

# Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee Minutes

3 September 2014

Members Present: Steven Doyen, Chair  
Rocky Caffarella, Vice Chair  
Ken Anderson  
Willy Otterpohl

Members Excused: Art Kunde

Others Present: John Gagnon, CF, Forest Administrator  
Dale Mayo, Parks & Recreation Administrator  
Constance Valkenaar, Administrative Secretary  
Jill Nemeec, DNR Forestry Liaison  
Ron De Bruyne, County Board Chair  
Dawn Schmidt, Zoning Administrator  
Rollie Alger, Phelps  
Brian Jopek, Lakeland Times  
Gary Meister

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Doyen, who advised that this was a public meeting and that notification of the meeting with the agenda was properly posted. This notification was verified by Forestry Department Administrative Secretary Valkenaar.

- 1) Motion by Mr. Caffarella, seconded by Mr. Otterpohl, to approve the agenda to be discussed in any order at the discretion of the Chair. Motion carried unanimously.
- 2) Approval of Minutes: Motion by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Caffarella, to approve the minutes of the 14 July 2014 joint meeting of Forestry, Recreation, & Land & Highway Committees and 6 & 27 August 2014 Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee and the 11 August 2014 joint meeting of the Forestry, Recreation, & Land & Law Enforcement Committees. Motion carried unanimously.
- 3) Rezoning Fairgrounds: Zoning Administrator Schmidt gave an update. Ms. Schmidt advised that the Fairgrounds is currently zoned Industrial; should be zoned Parks & Recreation, because of its current use, and she explained the steps that need to be taken to effect this change. Discussion. Motion by Anderson, seconded by Caffarella, to authorize the appropriate County official to sign the application form(s) with additional language that overnight camping at the Fairgrounds would be limited to during events at the Fairgrounds. Schmidt further advised that these zoning changes will be done at no cost to the County. Motion carried unanimously.
- 4) Snowmobile Trail Maintenance Advance Payment 2014-2015: Motion by Caffarella, seconded by Otterpohl, to pay the \$60,400.00 to the Vilas County Snowmobile Alliance.
- 5) Parks 2015 Budget: Mr. Mayo advised that since the resolution to purchase a new Parks truck for \$30,000.00 for 2015 failed, he would like to add \$15,000.00 extra into

Capital Improvements. Mayo said that he has a request for an additional cross-country ski trail, possibly open up the old Ski Hill trail. Another item Mayo said he was looking at is to put in an equestrian trail, which would require dozing and graveling. Anderson advised that he would be chairing the new ad hoc trails committee, and that he doesn't want any new trails opened, discussed, planned, or constructed until that ad hoc committee starts meeting and doing their work. Anderson stressed that whatever discussions may be had concerning new trails must be discussed up front and in the open. Motion by Anderson, seconded by Caffarella to add \$15,000.00 to Capital Improvements budget. Discussion. Chair called for a vote on the motion. All voted no; motion failed. Discussion of possibility of new County campground on County Forest Land at Torch Lake in Conover. Motion by Caffarella, seconded by Otterpohl, to amend the Parks Budget to move \$30,000.00 from Capital Equipment to Capital Improvement. Motion carried unanimously.

- 6) Phelps Land Use Agreement: Mr. Algers advised that the Town of Phelps is in agreement with the form of the LUA as decided upon at the 27 August 2014 FRLC meeting, and further, that changing the agreement from a 30 years term to 25 years is acceptable to the Town. Motion by Anderson, seconded by Doyen to recommend approval of the LUA as discussed at the 27 August 2014 meeting and to authorize the Chair to sign the LUA after final review by Corporation Counsel. Motion carried unanimously.
- 7) Resolution: Split Position with Highway Dept: Discussion. Motion by Anderson, seconded by Otterpohl to approved the resolution contingent upon comments of Corporation Counsel. Motion carried unanimously.
- 8) Ad Hoc Trails Committee: Anderson advised that he has people in place to serve on this new committee, except for someone to represent bicycle trail user interest. Mr. Gagnon advised that Corp Counsel recommends that in the process of selecting individuals for ad hoc committees, County Board Supervisors should not be involved. DNR Liaison Nemecek suggested that rather, the groups who are going to be represented by the committee should be asked to submit a representative. Anderson advised that the groups to be represented are: equestrian, ATV, snowmobile, with a bicycle trail representative still needed. Mr. De Bruyne advised that there are no formal equestrian organizations in the County. Mr. Alger said that in the opinion of GHT, the person who best represents the bicyclist interests in this area is Michael Robillard, who is associated with GHT, Three Eagles Trail, Tara La, and bike trails in other areas. Alger and Mr. Gagnon advised that Mr. Robillard is interested in participating in the ad hoc committee. Mayo advised that he would get in contact with Robillard in this regard. Gagnon reminded the Committee that as regards recreation on the County Forest, timber management and recreational activities impact each other, and as such he feels that it would be prudent to have a representative of the timber industry on the ad hoc committee. Discussion. Doyen said that perhaps hunters, berry pickers, and other types of groups should also be represented, and Gagnon noted that organizations such as Ruffed Grouse Society have done much work on the County Forest Hunter/Hiking Trail System. Chair Doyen asked that Gagnon try to find a timber products industry representative for the ad hoc group. De Bruyne told the Committee that he will announce the ad hoc committee appointees at the September County Board meeting.
- 9) Performance Bonds/Letters of Credit: Review of current Department policy, which requires a 10% performance deposit for all projects, minimum \$500.00, timber sales

