

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
May 14, 2018  
County Board Room**

**Members Present:** Fred Strand, Vice Chairperson; Jeffrey Silbert; Larry Fickbohm and David Zepczyk

**Members Absent:** Harold Maki (excused)

**Staff in Attendance:** Jason Bodine, Administrator; Steve Probst, Asst. Administrator; Andrew O'Krueg, Forester; and Caleb Brown, Forester; and Pat Bruno, Office Manager

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

The meeting of the Forestry and Parks Committee was called to order by Vice-Chair F. Strand at 6:00 P.M.

**2. Election of Forestry and Parks Committee Chairperson.**

F. Strand welcomed newly appointed Committee Member, David Zepczyk.

F. Strand opened the floor to nominations for Forestry and Parks Committee Chairperson. J. Silbert nominated F. Strand. F. Strand repeated the call three times. No other nominations were received.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Fickbohm ) to close nominations and cast a unanimous vote for Fred Strand for Committee Chair. No discussion. F. Strand called for a vote to elect F. Strand for Committee Chair. All: Yes. Carried.*

**3. Election of Forestry and Parks Committee Vice-Chairperson.**

Chairman Strand called for nominations for Forestry and Parks Committee Vice-Chairperson. L. Fickbohm nominated J. Silbert for Vice-Chair. Chairman Strand called three times for more nominations. No other nominations were received.

***MOTION:** (Fickbohm, Zepczyk ) to close nominations for Committee Vice-Chairperson and cast a unanimous vote for Jeffrey Silbert as Vice-Chairperson. No discussion. F. Strand called for a vote to elect J. Silbert for Committee Vice-Chairperson. All: Yes. Carried.*

**4. Public Comment.**

Chairman Strand called two times for public comment; no one came forward. Closed public comment.

**5. Approval of the April 9, 2018 Meeting Minutes.**

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Fickbohm) to approve the minutes of the last meeting. All: Yes. Carried.*

**6. Spring Timber Sale Bid Opening.**

J. Bodine read the timber sale bids of the 2018 spring timber sales (30 tracts offered). The unofficial winning bids were announced.

**MOTION:** *(Fickbohm, Silbert) to accept the apparent high bids. All: Yes. Carried.*

Of the 30 tracts offered, 6 did not sell. The preliminary sold value is \$1,703,368.88. Of those six, three frozen ground sales are now eligible for direct sale and will be posted on the Department's website to be sold.

**7. Xcel Energy, Ellen Heine. Update on the proposed Xcel Energy 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit Transmission Line Project. Discussion regarding this update.**

Chairman Strand announced a request was received from the Bayfield Peninsula Energy Alternative members and Xcel Energy personnel to reverse the order of their agenda presentations. Agenda Item was #8; is now #7 - Xcel Energy, Ellen Heine, presenting first.

E. Heine said that since the last committee meeting, Xcel has invited the public to view maps, tables and a permitting facilitator answered questions. Another public open house will be scheduled for June. The 34.5kv transmission line and attached substation are the topic of the discussion. Xcel technical staff made a field visit on May 1 to review the potential line path and will do so again.

Currently, the most viable and preferred option is the bypass route option which lies mostly on the right-of-way or to go further west along Church Corner Road. They are working on how to construct a temporary line when the current line is energized. Some right of way shifting may need to be done. She noted that there is the potential for minimal timber impact if the bypass line is built, which is partially on county forest roads for purposes of clearing. Once complete, the temporary line will be removed. This line path option was part of the initial proposal. She noted that this is a unique scenario in that the project is small and normally it is a rebuild in place. Public input will be included during the final permitting review process. No action taken.

**8. Bayfield Peninsula Energy Alternative (BPEA), Bob Adams, Spokesperson. Update on the Proposed Xcel Energy 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit Transmission Line Project.**

Phil Norrgard presented the information substituting for Bob Adams. The group has been working to develop objective criteria to apply to the final two Xcel proposals. The BPEA citizen group has attended affected township board meetings to discuss. The overwhelming opinion in all groups is for placing this route on the existing right of way. Xcel has taken that seriously when looking at the bypass route. The route is to help mitigate concerns of residents living on the route. The concerned citizens group will keep up with project information. No action taken.

**9. Monthly Reports.**

**A. Forestry (all updates):**

**1) 2018 Budget.**

April's timber sale revenues of \$247,000 were slightly above normal as is also the year's total to date. Expenses are normal for the first quarter.

