawrence Stevens, CF, Forest Administrator  
John Gagnon, Assistant Forest Administrator  
Dale Mayo, Recreation Administrator  
James Jefferson, Forest Technician  
Constance Valkenaar, Administrative Secretary  
Jill Nemec, DNR Forestry Liaison  
Jason Hilger, Finance Director  
Janna Kahl, Human Resources  
Fred Heider, NCWRPC  
Ken Anderson, Media  
Dan Balog, Land O'Lakes Town Chair  
Gary Meister, MHT  
Joe Laux, City of Eagle River

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman Sitzberger, who advised that this was a public meeting and that notification of the meeting with the agenda was sent to the Committee members, the County Board Chairman, the Vilas County Clerk, the Vilas County Corporation Counsel, the Vilas County News-Review, the Lakeland Times, FYI Wisconsin, Radio Stations WRJO and Coyote 93.7, and the Northwoods River News. The notice and agenda were also posted on the Courthouse and Forestry Department bulletin boards. This notification was verified by the Forestry Department Administrative Secretary.

- 1) Motion by Kukanich, seconded by Bedish to approve the agenda in any order at the discretion of the Chair. Motion carried unanimously.
- 2) Motion by Bedish, seconded by Kukanich, to approve the minutes of the 1 & 15 May 2013 meetings. Motion carried unanimously.
- 3) County Outdoor Recreation Plan Update: Heider gave the Committee an update on the progress of the plan. Via survey, Heider solicited and received responses to his requests for input from various groups including lake/river associations. Heider provided the Committee with a summary of the results as well as potential goals & objectives, and a letter from the Lac du Flambeau Town Lakes Committee. Heider will finish creating the draft plan for public review and will keep the Committee advised. Heider plans to have a draft plan available for Labor Day weekend
- 4) ChoiceTel Fiber Optic Cable Lease: This lease, which allows ChoiceTel to install fiber optic cable across County Forest Land to serve Camp Ramah, was approved by the Committee and Corporation Counsel and will be signed by Ted Bogeman, ChoiceTel representative, today.
- 5) City of Eagle River Request to Allow Hi-Pines Campground to Use County-Owned RR Grade for Wheeled-Vehicle Traffic: Laux addressed the Committee. He advised that

the Hi-Pines Campground (located adjacent to the County Forest shop) wishes to add bike/motorized cart rental to their business enterprise, and wish to have use of the County-owned RR grade which runs from the Hi-Pines property south to Highway G so that their customers can access the City via the RR grade south to Adams Road. This matter will be placed on the July agenda.

- 6) Great Headwaters Trails (GHT) Update: Meister gave an update on the bike trails. He advised that Phelps will be assuming responsibility for sponsorship of the Phelps segment of the Conover-Phelps bike trail.
- 7) Bid Opening – Tax Deed Land Sales: Bid opened from Nowak/Klessig for #12-1639-008 (Lot #7, Mill Creek Highlands Sub) in the amount of \$28,000.00. Motion by Hjenvick, seconded by Bedish to reject this bid. Motion carried unanimously.
- 8) Land Acquisition Opportunity: This is the BCPL 40 discussed at the 1 May meeting. The appraisal report is expected soon. Sitzberger directed that copies of the appraisal report be sent to the Committee upon receipt.
- 9) Timber Sales Contracts/Forest Management: Gagnon gave his report, a copy of which is attached.
- 10) Skidder Breakdown/Fuel Spill Cleanup: Stevens advised that on 28 May while using the skidder for site prep work, Jefferson reported that due to a hole the fuel tank, fuel was spilled at the worksite on the County Forest. Emergency Government, DNR, and the Highway Dept assisted. REI Environmental assessed the situation, took soil samples and made recommendations for remediation. Based on REI and DNR's recommendations, the contaminated soil was excavated by the Highway Dept and transported to the Lincoln County Landfill for safe disposal. Jefferson and Stevens were on site for the duration of the clean-up operations. County Clerk Alleman will ascertain whether County insurance will reimburse for the expenses. To make the skidder operable, a new fuel tank and U-joint will be purchased, and Highway Dept can do the repairs.
- 11) Parks/Recreation: Bike/Ped Trails: Mayo advised that the land use agreements for the Conover & Phelps bike clubs to utilize the County-owned abandoned RR corridor between Conover & Phelps should be signed this month. Proposed Parks Tech Position: Mayo advised that he is working with Kahl & Jerred Maney, Highway Superintendent, to work out a new full-time County position that would be 7 months Parks and 5 months Highway. He will keep the Committee apprised. Dr. Oldfield Memorial Park Pier Bids: Quotes were received for the replacement of the dock with a new roll-in dock. The previous pier was removed because of unsafe condition due to ice damage: Jensen-Akins - \$4,409.60; Trackside - \$4,479.74. The quote of Jensen-Akins was accepted.
- 12) Position Descriptions: The personnel structure of the Department was discussed. The Chair advised that the Parks/Recreation and the Forestry should be separated, both under the jurisdiction of the Forestry, Recreation & Land Committee. The Chair stated that he is very keen on getting the County's boat landings, parks, the access points, and whatever the County has into better shape. The Chair advised that this will be tough with budgeting but believes that with planning this can be accomplished; however it will basically require a separate department. Discussion. Kahl made a diagram to outline the personnel hierarchy within the two departments, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. It was clarified that the Forest Tech position is under the supervision of the County Forest Administrator and the Administrative Secretary position works with both departments. Motion by Hjenvick, seconded by Bedish, to formalize the personnel structure as set forth in Kahl's diagram. Motion carried unanimously.

