

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING**

May 11, 2020

Remotely held via Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Fred Strand, Chairperson; Jeffrey Silbert, Larry Fickbohm, Steve Sandstrom, joined late David Zepczyk.

Staff in Attendance: Jason Bodine, Administrator; Lindley Mattson, Office Manager; Steve Probst, Assistant Administrator

Others in Attendance: Joseph LeBouton, DNR Liaison; Mark Ables-Allison, County Administrator

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

This meeting was called to order at 6:04pm. Chairman Strand took roll call of committee members and others in attendance. Dave Zepczyk, not in attendance at time of roll call.

2. Remote Meeting Procedures

Good evening, this open meeting of Bayfield County Forestry and Parks Committee meeting is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Evers' executive order no.12 of March 24, 2020, due to the current state of emergency in Wisconsin given the outbreak of covid-19.

In order to mitigate the transmission of this virus and reduce risk of Covid-19 illness we have been advised by the State of Wisconsin to minimize public gatherings. The WI Department of Justice issued an open Government Advisory on March 20. All members of public bodies are encouraged to participate remotely.

The order, which you can find posted with agenda materials is for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with deliberations of the meeting.

Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will feature public comment. Even if members of the public do not provide comment, participants are advised that people may be listening who do not provide comment, and those person are not required to identify themselves.

For this meeting, Bayfield County is convening by Teams, as posted on the county's website identifying how the public may join.

Please note that this meeting is being recorded.

3. Election of Forestry and Parks Committee Chairperson

Silbert nominates Fred Strand as chairperson. No other nominations.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Fickbohm) close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Fred. All: Yes. Carried.*

4. Election of Forestry and Parks Committee Vice-Chair

Fickbohm nominates Jeff Silbert for vice-chair. No other nominations.

***MOTION:** (Fickbohm, Sandstrom) close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for vice-chair. All: Yes. Carried.*

5. Public Comment.

Chairperson Strand called for public comment. After repeating the call no one came forward. Closed public comment.

6. Approval of the April 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

***MOTION:** (Fickbohm, Silbert) to approve the minutes as presented. All: Yes. Carried.*

7. Covid-19 Adjustments

- a. Office Structure. We continue to operate remotely. Transition plans are underway to begin to incorporate more regular office hours. Starting May 11, Bodine and Lindley will be coordinating regular office hours.
- b. Campgrounds. For health and safety of all involved, the decision was made to adopt a seasonal only structure for the 2020 season. J. Bodine presented press release and summary email that was sent to current seasonal campers. Seasonal sites were increased to 75% capacity at each campground. Big Rock will remain closed until at least 5/26. Day use is permitted.
- c. Yurts. Yurts were closed on 3/18 and have remained closed. Estimating we have lost about 120 nights worth of rentals. When discussing re-opening, cleaning of the yurts is concern, for staff as well as guests.
- d. Day-Use Parks. The boat launch at Atkins Lake is open and day use is allowed, but the bathrooms remain closed. Siskiwit Falls remains open.
- e. Designated Recreation. ATV trails are still closed but will most likely open mid month. We will stay on pace with what the Feds determine for opening.

No discussion, reports received and placed on file.

8. Spring Timber Sale Offering

One sale was removed from the spring offering, tract 5-19. We are in the process of potentially purchasing an adjacent 30 acre parcel. If purchased, a significant portion of that parcel will be added to this sale.

- a. Bid Deadlines. Bids are normally due 15 minutes before the meeting time. Many of the bids get hand delivered before the meeting. With this meeting possibly being held remotely we need to look at a new process. The plan is to establish a deadline for bids Friday before the meeting, 3:00pm.
- b. Bid Opening Process. Monday morning, after the mail arrives all bids will be opened in office. All bids will be read aloud, Lindley will record all high bid information. Once all bids have been read and recorded, Lindley will develop a spreadsheet with a summary of the results. Results will then be uploaded to dropbox for the committee prior to the meeting. During the meeting Bodine will address the results of each sale, reading the total number of bids, contractors and the highest bidder. Specifics will be available in the summary document. The committee will then act on the results of the bid opening, as per normal. In the bid letter, we asked contractors to submit bid retracting information in case they would like to pull a bid prior to the opening.

9. Timber Sale Policies

Bodine presented a letter from Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA) asking counties to consider taking actions to help logging contractors during this unprecedented time. In short, they are asking counties to consider offering free extensions, as well as a reduction in bid and performance bonds. We were already considering recommending temporary actions prior to receiving this letter. J. Bodine recommends

a. Timber Sale Contract Extensions. All contracts are written to expire on May 31. Around the end of April extension letters go out to contractors reminding them of expiration along with a form asking if the contract in question will be completed by the expiration date, and, if not, that they request a one-year extension. A \$100 fee is associated with each extension request. All extension requests are reviewed and addressed internally.

If approved, for the first one-year extension, the stumpage prices are increased by 5%, as per the contract. An additional 10% increase is added to each subsequent one-year extension (i.e. 15% above the original stumpage price on a second extension; 25% on a third; 35% on a fourth and so on). Extensions are not guaranteed, but are common.

With the poor markets and inevitable negative impacts associated with COVID-19, Bodine recommends waiving the fee and stumpage price increase on all timber sales set to expire in 2020, with the following conditions: that the contractor 1) is in good standing with the county; 2) has made timely payments on existing contracts; 3) has a history of prompt communication; and 4) is current on all required bonds, insurances and training records. We will review each extension request and issue free extensions if a contractor meets or exceeds each condition.

b. Bid Bonds. A 10% bid bond is required to accompany every bid on a Bayfield County timber sale. The winning bidder has an option to either have us cash this check and apply it towards the required 15% performance bond, or hold it to be replaced with a letter of credit. The contractor has to provide us with a performance bond in the amount of 15% of the contract value within 30 days of being awarded the contract. The bid bond is returned to all losing bidders.

