

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING
February 12, 2018
Emergency Operations Center**

Members Present: Shawn Miller, Chairperson; Fred Strand, Vice-Chairperson, Harold Maki; Jeffrey Silbert and Larry Fickbohm

Staff in Attendance: Jason Bodine, Administrator; Steve Probst, Asst. Administrator and Pat Bruno, Office Manager

Others in Attendance: Joseph LeBouton, WI DNR Liaison; Chad Abel, Administrator, Division of Natural Resources and Gabrielle VanBergen, Water Resources Program Manager, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

1. Call to Order of Forestry and Parks Committee Meeting.

The meeting of the Forestry and Parks Committee was called to order by S. Miller at 6:00 P.M.

2. Public Comment.

S. Miller called for public comment. No comments were received. Chairman Miller closed public comment.

3. Approval of the January 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: (Maki, Fickbohm) to approve the January 15 meeting minutes as presented. All: Yes. Carried.

4. Monthly Reports.

A. Forestry (all updates):

1) 2018 Budget.

The stumpage revenues, currently at approximately \$300,000 for January and expenses for are about average.

2) New Position.

Caleb Brown is settling in, shadowing staff working towards incorporating independent work. Jason Holmes started the new Inventory and Analysis Forester position on the 5th. The Department is working with the DNR to move closer towards establishing permanent CFI plots.

3) Red Cliff Land Acquisition (80 acres).

After the County Board approved the latest and second sale to Red Cliff, the application for withdrawal of county forest land was sent to the DNR. A reply is expected in early March and then the sale should proceed quick.

4) Stewardship Grant.

The application was submitted to the DNR on February 2. The bids on the appraisals are coming in less than expected, possibly \$15,000-\$25,000 less, because some of the match parcels had been appraised by the same company recently. Less work is required. They will be reviewed by the DNR, waiting for the approval from the state could take until mid-summer.

5) **Oak Wilt.**

Oak wilt fungal disease was recently found in Sawyer County, about 5.5 miles away from Bayfield County forest land. Avoidance is the best defense, combined with routine and regular monitoring. To avoid spreading, this means no harvesting in stands where oak is a significant component during the time of year when beetles are most active; mid-April to mid-July. Educating the public is another component, one which will be handled by the state forest health specialists. A buffer zone will be set up around the area of detection to minimize spreading. Trail maintenance could also have restrictions imposed.

B. Parks.

Nothing new to report.

C. Trails and Recreation.

1) **Motorized Trails.**

The Town of Kelly is meeting tonight to decide if new trail construction will be allowed through their property for the Mason re-route. If approved, that should correct the current issue.

In 2022, the DOT will be replacing the crossing over Bono Creek with a bridge, south of Washburn on Highway 13. If completed, an alternative motorized trail crossing or re-route will need to be built. It is anticipated that retaining the temporary bridge that would be constructed and used during the new bridge construction could be used for the permanent snowmobile trail.

2) **Non-Motorized Trails.**

Nothing new to report. The clubs are still maintaining trails at Mt. Ashwabay and Cable. The trails are well used and are in good condition this season.

3) **Yurts.**

In the planning process for the third yurt. The success of the existing Bayfield yurt, is demonstrated by the entire month of July is reserved but for one day. August dates are filling up as fast as they become available. No dates are reserved in July at the Cable yurt; however, the overall occupancy expectations are being met.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Fickbohm) to receive the reports and place them on file. All: Yes. Carried.*

5. Land Acquisition Proposal: Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. Proposal from Red Cliff to purchase approximately 210 acres of county forest land located along Blueberry Road in the Town of Russell.

Chad Abel, on behalf of the Tribe, is requesting permission to pursue a purchase of 210 acres and an asking per acre price. If given pre-approval, Red Cliff would most likely pursue funding through various grants, including a conservation grant. He noted that removing the timber complicates the success of the land conservation grant application if the property is pre-managed and would prefer the land remain intact. The actual acreage purchased would be dependent upon available funds. Due to the proximity of the acreage to the Frog Bay National Park's protected habitat and the Frog Creek Conservation Management Area, the Tribe will have restrictions in place regarding future use of the parcel once owned. C. Abel is requesting a per acre price needed for the Tribal Council's agenda to be set on Thursday for the meeting scheduled for the following Tuesday.

