

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2018, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Tuesday, January 16, 2018, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 4:30 p.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chris Zellmer-Zant, Aaron Gehling, Neil Stockfleth, and Suzan Boden

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Cindy Bennett

**STAFF PRESENT**

Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, Dawn Snyder, Theresa Kruid, and Dawn Bostwick

**OTHERS PRESENT**

None

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Boden called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

**CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**

None

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**ITEM R1.      APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION** by Stockfleth second by Zellmer-Zant.

To approve the consent agenda.

**VOTE:**    Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Neil Stockfleth, & Suzan Boden  
              Nay: None  
              Absent: Cindy Bennett

Consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

**ITEM C1.    Approve minutes of the December 5, 2017 monthly meeting and the December 11, 2017 special meeting**

**ITEM C2.    Approve the December 2017 claims and expenditures**

**ITEM C3.    Receive and place on file the December 2017 financial/budget report and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter FY 18 Reserve Fund Report**

**ITEM C4.    Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:**

1. Scheels for \$1,000 cash donation for intern program
2. Roger Martin family for red fox & golden pheasant mount
3. Gene & Ginger Martin for \$500 for Scarlet Red-tailed Hawk adoption
4. Gary Heineman for 50 pounds black oil sunflower seed
5. Maureen Pape for animal tracks

6. Bob Gillespie for fishing poles
7. Helen Shuck for animal furs
8. Rick Schneider for turkey tail mount
9. Kingsley Garden Club for \$5 cash donation
10. Winter Fun Day donations: Jolly Time Pop Corn for popcorn; Kay's Sweet Treats/Kayla Nieman, Judi Deaton, Barb Small, Brenda Nelson, Donna Popp, Doris Swanson, Anne Shaner for cookies, Floyd WalMart for \$25 gift card, Marketplace Hy-Vee & Bimbo for bagels

**ITEM R2. Welcome and installation of new board member – Oath of Office**

President Suzan Boden administered the oath of office to Aaron Gehling, and he was welcomed as a new member of the Woodbury County Conservation Board.

**ITEM R3. Election of Board Officers and committee assignments for 2018 (Conservation Board)**

Heissel stated that following the traditional rotation of officers Neil Stockfleth would become President, Chris Zellmer-Zant would move to Vice President, and Cindy Bennett would serve as Secretary.

Chris Zellmer-Zant agreed to serve on the County REAP Committee, as well as continue her term with the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation. All board members serve on the Endowment Fund Committee.

**MOTION** by Zellmer-Zant, second by Gehling.

To approve the slate of officers and committee appointment for 2018 as presented.<sup>1-18</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Aaron Gehling, Neil Stockfleth, & Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: Cindy Bennett

Stockfleth assumed the role of President for the remainder of the meeting.

**ITEM R4. FY 19 Budget Review – Information from Budget Review (Heissel)**

Heissel recapped the department's budget review with the Board of Supervisors held on Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>. The capital improvement projects, proposed new positions, and \$100,000 equipment replacement line item were included in the budget to provide a "worst case". The Supervisors removed the two full-time position requests, but kept the part-time clerk position, and accepted the rest of the budget as presented. Changes are still possible until it is formally approved in March.

The FY 18 budget amendment is due in February. The amendment will be emailed to the board and acted on at the next meeting. Reserve funds were earmarked for the Director transition.

**ITEM R5. Brown's Lake – Land Acquisition Update (Heissel)**

Heissel reviewed the status of the 93-acre land acquisition at Brown's Lake. Heissel withdrew the Habitat Stamp grant request of \$45,000 because no commitment would be made before the grant requests were reviewed. The appraisals were \$100,000 short, and the farm manager was

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<sup>1-18</sup> To approve the slate of officers and committee appointment for 2018 as presented.

seeking another appraisal but had still hoped to close on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Heissel contacted him again last Friday and was told they are still working on a proposal.

