

Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee Minutes

6 March 2013

Members Present: Ralph Sitzberger, Chair
Sig Hjemvick, Vice Chair
Leon Kukanich
Charles Rayala, Jr.
Maynard Bedish

Others Present: Lawrence Stevens, CF, Forest Administrator
John Gagnon, CF, Assistant Forest Administrator
Dale Mayo, Recreation Administrator
Jill Nemec, DNR Forestry Liaison
Ryan Brown, DNR Forest Technician
Dale Ayers, Fair Board
Ken Anderson, Media
Tim Price, DNR Warden
Barb Gibson, Vilas County Mapping
Deborah Eicher, Fair Board

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 Administrator.

- 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 Rayala, seconded by Kukanich, to approve the minutes of the 6 February 2013 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
- 3) Tax Deed Lands: A sealed bid was opened as follows: #18-648-03 – Todd Riihimaki in the amount of \$4100.99. Motion by Rayala, seconded by Hjemvick, to reject this bid. Motion carried unanimously. The Committee directed Stevens to investigate having the used tires stockpiled and scattered on this property removed.
- 4) American Tower Corp: Offer of \$40,000.00 was received to purchase an easement of the currently leased cell tower site. Discussion. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Kukanich to reject the \$40,000.00 offer from American Tower. Motion carried unanimously.
- 5) Timber Sales Contracts/Forest Management: Gagnon gave his report, a copy of which is attached. Hjemvick directed a **letter of appreciation** be sent to New Page Corp for the extra effort made plowing of the Pincherry Road to make it safe for snowmobiles through Contract 846.

- 6) Legal Action – Martens v Vilas County: Mayo reported that on February 19, 2013 the Court denied the motion by Martens to uphold a temporary restraining order on the snowmobile trail construction using Hwy 155 right of way. Also the Court granted the State of Wis motion to dismiss the case. On February 26, 2013 Martens filed a motion for the Court to reconsider its decision. There is a 90 day time period for the Court to rule on the motion to reconsider.
- 7) GPS Data of Recreation Trails: Discussion regarding fees charged and sharing of data, fee exemptions for clubs and government agencies, custodian of the data, and previous Committee actions. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Kukanich to sell recreational trail data with exemptions and with the provision this recommendation is forwarded to the Land Records Committee. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Kukanich to designate Land Records as custodian of the data. Motion carried unanimously. Sitzberger noted he will check with Jason Hilger on the distribution of the fees. The Committee directed Mayo to forward recreation club contact information to Land Records for data sharing agreements.
- 8) Landings & Piers: Discussion regarding improvements, winter access, and power loading. Mayo was directed to create a list of prioritized improvements with estimated costs for Committee review.
- 9) Eagle Lake Pier Rehab: Collins Excavating satisfactorily completed the contract of stabilizing the pier. The cost of the repairs was budgeted and paid for from the County Parks Capital Improvements Account.
- 10) Snowmobile Trails Maintenance Final Payment: Mayo explained the final maintenance payment of \$60,925.00 with deductions for signs and posts sold to the snowmobile clubs of \$5,119.05. Motion by Rayala, seconded by Hjemvick to pay the clubs. Motion carried unanimously.
- 11) Widening of Snowmobile Trails: Stevens reviewed what is currently stated in the timber sale contracts and what changes the staff recommends that can be made to improve safety and coordination with the clubs contracted to maintain the trails when trails are coincident with timber sales. Discussion. Staff is directed to submit the following changes to the timber sale contract to Corp Counsel for approval to be brought to the next Committee Meeting: 1. Logging contractors are to give one week's notice of commencement of logging activity when a timber sale area includes a snowmobile trail; 2. Logging contractor is to plow the access road/trail as wide as possible with additional turn-offs; 3. If equipment must be left on a trail overnight reflectors are to be used as warnings to snowmobilers. Additionally, the Department will purchase larger highway-type maintenance signs. Discussion of how to accomplish the widening of trails to 16 feet on the County Lands and suggesting the postponing of logging activity around the Christmas holidays and Presidents' Day.
- 12) DNR Warden Price explained the "Kids Don't Float" program of supplying life jackets at boat landings that can be borrowed by boaters. Vilas County, as a Partner in this program, would agree allow the placement of a "Loaner Board Station" with signs at the Eagle Lake Boat Landing. Included in the agreement the County will be responsible to maintain, erect, take down, and store the "Loaner Board Station". Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Rayala to enter into this Agreement. Motion carried unanimously.
- 13) Snowmobile Trails Safety Committee Report: Sitzberger submitted and reviewed a copy of the meeting notes highlighting the recommendation to pursue the widening of the trails to 16 feet.

- 14) Highway 155 Trail Reroute: Mayo explained this contract could not be completed on time due to the Martens v Vilas County Case. The Contractor has indicated he will honor his original bid if the County would extend the contract. Motion by Rayala, seconded by Hjemvick to extend the contract one year. Motion carried unanimously.
- 15) Fairgrounds Truck Pull: Dale Ayers explained a proposed one-night truck pull event at the Vilas County Fair and submitted a map of the proposed location. The Fair Board asked the Forestry Committee to consider investing in the cost of construction, \$11,800.00. Discussion. **Ayers will obtain input from the City** of Eagle River.
- 16) Resolutions: Stevens reviewed the 4 resolutions submitted for the March County Board Meeting. The resolution regarding the “Sustainable Forestry Grant” was changed by Finance Director Hilger to reflect the distribution of revenues to line items within the State Forestry Aid Account. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Rayala to forward the amended resolution to the County Board for approval. Motion carried unanimously.
- 17) Meetings & Education: Motion by Bedish, seconded by Hjemvick to approve out of County travel for Sitzberger, Kukanich, Hjemvick, and Bedish to attend the Forest Economics Conference in Florence, WI on April 11, 2013. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Bedish to approve out of County travel for Sitzberger to attend the Governor’s Snowmobile Recreation Council meeting in Eau Claire, WI on March 18 & 19, 2013. Motion carried unanimously.
- 18) Monthly Budget Summary: Stevens presented the Department Budget Summary for the month of February, 2013. The revenues and expenditures summaries produced by the Finance Director were given to the Committee to review and sign. Discussion. The committee **commented, for the record**, that instruction is needed to understand the Finance Director’s reports, the process of review and sign the reports is not in the committees’ standing rules, there is no time to review the reports at the monthly committee meetings, to review and sign invoices is easier and there is less to look at and understand. The Committee did not sign the expenditure summary.
- 19) Abandoned Rail Grades: Mayo reported that on February 22, 2013 Corporation Counsel contacted the County’s insurance carrier for a recommendation to pursue investigating the County’s ownership in abandoned rail grades. There is currently one snowmobile bridge project that is being delayed due to the question of ownership.
- 20) The date for the next meeting is April 3, 2013 at 8:30 a.m.
- 21) Chairman Sitzberger adjourned the meeting at 10:52 a.m.

Minutes reflect the recorders’ (Mayo & Stevens) notations and are subject to approval by the appropriate board or committee.