excepted as there is a separate policy for that. Gagnon advised that when projects are for amounts exceeding certain amounts, there are statutory requirements for bond, according to Corporation Counsel. Discussion. Motion by Doyen, seconded by Anderson, that on projects exceeding \$5,000.00 a 10% performance deposit in the form of letter of credit or cash will be required, timber sales contracts excepted.

Motion carried unanimously.

- 10) Land Acquisition – Torch Lake: Gagnon reported that he was contacted by a real estate agent who informed him that a 7 acre parcel on Torch Lake adjacent to County Forest Land (including Torch Lake County Park) is for sale. Motion by Caffarella, seconded by Anderson, to have the parcel appraised. Motion carried unanimously.
- 11) Tax Deed Redemption Policy: Gagnon outlined the County policy for taking of tax delinquent properties to the point where the Forestry, Recreation, & Land Department is charged with the responsibility of disposal of these properties. The formal Department procedure (CB Res. 2004-2) says that: “After judgment has been entered by the Circuit Court, no former owner will be allowed to regain title to their property outside of the normal sale process except upon a showing of good cause to the Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee, approval by that Committee, and payment of all back taxes, interest, penalties and other costs.” Corporation Counsel, County Treasurer and Forestry Department staff feel that it would be in the best interests of Vilas County to have a more standard policy. Toward that end, Gagnon directed Valkenaar to gather information from other Wisconsin counties as to how those counties handle these redemption requests. Valkenaar presented a summary of those responses for Committee review. Discussion. The Committee directed Gagnon to come back to the Committee with a suggested policy. Gagnon will prepare a recommendation and send out to the Committee for their review prior to the October meeting. This will be on the October meeting agenda.
- 12) Update of Tax Deed #28-561: Gagnon reported that the former owners took whatever personal property they wanted from this tax deed parcel, and the property is on the real estate prospectus to be offered for sale at the October real estate bid opening.
- 13) Forest Management: Gagnon gave his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.
- 14) Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant: Gagnon advised that the final payment has been received from DNR for the acquisition of the Denton Lake 40. The County will submit the purchase price to BCPL and BCPL will issue a Patent and Vilas County will own the property. Gagnon will continue to keep the Committee informed as to the progress of this project.
- 15) Land Acquisition – Johnson: Gagnon reported that per Committee direction, he ordered an appraisal to be done; the appraised value is \$66,000.00 for the 28.3 acre parcel. Discussion. Motion by Anderson, seconded by Otterpohl, to extend an offer to purchase in the amount of \$66,000.00 (the amount of the appraisal) to Mr. Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.
- 16) Land Acquisition – Jackson: Gagnon advised that per Committee direction, he verbally extended the Committee’s offer of \$57,000.00 for the Jackson property discussed at the 6 August 2014 meeting. Mr. Jackson accepted on behalf of himself and fellow property owners. Corporation Counsel has requested a Committee motion. Motion by Caffarella, seconded by Otterpohl, to ask Corporation Counsel to draft an offer to purchase the Jackson property for \$57,000.00 with the standard contingencies. Motion carried unanimously.

- 17) Forestry Budget 2015: Gagnon explained to the Committee how he plans to rearrange staff in the available office spaces, and the office equipment necessary to accommodate the staff. Discussion. Doyen directed Gagnon to put the request in the budget.
- 18) Job Descriptions: Caffarella advised that he would like Mayo and Gagnon to write descriptions of their current jobs and bring it back to the Committee. Caffarella said he would like the Committee to look these job descriptions over and see if there is anything that the Committee needs to add or delete to these job descriptions and then take it to Personnel. The Chair stated that was just done; Gagnon and Mayo both confirmed that was done about 1 year ago. Caffarella said that if John thinks his job description is exactly as written just submit that back to the Committee, and if John or Mayo thinks there are changes that need to be made, the changes should be shown to the Committee.
- 19) Meetings/Education/Travel: WCFA Fall meeting 26 September – this will be held in Wausau at Stony Creek Inn. Attendance of Gagnon and any interested Committee members was approved at the regular August FRLC meeting.
- 20) Monthly Budget Summary: No problems noted.
- 21) Next Meeting Date: The next regular meeting of the Forestry, Recreation & Land Committee will be 1 October 2014, 1:00 p.m. at the Courthouse Conference Rooms.
- 22) The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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