J. Bodine explained that of the 210 acres identified, approximately 100 acres are now ready for timber management and another 50 acres in 10 years all with a potential hardwood timber value of \$800-

\$1,000/acre. The remaining 60 acres are removed from future harvest potential due to riparian protection. This parcel is very different from the previous two sales to the Tribe where most of the manageable acres were recently harvested and the remaining stands were removed from future consideration. These factors determined the \$1,000/acre price point on the previous two sales. However, setting this request's sale price at \$1,800 - \$2,000/acre to account for the added timber value may be unacceptable to the Tribe.

J. Bodine further explained that the County's recent Stewardship grant application has the potential match land purchase price of \$1,215/acre. The properties identified for this grant contain various degrees of mature, merchantable timber. All other variables considered as per the previous two transactions would remain the same, such as the working partnership as outlined in the MOU with the Tribe, ability for the County to pursue matching Stewardship funds and the desire of the County to maintain public access, etc.

MOTION: *(Silbert, Fickbohm) to provisionally approve the sale to Red Cliff as is, contingent upon agreement of the fair market value price; including land and trees.*

Discussion: The Committee discussed waiting for the appraisal to come in, and cruising the timber to determine a pre-managed and post-managed price per acre based on fair market values. They also discussed the MOU which is interpreted to consider attaining the goal of returning County owned land held within the boundaries of the reservation to Tribal ownership, an agreement to sell County owned land to the Tribe only, to consider fair market values, and to move toward overall reciprocating decisions and cooperation which benefit both the County and Tribe in a neighbors and partners manner.

The original number of acres owned by the County within the reservation was around is 1,450; however, including the last two sales of 80 acres each, the remaining acreage is around 1,300. Also discussed was the need to protect all of the Bayfield County's residents' interests and determine the fair market value for any property sold. Once the value is determined, then a selling price will be set. Also discussed was granting preliminary approval to move forward with a grant application to the purchase the land and work with J. Bodine to determine an appropriate price per acre, incorporating all variables previously discussed, noting that none of which is binding to the county.

VOTE ON MOTION: *All: Yes. Carried.*

6. Land Acquisition. Discussion and possible action regarding the purchase of 5 acres in the Town of Barnes, utilizing funds from a recently awarded DNR ATV Grant.

In 2017 the current landowners closed the trail to both ATV and snowmobile use. There is no viable re-route which basically closed this section of trail and pushed recreation vehicles on to Highway N. to better secure this integral section of ATV/snowmobile trail that provides direct connection to the Town of Barnes, J. Bodine has worked with the landowner to reach a tentative purchase agreement of \$13,250, which is well under the assessed value. The Town of Barnes has committed \$5,000 toward the purchase and the DNR has granted a \$12,500.00 loan for the balance. The Bayfield County Board has approved this purchase.

MOTION: *(Strand, Fickbohm) to approve the purchase at \$13,250. All: Yes. Carried.*

7. Recreational Use Request. Ashwabay Outdoor Education Foundation.

J. Bodine received a request from Ashwabay Outdoor Education Foundation to use the Jolly Trail located on

county forest land in the Town of Bayfield for a skijoring event on March 4, 2018. This is the first time for this event which is expected to draw 50 racers and 10-15 volunteers. He recommends approval.

***MOTION:** (Strand, Silbert) to approve. All: Yes. Carried.*

8. 2017 Accomplishment Report.

Other priorities and considering it is a work in progress have pushed the draft presentation of this report to the March meeting.

9. Joseph LeBouton, DNR Representative.

Nothing to report.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 P.M.

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting will be held **Monday, March 12, 2018 at 6:00 P.M.** at Bayfield County Courthouse, County Board Room, Second Floor, 117 E. 5th Street, Washburn, Wisconsin.

Submitted by,
Pat Bruno