

FLORENCE COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING
3:30 P.M. - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2013
LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - LOWER LEVEL
FLORENCE NATURAL RESOURCE CENTER
FLORENCE, WI 54121

PRESENT:

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

ED KELLEY
ED WENGER
LARRY NEUENS
DON GARDNER
HENRY SULLIVAN
PATRICK SMITH
JACOB WALCISAK
MARY PODNAR

Absent or excused: John Halada, Harv Skjerven

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

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

2. APPROVAL / AGENDA

It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to approve the Agenda as posted.

3. APPROVAL / MINUTES

It was moved by Supervisor Neuens, seconded by Supervisor Gardner, and unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of May 8, 2013 as read.

4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

5. AGENCY REPORTS

A. HARV SKJERVEN - USFS DISTRICT RANGER

USFS District Ranger Harv Skjerven was not in attendance. However, Supervisor Wenger passed around a resolution directed to the USFS regarding their concerns about the health management of the US forests and its direct effects on the sustainability of the communities across the nation. It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to send this resolution to the county board for approval.

Forestry & Parks Administrator Patrick Smith attended a meeting last week with Paul Strong regarding stewardship funding and how to make it work. Stewardship funding basically is the trade off of timber revenues for other projects that need to be done on USFS properties in accordance with the Forest Plan. Right now, they are looking for a coordinator to make this happen. Smith recommended that they start with Florence County and wants to sit down with Skjerven and Strong to work out the details for a project in Florence County.

Smith also passed around part of the Mursau bill which involves securing federal funding for northern schools. The townships will no longer receive the 25% fund. This money will now be given to the school districts and the

townships will receive their compensation through Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILTS). The concern here is that PILT payment has a history of not being fully funded.

B. HUBER & ASSOCIATES – KAREN GARDNER, FORESTER

Karen Gardner was not in attendance but sent an email to Business Manger Mary Podnar asking her to relay a few messages. She wanted the committee to know that they had started back in the woods on June 3rd and have two active jobs in the county. One is near Lake 17 and the other is west of Lake Patten. They will be having their FSC audit in August. Finally, there were no forest health issues so far this spring.

C. DNR – HENRY SULLIVAN

Henry Sullivan, DNR-County Forest Liaison/State Land Forester was not in attendance because he is busy with the states MFL audit. Therefore, he could not introduce our new Private Lands Forester.

Smith passed around a letter that County Chairperson Jeannette Bomberg received from Northeast Regional Forestry Leader Curt Wilson. Wilson’s letter was a follow up to the counties original letter sent to him concerning the Florence/Forest Team Leader position and the counties strong desire to have this vacancy filled in the Florence office. Wilson explained his rationale for advertising that the Team Leader position could be filled in either Florence or Forest county locations.

Sullivan gave Administrator Smith maps for the committee. The first map showed where the MFL tree farm group audit was located. The second map included information on the Spread Eagle Barrens prescribed burn locations. The last map detailed the Barrens Lake North Timber Sale in which they are currently working on.

Time Standards for the county have been met for the year and Smith passed around a handout showing the details.

6. LAND SALES

A. KEYES LAKE CAMPGROUND

Forestry & Parks Administrator Patrick Smith reported to the board that another appraiser was not contacted in regards to the land that Leland Nelsen is currently leasing from the county. Instead, he spoke with our attorney and our attorney advised Smith to sell the property to Nelsen for \$6,622. There believed there wasn’t any reason the county would have to put this bid on to the open market. It was moved by Supervisor Gardner, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to accept Nelsen’s offer and send to county board for approval.

B. TAX DELINQUENT PARCELS

Administrator Smith shared with the board that the county potentially has five parcels of land for sale. Smith suggested that the county keep (for now) two of the parcels and put up the other three up for bids. The first parcel of land Smith is interested in keeping is located on Price Lake. Currently, Price the Lake does not have public boat landing access. Smith would like to investigate the option of using this parcel to provide one. The second parcel of land Smith suggests the county hangs on to would involve a “land swap”. The interested landowner owns property next to the Spread Eagle boat landing and might be willing to “swap” land. Smith would like to explore this option so the county could have more parking space available at the boat landing. It was moved by Supervisor Gardner, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, and unanimously carried to go ahead and advertise only three of the five parcels of land.

7. COUNTY FOREST

A. TIMBER SALE HARVEST - UPDATE

Forestry & Parks Administrator Patrick Smith reported to the committee that there are currently four active sales on county land.

B. TIMBER SALE BIDS – REVIEW & ACCEPT

Administrator Smith passed around the Spring 2013 Timber Sale Bid Summary report for the committee members to review. Out of the seven sales that were up for bid – one did not sell. The plan is to re-package the sale and bid it out again in the fall. The sales totaled \$486,258.60. Smith was very pleased with the strong bid results. It was moved by Supervisor Gardner, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to accept the high bids and re-package the bid that did not sell for the fall sale.

