

Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee Minutes

3 July 2013

Members Present: Ralph Sitzberger, Chair
Sig Hjemvick, Vice Chair
Leon Kukanich
Charles Rayala, Jr.
Maynard Bedish
Others Present: Lawrence Stevens, CF, Forest Administrator
Constance Valkenaar, Administrative Secretary
John Gagnon, Assistant Forest Administrator
Dale Mayo, Recreation Administrator
Ken Anderson, Media
Terry Hess, BCPL
Jim Ayers
Pat Weber (Eagle River Baseball)
Dale Ayers, Vilas County Fair
Jeff Currie, GHT
David Werner, WCC
Barb Gibson, County Mapping; Katie Lima, volunteer

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 Rayala, seconded by Bedish to approve the agenda in any order at the discretion of the Chair. Motion carried unanimously.
- 2) Motion by Kukanich, seconded by Hjemvick, to approve the minutes of the 5 June 2013 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
- 3) Tax Deed Lands: Parcel #14-1727 was taken on tax deed in October 2012. Subsequent routine investigation of the tax deed parcels taken at that time was conducted per Department procedure by Stevens and Valkenaar, who ascertained that this particular parcel currently has snowmobile trail running across it. #14-1727 also has potential use as trail in case the adjacent lands currently used as trail become inaccessible in the future. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Kukanich, to retain parcel #14-1727 rather than offer it for sale, since it is in the best interests of the County snowmobile trail system. Motion carried unanimously.
- 4) Land Acquisition Opportunities: a. NWNW Sec. 34 (Denton Lake) – Hess and Stevens addressed the Committee. Hess advised that BCPL wishes to sell certain parcels within the County Forest boundary to the County before offering it them for sale to be placed on the tax rolls. Discussion. As directed, Stevens obtained an appraisal, which sets a value of \$60,000.00 for this 40+- acre parcel. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Rayala, to direct Stevens to pursue County purchase of this parcel, including

investigating Stewardship Grant funding. Motion carried unanimously. b. SWNE, Sec. 18 (Indian Lake) – Gagnon advised the Committee that this parcel, surrounded by VCF on 3 sides, is for sale. Discussion. Motion by Rayala, seconded by Kukanich, to investigate acquisition of this parcel, including obtaining an appraisal. Motion carried unanimously. c. SENW (part), Sec. 26 (access parcel) – Acquisition of this parcel would provide permanent access to VCF lands which are presently landlocked. Although permission to access is possible through an adjacent landowner, the landowner will not grant any formal access to the County. Motion by Rayala, seconded by Hjemvick, to pursue possible acquisition of this parcel, including an appraisal. Motion carried unanimously.

- 5) Correspondence from Joe Laux: An email was received from the office of Joe Laux, Eagle River City Administrator, asking for use of the County-owned railroad grade north from County Highway G to the Hi-Pines Campground, for the stated purpose of pedestrian access to Highway G. Laux indicated that Mark Weber of the campground is interested in providing an alternative transportation corridor into Eagle River. At the June Committee meeting, Laux had indicated an interest in use of the grade for golf carts, possibly to be rented at the campground. Discussion. The Committee noted that the City of Eagle River and Hi-Pines Campground own adjacent parcels which connect to Highway G, with no need to utilize the RR grade in order to provide alternative access to Highway G. Motion by Bedish, seconded by Kukanich, to deny the request from Joe Laux, Eagle River City Administrator. Motion carried unanimously. There was also a brief discussion about the gate the Committee allowed Jim Ayers to place on the County RR grade just north of Highway G. The Committee was reminded that the reason for this was that the gate discourages the motor vehicle driving public from ending up in Ayers yard (who lives adjacent to the RR grade). The gate also averts a safety hazard, as this area is very low and wet and vehicles were tearing up the landscape and becoming stuck. The RR grade is still accessible to the public for other than motorized vehicle use. The Committee advised that the current location of the gate is appropriate.
- 6) Fairgrounds Budget: Letter received from Dale Ayers, President of the Vilas County Fair Association, requesting County funds to be budgeted for the Fair for 2014. Ayers outlined project and maintenance needs for the Fairgrounds. Discussion. The Committee directed Ayers to provide a request letter to the County, with the specific requests outlined. Ayers advised he will provide this to Mayo as soon as possible. Stevens advised the Committee that in the past, the County regularly budgeted funds to help support the County-owned Fairgrounds. The Chair asked that Stevens ascertain the particular of this funding.
- 7) OSP Budget: Pat Weber, President of the Baseball Association, addressed the Committee regarding the fencing project to relocate the rest of the baseball fields from Fairgrounds to OSP as planned. Weber advised he would like to see the County appropriate around \$15,000.00 to either re-install that fencing or place new fencing on the as yet undeveloped field on OSP. Weber reminded the Committee that the Baseball Association was promised by the Department that they would have a match of their Fairgrounds facilities so that Baseball could move out to OSP. Weber is trying to work out the price details. Weber will submit a funding request letter to the Committee today.
- 8) Snowmobile Trail Safety Committee: The minutes of the June meeting were provided to the Committee and are available in the Safety Committee minutes book.
- 9) Greater Headwaters Trails: Jeff Currie gave an update.

- 10) Volunteer GIS Trail Project: Gibson of Mapping introduced Katie Lima, who is working on her Master's in a GIS-related field of study. Lima wishes to volunteer her time working on County projects with Gibson in order to gain experience. Gibson outlined the projects. This work will be at no cost to Vilas County. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Rayala, to accept Lima's offer and for Mayo to work with Lima on incorporating the new data gathered as it applies to the Department's recreation programs. Motion carried unanimously.
- 11) Timber Sales Contracts/Forest Management: Gagnon gave his report, a copy of which is attached. As outlined in the report, there are 2 site prep contracts with Future Forests, which Corporation Counsel has reviewed and approved. Motion by Rayala, seconded by Hjemvick, to approved signature by the Chair. Motion carried unanimously. Further, Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Kukanich to accept Gagnon's excellent report and to thank Gagnon and Stevens for keeping the Vilas County Forest healthy. Motion carried unanimously.
- 12) Forest County Resolution: Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Rayala, to submit a Vilas County resolution supporting Florence County Board Resolution 2012-20 and requesting a written response from the USFS Regional Forester and the Forest Supervisor within 60 days as to why the CNNF is not being managed in accord with the 2004 Forest Plan. Motion carried unanimously.
- 13) Monthly Budget Summary: a. Bids for refuse removal were received as follows (2014-2015 combined totals): Eagle Waste - \$1,824.00; Advanced Disposal- \$2,049.35. Motion by Rayala, seconded by Bedish, to accept the bid most advantageous to Vilas County. Motion carried unanimously. Stevens advised that the Conservation Congress line item in the Forestry Conservation Budget falls \$193.13 short due to unexpectedly high mileage expense for the annual meeting. The Committee directed that the excess cost be taken from the Pan Fishing Piers line item of the Conservation Budget.
- 14) Abandoned Railroad Grades: The attorneys hired via Corporation Counsel to investigate the questionable ownership of the abandoned RR grades have completed their report. Milanowski wishes to present her conclusions on this report at the August Committee meeting. This item will be placed on that agenda.
- 15) Meetings & Travel: Motion by Rayala, seconded by Kukanich. to authorize Mayo to attend the Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council on 21 July at Wisconsin Dells. Motion carried unanimously.
- 16) Next Meeting Date: The next regular meeting of the Forestry Committee will be 7 August 2013, 8:30 a.m., Courthouse.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

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