The bid bond also provides a level of security on a bid. The contractor could potentially lose the bid bond if they decide not to honor the contract. This is very rare, but has happened recently.

For this offering only, Bodine recommends waiving the requirement to include a 10% bid bond with each bid. The 15% performance bond will still be required within 30 days of being awarded the contract. I highly recommend we leave the performance bond requirements as is. We are on the low end of average with regards to what we require for performance bonds, many counties require performance bonds in the range of 20% to 25%. We can re-evaluate in the fall to see if additional waivers should be considered.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Fickbohm) Accept changes in policy as Bodine outlined for contract extensions and performance bonds. All: Yes. Carried.*

10. Monthly Reports. Discussion of general activities, events, issues and accomplishments. Possible action on report(s) only.

a. Forestry (all updates):

- a) 2020 Budget. Revenues were average for April. To date, we have generated just over \$1.07 million in stumpage revenue. This time last year \$1.22 million. Expenses are on target.
- b) Jackman Lake Land Sale This has stalled a bit, property is in probate.
- c) Pratt Rd Land Purchase. Offer has been accepted contingent upon receiving the grant from the DNR and board approval. We are in the process of getting this appraised. If all goes as planned, we would secure the ¼ mile of snowmobile trail as well as the bridge and be able to harvest the mature timber off this property.
- d) Carbon Offset/Marketing The CFI data has turned out to be a great help in this project. They are analyzing our information and will provide a report regarding the feasibility of carbon marketin

b. Parks:

Moving ahead with credit card payments with the expectation it won't be used much for the 2020 season. The plan is to have all the kinks worked out for the 2021 season.

c. Trails and Recreation:

- a) Motorized Trail Updates: Feds will allow designated trails to open May 8, pending local conditions. Clubs are reporting ok conditions in the southern part of the county, but poor conditions in the north. Looks as if trails will open mid May, as per normal.
- b) Non-Motorized Trail Updates: We have been seeing steady use of the hiking trails. We have installed COVID-19 signs at all trailheads encouraging social distancing.
- c) Yurt Updates: As a result of Covid-19, all yurts were closed mid March and remain closed through the first three weeks in May. Nearly 90 nights have been cancelled as well as 20-30 additional lost nights. When discussing re-opening the emphasis is on health and safety of all involved, staff and guests. Discussions are in the works for a soft re-opening in June that will allow a 2-3 night reservation with a mid week cleaning. We would re-evaluate mid June with expectations that some level of modifications will be had throughout the summer.
- d) Events. Many events have been cancelled. The CARE 200 running event in Cable is a recurring event that was approved last month. The event is typically held on 7/4 but may be cancelled due to COVID-19.
- d. Delta Landfill Update: DATCP engineers are just about done with the two plans for the repair of the Delta landfill. Once all plans are ready, it will then be submitted to WI emergency Mngt, then to FEMA. Many county departesnt are working togheter to get this along.

***MOTION:** (Fickbohm, Sandstrom) Receive and place on file. All: Yes. Carried.*

Many committee members are interested in more information regarding the carbon marketing project. J. Bodine will send around more info to the committee.

11. Bayfield County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan Revision

- a. Chapters 700: Public Comment. Comments submitted from CAMBA, most of the comments seem to be editing type comments (sentence structure etc) Good comments, but nothing to significantly impact the plan.

***MOTION:** (Zepczyk, Sandstrom) Receive and place on file. All: Yes. Carried.*

- b. Chapter 800: In process, much data analysis in this chapter. Draft chapter should be available for the June meeting.

12. Land Use Request. North End Ski Club

Requesting permission to construct a second storage unit on county forest land in Cable. Attached is their formal request, a summary of their proposal, and a few maps. The Club has been looking into the potential of another storage structure for some time. We have completed an initial site visit and it would be situated in a good location. The club also maintains the North End Cabin, outhouse, and another storage building on county forest land in that same general area. All activities are permitted as part of their current Recreational Use Agreement with the Department. New construction would require Committee approval. The new building is necessary to store equipment needed to maintain the very popular trail system. The small amount of merchantable timber removed as part of construction can be used as firewood for the cabin. The existing structure would still be used to store additional trail maintenance equipment. Bodine recommends approval.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Zepczyk) Approve land use request for the North End Ski Club. All: Yes. Carried.*

13. Recreational Use Request: CAMBA.

CAMBA is requesting permission to build about 1/3 mile of new single track mountain bike trail. Attached is their formal request as well as a map of the area. The new segment would provide connection between two existing trails. We maintain a Recreational Use Agreement with CAMBA.

New trail construction is a permitted activity as outlined in the Agreement, but requires Committee approval. Bodine recommends approval.

***MOTION:** (Zepczyk, Sandstrom). Approve CAMBA new trail request. All: Yes. Carried.*

Silbert brought up the topic of emergency services on/at these trails and the difficulty in maneuvering trails.

14. Joseph LeBouton, DNR: Welcomes Steve Sandstrom to the committee.

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting has been scheduled for **Monday, June 8 at 6:00 P.M.** We are unsure at this time if it will be held remotely or in person.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM

Submitted by,
Lindley Mattson