

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 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, February 10, 2022, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth, and Tom Limoges

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, Dawn Snyder and Dawn Bostwick

OTHERS PRESENT

Jeremy Taylor, County Supervisor/Conservation Board Liaison
Maria Rundquist
Matt Sandman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Stockfleth called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Matt Sandman, a Brown's Lake resident, addressed the board and requested reconsideration of the ordinance prohibiting golf carts, UTVs and ATVs. He acknowledged the danger with ATVs & UTVs but felt that golf carts should be treated differently. Brian and Dan explained that the law doesn't allow golf carts to be registered yet and that even with the new county ordinance, registered ATVs are not allowed on state and public roads. Because the roads in Brown's Lake campground are state roads, golf carts and ATVs are prohibited by law.

Maria Rundquist was present to introduce herself, announce that she is running for the open seat on the Board of Supervisors, and ask for support at the primary on June 7th.

(Chris joined the meeting at 4:30 p.m.)

ITEM R1. Swearing In of New Board Member, Tom Limoges

Chairperson Stockfleth administered the oath of office to Tom Limoges, and he was welcomed as a new member of the Woodbury County Conservation Board.

ITEM R2. Approve Consent Agenda

MOTION by Aaron, second by Tom.

To approve the consent agenda.

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

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

- C1. Approve Minutes of the November 18, 2021 Regular Meeting.
- C2. Approve the November 2021 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the November 2021 Financial/Budget Report
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:
 - Lucinda Tryon for \$650 for outdoor combo dog water fountain project
 - Alex Uhl for \$600 for trail bench
 - Mark & Susan Nielsen for \$50 for Mary Smith Memorial
 - Constance Smith for \$40 for Jack Connor & Ray Schroer Memorial
 - Kingsley Garden Club for \$10 donation
 - Dr. David Paulsrud for books
 - Brandon Bradshaw for fossils

ITEM R3. Budget FY 22-23 – Supervisors’ Salary Changes/Equipment

Dan reported that the Board of Supervisors discussed wage plan employee cost of living increases again. He stated that the initial budget included a starting figure of a 2.75% increase, but the supervisors have now approved a 4% increase for wage plan employees. He noted that although the conservation board has the authority to set department salaries, they have always followed the cost of living increases approved by the Board of Supervisors.

MOTION by Aaron, second by Cindy.

To acknowledge that the FY23 budget will now include a 4% increase for wage plan employees.²²⁻⁵

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

ITEM R4. Capital Improvement Projects Update

1. Brown’s Lake Projects

a. Campground – Sewer, Water, Electrical

Dan reported that the Brown’s Lake campground project has been moving along. The sewer is basically done and just needs electrical hooked up to the sewage pit in the spring. The water is done other than lowering the sewer caps to grade when roads are finished. The electrical contractor has been on vacation but is supposed to be finishing up as weather allows.

²²⁻⁵ To acknowledge that the FY23 budget will now include a 4% increase for wage plan employees.

b. Road Project

Dan stated that the electrical contractor will need to be done by April 1st as that is when Knife River wants to start. Dan and Brian met with Knife River's lead foreman and the county engineer's office. The engineer's office has agreed to do the inspections for the project. A public meeting has been scheduled for landowners next Wednesday at 6 p.m. Discussion will be held about plans for ingress and egress while concrete is being poured in front of their houses. Knife River said that they will easily meet the project deadline of the 22nd if the weather is good. They will do dirt shoulders, and Dan will check with them about feathering them out to allow for easier mowing.

c. Concession Project

Dan stated that Brandon Deeds Construction has been contracted for the concession building project. Brandon has suggestions for changes and will review those with Dan. Dan will then prepare a change order resulting in reductions of possibly \$25,000 or more. Materials have already been ordered and paid for to lock in prices.

ITEM R5. Board member/staff reports

1. Administrative items

Dan reported on the following items:

a. March Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on March 17, 2022, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

b. Briese Memorandum of Understanding

Dan reported that the Briese memorandum of understanding was discussed at the supervisors meeting two weeks ago with four supervisors in attendance. Supervisors Taylor & Ung were in favor of signing the memorandum, but Radig and Wright were against it because they don't want to tie their hands with what they could do with the property down the road. Dan stated that he previously had a good discussion with Radig who had said that the housing project was probably dead because he didn't have funding to extend the Correctionville water and sewer. But now with AARPA funds possibly being available to cover water and sewer, Radig has pulled back and wants to revisit the project.

Dan stated that he was contacted by a couple Correctionville residents expressing their disapproval of a housing development outside of Correctionville that would further tax their already overburdened water and sewer system. They stated that they would prefer to see a development inside the city limits where the city would get the tax benefits from it. They indicated that they would be talking to their city council. Dan informed them that he was the wrong contact for the county and directed them to talk to the Board of Supervisors.

