

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2022, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, December 15, 2022, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Aaron Gehling (via Zoom), Chris Zellmer-Zant (via Zoom), Cindy Bennett (via Zoom), Neil Stockfleth, and Tom Limoges

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, Dawn Snyder (via Zoom), and Dawn Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

None

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Stockfleth called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

MOTION by Tom, second by Cindy.

To approve the consent agenda.

VOTE: Aye: Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth, & Tom Limoges

Nay: None

Absent: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

C1. Approve Minutes of the November 17, 2022, Regular Meeting

C2. Approve the November 2022 Claims and Expenditures

C3. Receive and Place on File the November 2022 Financial/Budget Report

C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:

- Scheels for \$4,000 cash donation for Summer Interns
- Rosie Kuehne for \$3,000 cash donation for Outdoor Learning Shelter
- Rosie Kuehne for \$200 for Winter Fun Day craft box supplies
- Lawrence L. and Juliann P. Delperdang for \$600 for bird seed/animal food
- Jerry Von Ehwegen for \$50 cash for bird seed

- Greg Pranke and Julie Miller-Pranke for \$25 cash in memory of Bonnie Brown
- Dawn Snyder for \$40 cash in memory of Bonnie Brown
- Jan Null for \$10 cash donation for programs
- Rosie Kuehne, Donna Popp, Mary Siepker, Carol Probst, Helen Anderson, Linda Bockelman, Anne Shaner, Cindy Bennett, Theresa Kruid for craft supplies for winter craft boxes
- Pizza Ranch Sioux City for 200 boxes for winter craft boxes
- Norb Ruhland for gift shop tree stand repair

(Aaron arrived at 4:06 p.m. via Zoom.)

ITEM R2. Appoint Theresa Kruid as the Woodbury County Conservation Board’s Employee Representative to the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation Effective 2023

Dawn will vacate her WCCF board position as Secretary/Treasurer with her retirement. She recommended Theresa to replace her on the Foundation board.

MOTION by Tom, second by Aaron.

To appoint Theresa Kruid as the Woodbury County Conservation Board’s employee representative to the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation effective January 1, 2023.²²⁻³⁵

VOTE: Aye: Aaron Gehling, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth, & Tom Limoges
Nay: None
Absent: Chris Zellmer-Zant

Dawn stated that Chris has been the board representative for a lot of years, and it might be a good idea to consider new board representation. That appointment will be made at the January meeting. The Foundation annual meeting will be held in February.

(Chris arrived at 4:08 p.m. via Zoom.)

ITEM R3. Budget – FY 24

Dan reported that he submitted the department budget for general basic askings and noted that the supervisors will add the salaries with cost-of-living increases later. Dan reviewed the CIP requests that were turned in last week.

1. CIP Improvement Requests

a. Little Sioux Park Road (\$600,000)

Dan stated that Rick had started requesting the Little Sioux Park road replacement before he retired, and Dan has continued submitting it with the hopes that the supervisors will approve it eventually. The Brown’s Lake road project is a ten-year commitment with the first payment coming due in June of 2023. The Little Sioux road will need to be replaced before that is paid off, so assistance from the supervisors will be needed. Dan noted that \$600,000 will not cover the cost of concrete. He will need to contact Secondary Roads and have them estimate what it will cost for concrete.

²²⁻³⁵ To appoint Theresa Kruid as the Woodbury County Conservation Board’s employee representative to the Woodbury County Conservation Foundation effective January 1, 2023.

- b. Brown's Lake Boiler Replacement (\$12,000)
The boiler for the hot water heating in the floor of the shower restroom/tornado shelter at Brown's Lake is at the end of its life expectancy. Repairs are being made for \$1,000, but it was advised to replace it before it is no longer able to be fixed. The floors are heated to keep the pipes from freezing in the winter and to dry the floors in the summer.
- c. Law Enforcement Radio Replacement (\$64,000)
Radios in all eight law enforcement trucks need to be replaced. Motorola has the contract through 2025 for maintenance and purchasing. Before Glenn Sedivy retired, he advised Dan to replace the radios before the contract expires, or the cost will increase dramatically and they will no longer be supported. The Sheriff's office is in the same situation but is going to wait until next year to request them.

2. Improvement Request – Southwood Resource Technician position

Dan stated that Rick was requesting this position prior to his retirement also. Southwood Conservation Area is the only district that doesn't have a technician. It is the largest district with the most acres to take care of but has the smallest staff.

Dan said that he doesn't expect that much of this will be approved this year due to the situation with the new law enforcement center, but he continues to request it to document the need. The department's budget review is set for January 3rd, but CIP and improvement requests won't be reviewed until February.

ITEM R4. Capital Improvement Projects Update

1. Brown's Lake Projects

a. Water Levels & Condition

MidAmerican started pumping to the new inlet to Brown's Lake in mid-November and within two weeks, the water had come up a couple vertical feet. They are pumping 10 million gallons per day. The level is now at the point where it spills over into the wetland. MidAmerican requested drone photos every week now to keep a record of the levels and help monitor it.

Aaron asked about installing a flow meter on the pipe to show how much is coming out. Dan stated that he had asked about it in his meeting with Doug and Justin, and Doug said that he was ordering one because he had the same concern.

b. Park Projects – Beach, Concession, Campground, Etc.

Brian showed a picture of the completed beach. He stated that the Brown's Lake staff overseeded on the grass around the beach and concession building. They have also filled and frost-seeded the areas of the campground that had settled over the summer.

The concession building is still waiting on the mop sink, but Dan told him to get a different one so the project could be finished up. The freezers, coolers, shelving, and PA system will be put in once the contractor is done. A small cash register and a pop cooler are still needed.

