

FLORENCE COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING
3:30 P.M. - WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 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 BUSINESS MANAGER

ED KELLEY
ED WENGER
LARRY DZEKUTE
HOLLY STRATTON
SUSAN THEER
HARV SKJERVEN
HENRY SULLIVAN
PATRICK SMITH
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 Wenger seconded by Supervisor Theer, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as posted.

3. APPROVAL / MINUTES

It was moved by Supervisor Stratton, seconded by Supervisor Theer, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of November 9, 2016 as read.

4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

5. AGENCY REPORTS

A. HARV SKJERVEN - USFS DISTRICT RANGER

USFS District Ranger Harv Skjerven reported that there is a pause in hiring due to the transition in government. The only positions that are permitted to be hired are law enforcement and fire positions. Therefore, Skjerven is moving ahead on filling the fire position here in Florence.

Skjerven spoke with DNR Forest Management Bureau Director Carmen Hardin asking her to hire the new GNA Forester position here in Florence. He also has a call into DNR Forestry Northeast Regional Manager Curt Wilson to explain why it makes the most sense to have this position stationed in Florence.

All 2016 GNA sales are complete. They plan on selling the same amount of wood as they did this year. Sales of interest for Florence County include the Grub Hoe and Morgan Lake sales. There was a meeting with Administrator Smith last week about another potential Stewardship Project for road reconstruction work for upcoming GNA work.

Skjerven encouraged anyone who is 62 years old or older to purchase the Senior Lifetime pass for \$10 which will get you into any National Park for free.

B. HUBER & ASSOCIATES

Tony Derleth was not in attendance.

C. DNR – HENRY SULLIVAN

DNR County Forest Liaison/State Land Forester Henry Sullivan told the committee that they are no active timber sales.

GNA work is not being done in Florence specifically – however this could change as the Morgan Lake sale begins.

Smith passed around letters supporting having the GNA Forester, MFL Forester, and Wildlife Biologist positions stationed here in Florence. Sullivan passed around old and new maps showing the Division of Forestry Strategic Direction Staff Allocations, a map of the Division of Forestry Strategic Direction for Tax Law Field Teams, and a news release regarding the new DNR alignment process. He explained to the Committee the changes Florence County will see with this new alignment process. Discussion was had as to why Florence County is the most logical locations for these positions. It was moved by Supervisor Stratton, seconded by Supervisor Dzekute, and unanimously carried to send these letters of support to the County Board.

6. COUNTY FOREST

A. TIMBER SALE UPDATE

Smith reported that there are three active timber sales in the County.

B. ROAD LIMITS

Administrator Smith passed around the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA) transportation findings and the Effect of County Road Weights on Forest Products Industry report. Highway is planning a meeting with the Townships to discuss the road limits. In the meantime, Smith would like to see the road limit signs taken down for the Frozen Road Declaration time period. Florence County's economy is heavily reliant on the timber industry and we are unnecessarily hindering them. After much discussion it was moved by Supervisor Stratton, seconded by Supervisor Theer, and carried to support road limit signs taken down and the decision being sent to Highway. Supervisor Dzekute and Wenger opposed – Chairman Kelley was the deciding vote.

C. ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2017

Smith passed around the 2017 Annual Florence County Forest Work Plan. Supervisor Stratton wanted to update under "Recreation Area, (a)" to include an access trail to Aurora, look for safety improvements and/or possible re-route. After discussion it was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Dzekute, and unanimously carried to approve the 2017 Annual Work Plan with the changes.

D. APPROVE BIDS FOR PLOW TRUCK

Smith received a bid from Florence Motors for \$36,125 for a new 2017 ¾ ton truck with a snowplow. It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Dzekute, and unanimously carried to approve the purchase.

7. RECREATION

A. SKI HILL CONCESSIONAIRE

There were no bids received for the ski hill concessionaire. Smith informed the committee that Judy Waite will run the concessions for one more year. Smith will put it out for bid again next year.

B. SNOWMOBILE TRAIL CONCERNS

Smith informed the Committee that there was an issue with the snowmobile trail coming into Aurora from Niagara. A landowner in Marinette County cut off access to the trail. Marinette County is working with the landowner to resolve the issue.

There was a re-route near the Romitti gravel pit area.

The bridge on the snowmobile trail on the US2 railroad grade going into Iron Mountain, Michigan is closed. Michigan hopes to have it open by January 1st, 2017.

C. RESOLUTION ON PINE RIVER DAM

Smith reviewed with the Committee the Resolution in support of continued operations of the Pine Hydroelectric Project. The resolution supports the continuing operation of the Pine River Dam. It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Theer, and unanimously carried to approve this resolution and send to County Board for approval.

8. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

A. EVALUATION PROCESS

Smith asked for volunteers for reviewing Forestry & Parks performance evaluations. After discussion it was agreed that it Supervisors Wenger, Dzekute & Kelley be part of the process. Smith will coordinate a day in January 2017.

Smith passed around an updated Equipment Operator / Recreation Manager job description. The position was renamed and job duties were updated. The previous position did not pay enough to get qualified applicants. It was moved by Supervisor Dzekute, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, and unanimously carried to approve the job description and send to Personnel.

9. COMMITTEE MEMBER'S COMMENTS & CONCERNS

None

10. BILLS/REVENUES – FORESTRY & RESOURCE CENTER

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

Smith asked that because there was a surplus in the Forestry Account – he asked if the savings could be used for the purchase of a 2017 truck. It was the consensus of the Committee was to have Smith ask Financial Manager Joe Bestor.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

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