Stevens advised that the planning of recreation projects on the County Forest should include collaboration with the Forestry Department. Motion by Hjermvick, seconded Kukanich, that the current job descriptions of the office personnel will be amended to reflect the structure in Kahl's diagram. Motion carried unanimously.

- 13) Closed Session: Motion by Hjermvick, seconded by Kukanich, to convene into closed session pursuant to §19.85(1)(c), Wis. Stats. for the purpose of considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation date of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility. Roll call vote: Sitzberger, Hjermvick, Bedish, Kukanich, all voting aye. Motion carried unanimously.
- 14) Adjournment of Closed Session: Motion by Hjermvick, seconded by Bedish, to adjourn closed session pursuant to §19.85(a)(c), Wis. Stats. and return to open session. Motion carried unanimously. No action taken based on the closed session discussions.
- 15) Budget Review 2014/2015: The Committee, along with staff and Hilger, reviewed the proposed 2014 and 2015 Budgets. Highlights included: \$28,000.00 will be put into the 2014 Forestry Budget for the purchase of a new set of aerial photos of the County Forest. Hilger will set this up as a separate line item in the Forestry Budget. In the Conservation Budget, the line item for Pan Fishing Piers will be moved from Conservation to Parks. Also, in the Parks Budget, some other Parks line items will be adjusted due to Forestry not continuing to absorb Parks costs or as a result of moving the budgeted amounts from Snowmobile to Parks. Under Capital Improvements, at the request of the Chair, the budgeted amount is increased to \$15,000.00, with the goal of taking on some needed improvements, such as the pavilion situation at Eagle Lake Park and the ongoing erosion at the County facility at River Road. Also, the Summer Help line items (LTE's) in Forestry & Conservation are adjusted to reflect time spent on the respective programs. The Parks Budget includes the total amount of the Parks portion of the proposed new position as well as the \$11.00/hour for one LTE (1,040 hours) at \$11.00/hour. All the Department's budgets are subject to adjustment at this point; this discussion is for preliminary Department approval purposes.
- 16) Summer Parks LTE Hours: The Committee again discussed Mayo's proposal to change the Summer Park's LTE's schedule to provide for four ten hours days, Monday through Thursday with two paid 15 minute breaks and no mandatory unpaid lunch break. No action was taken.
- 17) Meetings & Travel: Motion by Hjermvick, seconded by Kukanich, to authorize Mayo to attend the International Snowmobile Congress in Green Bay 6-8 June, with travel expenses paid by the State. Stevens received an invitation from Congressman Duffy to attend a meeting to discuss forest management in Wabeno on 24 June. Motion by Bedish, seconded by Hjermvick, to authorize Stevens to attend. Both motions carried unanimously.
- 18) Monthly Budget Summary: No problems noted. Summer LTE's: Stevens advised that the 4 summer help employees have begun work. Conservation Mower: This piece of equipment has served its useful life and is in need of replacement. Discussion. Funds are available in the Wildlife Habitat Fund for this purpose. Two quotes were received, with possibly two additional quotes coming. The two quotes received are: Quinlan's - \$5,113.60 and Rew Motors - \$4,550.00. Motion by Sitzberger, seconded by Hjermvick, to accept Quinlan's quote unless another quote is received which the Department deems to be in the best interest of Vilas County, but not to exceed \$5,113.60. Motion carried unanimously.
- 19) Abandoned Railroad Grades: Nothing to report from Corporation Counsel.

20) Next Meeting Date: The next regular meeting of the Forestry Committee will be 3 July 2013, 8:30 a.m., Courthouse.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Minutes reflect the recorders' (Valkenaar) notations and are subject to approval by the appropriate board or committee.