Heissel also stated that Gary Brown continues to work towards acquiring the 57-acre superfund site at Brown's Lake. The wells have all been capped, but assurance is needed that no other cleanup costs will be incurred.

**ITEM R6. Flemming Property Update (Heissel)**

Heissel reported that the Flemming property acquisition has closed and the abstracts are done. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation will own the property, and WCCB will pursue grant dollars to purchase it from INHF.

**ITEM R7. Sorenson Property Information (Heissel)**

Heissel discussed a land acquisition opportunity that has come available on old Highway 141 near Hornick. The entire 280-acre property is listed for \$1.3 million (\$4642/acre). The property includes a large house, which is being offered with the surrounding 30 acres separately for \$599,000, and the remaining 250 acres at \$3,500/acre. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation is pursuing it without WCCB commitment, but the realtor is not considering them a serious buyer. Possibilities of using the house as a retreat, lodge or mini educational center or selling it with easements attached were discussed. Grants could be obtained to cover the land, and a few might help with the facility. Costs of upkeep, management and staff would be an additional burden. Options include purchasing the entire 280 acres including the house, purchasing the 250 acres without the house, or, if not acquired, obtaining easements with the new owner. It is the consensus of the board to explore possibilities with INHF on the entire 280 acres. Tim Sproul and Dan Heissel will meet with a realtor.

**ITEM R8. Capital Improvement Projects Update (Heissel)**

**1. Brown's Lake Campground Drain Field Project**

Heissel reported that Mike Barkley and park staff finished up the Brown's Lake campground drain field project, which was a couple years in the making.

**2. Brown's Lake Shoreline**

Heissel received word that the Fish Habitat Stamp grant request was approved by the District, and is waiting for Commission approval. The request was for \$78,000 and was ranked #3 for the district. Once approval is granted, the project can be initiated with JEO.

**3. Little Sioux Park Beach Renovation Update**

Heissel met with Bacon Creek Design and got a new set of plans for the Little Sioux beach renovation project. He will be meeting with the contractor and park staff to review the project, which is to be completed before the park opens for the season.

**4. Southwood – Upper Road – Observation Deck Discussion**

Heissel reported that additional rock was added to the upper road at Southwood but still needs to be bladed and rolled. Addition of an observation deck and elevated tower at a cost of \$15-16,000 has been discussed. The contractor will be asked to draw up formal plans.

**ITEM R9. Board member/staff reports**

**1. Nature Center Activities (Snyder)**

Snyder and Kruid reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- Winter Fun Day was held with over 400 people in attendance, up from approximately 200 last year. The event included a scavenger hunt, dozens of crafts to make, refreshments, and several artist booths. Many donations and volunteers helped with the event.
- In 2017, the Nature Center birds of prey were utilized in 87 programs, interacting with approximately 5,720 people. The number of bird programs was down a little from 2016 due to the unexpected death of the owl and the time spent in acquiring and transitioning to another.
- A grant has been requested in the amount of \$170,000 through Fund for Siouxland to help with the handicap accessible trail at the Nature Center.
- The Iowa DNR has \$80,000 of statewide funding available through their Youth Conservation Corps program for trail work. The crews are made up of individuals between 15 and 25 years of age. Requests are due February 2 and will be granted at the end of February, with a May 1<sup>st</sup> start date. Snyder will be submitting a grant request for the Nature Center.
- Program requests continue to increase. Theresa is first in line for leading programs, and when her schedule is full, Tyler and Dawn fill in as available. When requests are unable to be accommodated, the group has the choice to come on a self-guided visit or not at all. In 2016, 8 program requests could not be fulfilled, and 32 groups could not be accommodated in 2017.
- Snyder expressed her desire to turn one of the five summer naturalist intern positions into a 6-month position (April-October) to help with public programming, as well as camps. She will be researching the availability of funds.
- The Woodbury County Conservation Foundation annual meeting will be held on Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 p.m. A public program will be held at 2:00 p.m. with Steve Juaron presenting a 50-year history of the Missouri River.

