

FLORENCE COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING
3:30 P.M. - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016
LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - LOWER LEVEL
FLORENCE NATURAL RESOURCE CENTER
FLORENCE, WI 54121

PRESENT:

SUPERVISOR / CHAIRMAN
SUPERVISOR / VICE CHAIRMAN
SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER
SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER
SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER
USFS DISTRICT RANGER
DNR – COUNTY FOREST LIAISON/STATE LAND FORESTER
FORESTRY & PARKS ADMINISTRATOR
FORESTRY & PARKS ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
FORESTRY & PARKS BUSINESS MANAGER

ED KELLEY
ED WENGER
LARRY DZEKUTE
HOLLY STRATTON
SUSAN THEER
HARV SKJERVEN
HENRY SULLIVAN
PATRICK SMITH
ANDY NAULT
MARY PODNAR

Absent or excused: None

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Ed Kelley, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

2. APPROVAL / AGENDA

It was moved by Supervisor Dzekute seconded by Supervisor Stratton, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as posted.

3. APPROVAL / MINUTES

It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Dzekute, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of September 14, 2016 as read.

4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Neuens shared an article he read about the Public Lands Survey System. The article spoke about having Counties using steel posts for corners. Discussion was had about the Counties battle with accurate surveys.

5. AGENCY REPORTS

A. HARV SKJERVEN - USFS DISTRICT RANGER

USFS District Ranger Harv Skjerven introduced himself to the new Committee members. He told the Committee that Jason Bramstadt has been hired for the Forestry position and will be starting October 31, 2016. They are working on filling the Fire Management Officer position which be located in Eagle River. The next position to be filled will be the Supervisor Forestry Engine Operator and it will be stationed in Florence.

Final budget numbers will not be in until March.

The USFS would like to continue to work with the County on Stewardship projects.

B. HUBER & ASSOCIATES

Tony Derleth was not in attendance.

C. DNR – HENRY SULLIVAN / HEATHER BERKLUND

DNR County Forest Liaison/State Land Forester Henry Sullivan told the committee that they are no active timber sales. The department is ready to advertise for their Fall Timber Sale – bid opening will be November 10, 2016.

There isn't GNA work being done in Florence specifically – however the Crandon crew has been working in Armstrong Creek on GNA projects.

No word on the DNR restructuring.

6. COUNTY FOREST

A. TIMBER SALE UPDATE

Assistant Administrator Andy Nault reported that there are four active timber sales in the County.

B. APPROVAL TO ADVERTISE FOR OCCASIONAL LABORERS

Administrator Smith would like to hire a couple Occasional Laborers for winter work and keep for the summer as well. It was moved by Supervisor Dzekute, seconded by Supervisor Stratton, and unanimously carried to approve of hiring more Occasional Laborers and send this decision to Personnel.

C. RECREATION COORDINATOR POSITION - UPDATE

Smith said after seeing the results from the wage study – he would like to update the job description of the Recreation Coordinator position. He has not received any qualified applications for the position – he believes it is because of the pay scale. His focus now is move away from the Forester aspect of the position and change the focus to more of an equipment operator and laborer on grant work. It was moved by Supervisor Dzekute, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, and unanimously carried to approve the description changes and send to Personnel.

D. 2017 BUDGET

Chairman Kelley informed the Committee that the 2017 Budget has been approved and will be advertised to the public. Smith said there were capital improvement projects and boat landing items that were cut.

E. FALL 2016 TIMBER SALE APPROVAL OF BIDS

Smith passed around and discussed the Fall 2016 Timber Sale Bid Summary. The County sold \$697,391 worth of timber this bid – and over \$1,000,000 for the year. Chairman Kelley commended and thanked Assistant Administrator Andy Nault for his dedication and hard work on these sales – especially considering how the department has been running shorthanded. It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Theer, and unanimously carried to approve the Fall 2016 Timber Sale bids.

E. WAGE STUDY

Smith passed around and discussed the letter he sent to Personnel regarding the recent Wage Study and its effects on the Forestry Department. He has concern about being able to attract qualified foresters and keeping them here because the starting salary is so low. He passed around and discussed the Wisconsin County Forest Salary comparisons. This report shows what other Forestry Staff are making in the State. Currently, there is a forester job opening in Marathon County – that has less acres to manage and less responsibility and the starting wage is higher than our Assistant Administrator. Florence is competing with all of these Counties for the same forestry positions. There have been seven foresters in the last nineteen years – all have left because they can make more money elsewhere.

Supervisor Theer strongly encouraged Smith to review the job description with County Clerk Donna Trudell. She said pay increases will be given by the departments administrator based upon job performance. The exact amount will not be known until the budget is passed that year.

7. RECREATION

A. PARKS

Smith informed the Committee that the water samples have been coming back good. The crew is working on taking out docks.

B. BOAT LANDING PROJECTS UPDATES

The Menominee River Boat Landing project is 99% complete. The Sea Lion Boat Landing is complete.

C. US2 RAILROAD PROJECT

Smith received a quote from Statewide Fencing for \$16,250 for chain link fencing to be put on the railroad along US2. It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Stratton, and unanimously carried to approve payment.

8. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

The Log-A-Load was a great success.

Smith discussed with the Committee the direct costs weight limits are having for logging on our County highways. Smith had two contractors express their concern with the weight limits and told him it directly affected how they bid on our Fall sale. They bid less because of the limits. The impact Forestry & Parks is seeing is a loss revenue to the County because of the weight limits.

9. COMMITTEE MEMBER'S COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Supervisor Stratton asked if the Blue Ox Trail Riders fixed the road on Huber property. Smith said he has not heard.

10. BILLS/REVENUES – FORESTRY & RESOURCE CENTER

It was moved by Supervisor Stratton, seconded by Supervisor Theer, and unanimously carried to approve bills being paid for Forestry and Parks and the Florence Natural Resource Center for September.

11. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Stratton, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:05.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Podnar, Business Manager
Florence County Forestry and Parks