C. JOINT POSITION FORESTRY/HIGHWAY

Applications for the Common Labor / Forestry Technician position will be taken until June 21, 2013. Once all applications are received the next step is to pick the top candidates and set up interviews. It has been suggested that the administrators of each department and the Chair & Vice Chair of each departments committee perform the interviews. Questions will still need to be determined.

8. RECREATION

A. BRULE RIVER BRIDGE BIDS – REVIEW & ACCEPT

Assistant Administrator Jake Walcisak passed around the Brule River Bridge bid results. Walcisak recommended that the committee accept Option #2 because of its 18,000 lb capacity vs Option #1's 12,000 lb capacity. The department has worked with the winning contractor on three other projects and have always been pleased with their work. Smith agreed with Walcisak that Option #2 was the best option – however pointed out that the state may only fund up to a 12,000 lb capacity (Option #1). When the county submits this project for re-imbursement, there is a possibility that the state will not fund the full amount. The county may be responsible for the \$6,000 difference. The state has not done this with past bridges projects because the request has always come in under budget. It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Gardner, and unanimously carried to accept Option #2 of this bid.

B. LAKE EMILY BOAT LANDING

Assistant Administrator Walcisak reported that the county is applying for a 50% cost share grant project through the Wisconsin DNR. It is for improvements to the Lake Emily boat landing and parking areas. He passed around a draft from Coleman Engineering detailing the work that would need to be done on this site. This is a \$59,000 project with \$51,000 for development and \$8,000 in the engineering of this project. Walcisak would like to proceed with this 50% cost share grant. The county would pay their 50% portion via line item and in-kind work/labor. Smith said he did not budget for the Lake Emily Boat landing improvement but did budget for improvements at the Keyes Lake boat landing and was hoping to receive a grant for it. As Walcisak researched finding a grant for the Keyes landing – he quickly determined that the landscape of Keyes Lake would require much more work and money than originally expected. Currently, we have \$15,000 in the budget for Keyes Lake landing improvements and \$6,000 for a new dock. Smith suggested combining both of these line items for our match of the 50% cost share grant. The goal is to do as much in-kind labor as possible to keep costs down. It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to proceed applying for this 50% cost share grant for Lake Emily boat landing.

C. LONG LAKE BOAT LANDING

Assistant Administrator Walcisak reported that the Town of Long Lake has been working on improvements to their boat landing over the last couple of years. Our grant specialist asked us to assist them in finishing the project. The work would include painting the lines in the paved parking lot, assigning handicapped parking spots, placing a crushed gravel surface up to the kiosk station, and leveling the dock so it ADA accessible. Smith wanted the committee to be aware that he would be sending over a couple of guys to help with this work.

D. ATV/SNOWMOBILE TRAIL FUNDING

Assistant Administrator Walcisak stated that he attended a meeting with eight counties trail coordinators and our grant specialist. They were made aware that the Snowmobile and ORV programs were audited earlier this Spring. This audit found some red flags. For the last few years, the Snowmobile program has been running a deficit of \$1-\$2 million dollars per year. This was the first year that the ORV program has run a deficit. They believe the cause of the deficit is due to the way these two programs award their project funding. They fund based on an educated guess as to how much money they will bring in for the year. The council decided to change the way they distribute money by only giving out what they actually have. This will produce a one year lag time in funding distribution. What this means for Florence County is that all the projects that have applied for will not be considered. The only thing that will be funded is maintenance. The projects that we have already been awarded will not be affected. Unfortunately, this will affect the Highway department. Walcisak wanted the committee to be aware of this.

9. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Administrator Smith passed around a flyer for the Badwater Bash Festival being held on July 13th, 2013. Forestry & Parks personnel will be helping with the festivities.

Smith signed up Ed Kelley, Ed Wenger, and Larry Neuens for the Forestry Policy meeting being held in Carter on June 24th, 2013.

Smith reminded everyone of the 2013 WCFA Summer Tour that is scheduled for June 26 – June 28, 2013. Details were figured out.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBER'S COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Supervisor Neuens made the committee aware that in the April 24, 2013 Mining News, under the Aurora Town Meeting minutes, stated that their Parks & Recreation charges a rental fee for their pavilion at the ball park of \$350 with \$50 being a rental fee. He stated that this was just reference material.

He also noticed that the garage located by the Keyes Peak Ski Hill was damaged. Smith will see to it that it gets fixed.

11. BILLS/REVENUES–FORESTRY & PARKS/RESOURCE CENTER

Supervisor Neuens questioned why we paid for firewood at Lake Emily Park. He had concerns about theft. Walcisak said many county forests do it this way. It was moved by Supervisor Neuens, seconded by Supervisor Gardner, and unanimously carried to approve bills being paid for by the Forestry and Parks and the Florence Natural Resource Center.

12. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Gardner, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:10.

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