**2. Park Activities (Stehr)**

Stehr reported on the following park activities:

- Tool inventories have been completed, and supplies have been ordered.
- The Little Sioux swan pen is almost complete. Sections need to be added across the water and up the steep bank. A nesting platform will be made from an old dock with floats. The feeder will be supplied by the DNR. Delivery of the swans is expected the first week of April. A male currently recovering from lead poisoning may be available to be delivered along with the two females. An aerator and signage are still needed.
- Staff has been clearing along the southeast side of the Flemming property to get ready for fencing.
- Southwood staff worked on hauling rock for the road to the observation point.
- During the extreme subzero weather at the end of the year, the Southwood cabins had water lines freeze coming into the cabins and one fitting freeze at the bathroom building that houses the pressure tank. The pipes were thawed out, and steps were taken to better insulate the cabin pipes and the restroom facility.
- Staff has been working to take down fence in the Snyder Bend maintenance yard to allow use of the 6' of dead space between the fence and property line.

- Snyder Bend and Brown's Lake staff have also been removing hazard trees from the flood and completing maintenance on the tandem dump truck.
- Two staff members have passed their written CDL tests and will be taking the driving test soon.
- Staff will be completing pesticide applicators testing.
- Rifles and all accessories have been delivered. Training will be set up once the weather warms up.
- Stehr expressed the need for a sander at the Nature Center that can be attached to an ATV or a receiver hitch. The tandem dump truck with the sander is housed in the shop at Brown's Lake to prevent the sand from freezing in it. This creates a hazard when roads are icy as someone must drive it from Salix to the Nature Center to sand the parking lot and road. He requested a stainless-steel sander at a cost of \$1600. Sand would be packed in 50# bags and kept in the shop rather than piled in the lot.

**MOTION** by Boden, second by Zellmer-Zant.

To approve the purchase of a stainless-steel sander for the Nature Center at a cost of approximately \$1,600.<sup>2-18</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Aaron Gehling, Neil Stockfleth, & Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: Cindy Bennett

### 3. Administrative Items (Heissel)

Heissel reported on the following items:

#### a. Succession/Strategic Planning Session

A joint board and staff strategic planning meeting has been held the last two years in January. The board would like to review the list of goals from the past meeting and possibly set up another meeting later.

#### b. Set February Meeting Date

Heissel suggested moving the standard board meeting date to the second Thursday of the month and amending the Bylaws to reflect that change.

**MOTION** by Boden, second by Zellmer-Zant.

To approve moving the monthly meeting date to the second Thursday each month and to propose a Bylaws amendment to reflect that change at the next monthly meeting.<sup>3-18</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Chris Zellmer-Zant, Aaron Gehling, Neil Stockfleth, & Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: Cindy Bennett

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<sup>2-18</sup> To approve the purchase of a stainless-steel sander for the Nature Center at a cost of approximately \$1,600.

<sup>3-18</sup> To approve moving the monthly meeting date to the second Thursday each month and to propose a Bylaws amendment to reflect that change at the next monthly meeting.

The February meeting was set for Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, at 4:30 p.m. at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

**c. Statewide Winterfest Meeting**

Five employees will be attending Winterfest in Waterloo on January 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>.

**d. Miscellaneous Items**

Heissel stated that former director, Schneider, completed the water testing for the Nature Center in January and would be willing to contract to do it for the rest of the year until Tyler can get certified. Gehling noted that Siouxland District Health could also do it and a grant is available to cover the cost. Heissel will check into it.

Heissel discussed the ranger vacancy at Stone State Park with Todd Coffelt of the DNR and informed him that WCCB has no interest in providing the law enforcement there.

Ideas are being generated to make a few improvements to the Nature Center receptionists' office to alleviate crowding and organize it for ease of use.

**ITEM R7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

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Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

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Board Secretary, Cindy Bennett

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Board President, Neil Stockfleth