The percolation test has been done, which was a DNR requirement for the engineers to figure what is needed for the drain field. Everything is in JEO's hands now. The permit should be ready by February, and then bids can be let for it if required.

ITEM R5. Board member/staff reports

1. Administrative items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. January Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on January 12, 2023, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

b. Strategic Planning Meeting Date

A strategic planning meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 25, 2023, from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center. Resource managers will also attend. Dan will send out the list of projects from the last session.

c. Employee Law Enforcement Agreement

Dan proposed changes to the current employee law enforcement agreement to remove the repayment of salary and benefits, as well as the termination clause. Dan would like to have it ready for Brodie to sign before he goes to the academy next month. The new contract would require repayment of the academy costs, travel, and all related testing if the employee leaves within four years but would strike repayment of salary and benefits while they are at the academy and repayment of any costs if terminated.

MOTION by Tom, second by Aaron.

To approve the amended employee law enforcement agreement as presented.²⁵⁻³⁶

VOTE: Aye: Aaron Gehling, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth,
& Tom Limoges
Nay: Chris Zellmer-Zant
Absent: None

d. Education Director & Office Clerk Position Openings

Dan stated that seven applications had been received for the Education Director position, and three interviews have been scheduled on December 19th, two in person and one by Zoom. Interviews will be conducted by Dan, Brian, and Cindy.

The office clerk position had ten applications. Dan, Brian, and Dawn B. will review and choose candidates to interview. Dan increased the number of hours from 16 to 24 and was able to do that within the current budget due to unfilled seasonal positions. The hourly rate was increased to \$17.00 which was what the former clerk was making when she left. Dan stated that it is hard to draw applicants for a part-time position, so he hopes the additional hours and higher pay will help.

Dawn S. stated that she has been working on documentation to aid in a smooth transition for her position and hopes that she will get to work with the new person for a time before she leaves. She will also work with Theresa on the Foundation board transition.

²⁵⁻³⁶ To approve the amended employee law enforcement agreement as presented.

e. Shagbark Addition

Dan was approached by the owners of ground near Shagbark who want to sell two parcels totaling 27 acres. Dan had previously met with them and sent a map out to board members. Neil asked Dan to ask if they would have any interest in selling the north fingers of the property. Dan called them, and they said they might be interested but are concerned about losing crop ground. Tom asked about possibly negotiating an agreement to let them continue to farm some of it. Dan is planning to meet with them, but the weather has not been conducive for getting into the field. Dan informed the owners that the property would have to be appraised, and grants wouldn't allow paying more than appraised value.

f. Off-Duty Call-In Pay

Dan initiated a discussion about a concern brought to him by park staff regarding winter holiday cabin rentals and compensation of staff if they are required to tend to cabin issues over the holidays. At Southwood there are no salaried employees during the winter because an employee must supervise at least two people to be salaried. Erik is considered salaried during the summer when seasonal staff is onboard but is hourly the rest of the year. At Snyder Bend, Dylan is hourly all year, but Josh is salaried and could possibly be available. The issue arises when there are cabin rentals over the winter holidays, as someone needs to be available in case of major issues, and this prevents the park staff from being able to attend family events and such. Dan stated that the same discussion was brought up on the state association portal. Three other counties reported having the same issue, but no one had an answer yet. Dan will send a copy of the portal discussion to board members. Dan noted that there is currently a compensation agreement in place for holiday snow removal only.

Neil questioned whether the winter cabin rental rates are high enough to cover the extra compensation. Dawn B. will prepare a winter occupancy report.

Tom reported that at a Pheasants Forever meeting it was mentioned that the roads at Owego are getting rather rough. He said that it doesn't bother hunters but may be more of an issue for birders. Dan stated that that road is not a high-priority road for maintenance, and the roads crews will get to it only when they have time.

(Tom left meeting at 5:25 p.m.)

g. ARPA Money Update

Dan reported that he is still pushing for approval to use ARPA funds for the water and sewer campground upgrades. He has provided all the requested information, and it is being presented to the consultant next week. He is going to request to sit in on the meeting. Money must be spent by 2026, and the work will need to be done after the parks are closed for the season.

h. Old Business

None

i. Other Business

None

2. Nature Center Activities

Dawn reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors report for November was presented.
- Winter Fun Day had a good turnout with a little over 200 people, and it got some television coverage.
- Dorothy Shamblen had her six-month review. She is doing a great job, loves it, and is fitting in well.
- Betty West just had her 15th anniversary and is doing well.

(Chris left meeting at 5:28 p.m.)

- Dawn has been keeping up with the Foundation memberships and working on the transition. The Foundation annual meeting will be held on February 18th and will include a presentation by Wildlife Encounters.
- Neil also noted that Dawn's retirement reception is coming up on February 1st.

3. Park Activities

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Park staff have been burning brush piles and working on equipment maintenance.
- Little Sioux staff has been making signs for the Briese property and replacing wood signs with the routered plastic signs.
- In addition to the work done on the beach and campground, Brown's Lake staff continues to clean and remodel the shop for better storage use.
- Brodie completed his final CDL driving test and is now fully licensed. His academy paperwork is being completed.
- The new Bobcat track loader will be delivered tomorrow. It is still missing the engine seal kit, which is only needed for using the forestry grinder, but they will pick it up for installation when the kit is received.
- The ½-ton chevy pickup is in now, a lot sooner than expected.
- The ¾-ton Ford truck has been built and is waiting for transportation.
- There is no update on the 1-ton Ram dually yet, but they were scheduled to start building it after the first of the year.
- At the fall conference, WCCB received the Izaak Walton League's wildlife habitat improvement 1st place award for counties with population over 20,000.

4. Board Information

None

5. Other Business

None

ITEM R6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Cindy Bennett

Board Chair, Neil Stockfleth