Jeremy commented that the city of Correctionville may be interested if they believe they can get the AARPA money, but according to the Department of Treasury rules, those funds may not be available for projects in extensions of incorporated areas. The supervisors need to be very cautious because those funds have been allocated to the county, not to the cities. It would, however, be appropriate to use them in conservation since it is truly a county enterprise. They are waiting for advice from the county attorney.

Dan stated that the engineer expects it to be at least five years before mining is done on the five acres and another 15-20 years before the piece between that and Little Sioux Park would be done and could be developed. He asked the board if they wanted him to bring it before the supervisors again since it was a split vote or just wait awhile. The board agreed that it is important to get a signed document indicating intent for the property. Jeremy will put it back on the agenda and suggested that other board members also be present at the meeting to show support.

c. Grants Update

Dan announced that the Salsness REAP grant was approved last month. Dan Moore is working on the title opinion, and once that is done, Dan can apply for reimbursement. He also stated that the Briese Habitat Stamp grant has been approved by the DNR, and a title opinion is being prepared. The goal is to have both properties open by turkey season. He noted that no tax dollars were used for these acquisitions.

d. Old Business

None

e. Other Business

None

2. Nature Center Activities

Dawn reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- The programs and visitors report was presented.
- The foundation annual meeting will be held as a virtual webinar on February 20th. Deb Lewis, Curator of Ada Hayden Herbarium, will be the featured speaker.
- Founding member, Diane Blankenship, has decided to retire from the foundation board after 31 years of service. Chris Jackson of Security Bank has showed interest in nomination, but it has not yet been finalized.
- The Siouxland Big Give donations weren't quite enough for the outdoor dog-friendly water fountain, but additional donations were received to make up the difference. The fountain is being ordered and will be installed in the spring.
- Staff has been working on summer camp plans. There will be a few weeks with two ongoing camps this year, but most weeks there will be just one at a time which will allow interns to get out into the parks as well.
- Seasonal intern job postings closed on February 7th, and five interviews have been scheduled for the week of February 21st.
- Theresa has been preparing books and information for the Tale Trail displays.
- The new kiosk at the front entrance was completed last Sunday as an Eagle Scout project.
- Summer camp registrations will open on April 7th for WCCF members and on April 14th for the public. WCCF has allocated \$2,000 for scholarships.

3. Park Activities

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Staff has continued to work on vehicle and equipment maintenance.

- The dry weather has allowed staff to start working on firebreaks for the upcoming burn season, and they may be able to start the fire season a little earlier than normal if weather holds.
- Little Sioux staff has been removing volunteer trees in bottom part of the Briese property. It was seeded when INHF acquired the property but was flooded right away. A lot of the seeding has grown, however, and the prairie is starting to fill in nicely.
- Southwood staff has been removing interior fencing on the Zook property, so it doesn't confuse hunters who want to use the area.
- Brodie has been doing well working independently while Erik has been taking some time off. Brodie is signed up for the academy in January 2023 and will have his MMPI post and physical agility testing on March 1st. He has completed the written portion of the CDL test and will continue to work on needed training and licenses required for his position.
- Brown's Lake and Snyder Bend staff have been removing trees for the Bigelow Park road project. They have also been grinding trees on Owego where it was burned last year.
- Thomas went to the Winterfest conference and was impressed with the training provided.
- Aaron asked how the new county resolution regarding level B roads will affect the roads at Owego. Dan stated that he had talked to the engineer's office about it and was assured that there wouldn't be much change from what it has been. Level B roads won't be a priority for big snow events but will be taken care of later and will still get basic maintenance. If roads are not getting the attention they need, they can possibly be reclassified.

4. Board Information

None

5. Other Business

The ICCS District III meeting will be hosted at the nature center next Wednesday. Board members were invited to attend.

(Neil left the meeting at 5:27 p.m. Chris assumed the duties of chair.)

Dan reported that the supervisors approved the purchase of new body cameras and tasers for the WCCB officers as recommended by the sheriff's office.

Dan stated that he is working on getting security cameras for the nature center lower parking lot. The ductwork has already been put in for electric, and FiberComm has offered to donate the fiber and labor to install it. The cameras will record on a 30-day loop and will be accessible from cell phones or iPads, as well as on a monitor in the office. Dan and Brian are meeting with camera vendors. This will be paid from the nature center fund or possibly through grants.

Dan reported about a meeting he and Brian were invited to at the engineer's office regarding the Wright gravel pit north of Anthon. Graveling is being finalized, and they are getting ready to start reclamation. Years ago, it was discussed that WCCB would take over those pits when mining was finished. The Wright family has a CRP piece and asked if WCCB would be interested in that also. A possible trade for a piece of farm ground owned by the county was discussed. The family land is in a trust, and they understand that WCCB would be interested in that in the future as well.

ITEM R6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

Board Secretary, Cindy Bennett

Board Chair, Neil Stockfleth