**2) Red Cliff Land Sale (80 acres).**

The application for withdrawal from county forest law was approved by the state on May 8.

Closing should be soon as Red Cliff has the funds in place and Corp Counsel is gathering signatures. Proceeds from this sale were also part of the pending stewardship grant application.

**3) Stewardship Grant.**

J. Bodine reported that the DNR is currently reviewing both appraisals. He expects to receive soon a preliminary price per acre. If no adjustments made on the appraisal, the project could be in the \$1.5 million range.

**4) Siskiwit River Preserve.**

It was just learned that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) grant funding will be awarded to the county to show a direct deposit to the receiver. A budget amendment to receive \$180,000 in grant money will be presented at the May full county board meeting. The closing could be early June.

The current landowner's responsibility prior to the sale will be to cap off an existing well and demolished the building. Initial ownership concerns include how the public will access the property this summer, including parking. Current R-1 zoning designation for the properties on both sides of the river do not allow parking. A portion of the property, approximately ¼ mile to the east was rezoned to R-RB; however, it is not a desirable location due to road parking and drainage crossing. Priority should be immediate improvements to the primary access trails. Re-zoning will be required. The Town of Bell has agreed to allow parking on the north side of Siskiwit Falls Road temporarily. The goal is to have a parking area near the river. Also, a bridge will be needed to allow trail access to cross the river. There will be collaboration with the Town of Bell and West Wisconsin Land Trust (formerly Bayfield Regional Conservancy) for development. Planning and outreach will also be a priority. Minor expense budget amendments may also be presented to the Committee during the year reflecting these improvements.

**5) Wisconsin Habitat Partnership Fund Application.**

A grant application to fund the site preparation and jack pine seeding, invasive species control on right-of-way areas and core road/fire corridor development in the Barnes Barren's 1,000 grassy acres was submitted last month. Of the approximate \$108,000 grant, the county is required to contribute at least 25% (budgeted). However, the portions where the generation of revenue was a potential (i.e. plantations, jack pine seeding nor gravel for the core road development) was denied funding. The resulting grant funding total was reduced to approximately \$68-\$69,000 of which 25% is the county's share. Because this is expected to be a regular source of potential funding, additional future projects could be developed for the grant. The grant period ends in 2020.

**6) Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) Program.**

County Inventory and Analyst Forester Jason Holmes has established and begun data collection on about a dozen plots. This first round of plot establishment and data collection will take three to four full years. Then, all plots will be on a five-year re-inventory schedule. The DNR and county will work closely as data is collected as part of reforestation monitoring. A summer intern has been hired to assist in this project.

It was noted that the newly hired forester, Caleb Brown, attended tonight's meeting for the bid opening.

**B. Parks (update).**

Big Rock opened May 5 and Twin Bear and Delta on the May 11. There remains some dock and fishing pier work yet to be completed at Twin Bear; otherwise, most of the docks are installed. Road and site touch ups at Twin Bear and Delta are complete. Tree trimming at Big Rock is planned. Because of the shared DNR eastern property line at Big Rock, a long-term MOU maintenance plan is in development. Future items to consider are optimal dates to open the campgrounds and rate increases.

**C. Trails and Recreation.**

**1) Motorized Trails.**

This is the seasonal quiet time which falls between snowmobile and ATV activity.

**2) Non-Motorized Trails.**

A Recreational Trails Aids (RTA) grant application to fund additional boardwalk and river stairway access to Lost Creek Falls has been submitted. The total estimated cost is \$18,000. The county's required share is 50%. Some local funds are already budgeted; a portion could be a 2019 expense as the project is expected to take two years to complete.

**3) Yurts.**

April occupancy at the Bayfield location was 45% and Cable 23%. Work continues with the UDC inspector on acquiring UDC seals for the two existing yurts. Construction on the third yurt will begin soon.

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

**10. Recreational Use Request. The Chequamegon 100.**

The county forest land access request uses existing trails in the Cable block. Three hundred participants are expected with event proceeds going to funding mountain biking programs. J. Bodine recommends approval.

*MOTION: (Silbert, Fickbohm) to approve the request by Chequamegon 100. All: Yes. Carried.*

**11. Recreational Use Request. Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA).**

J Bodine received a request from CAMBA to use existing trails in the Cable block for the second annual Longass Ride mountain bike event and he recommends approval.

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

**12. Access Permit Request. Matthew Stewart.**

The request was made from a pending property purchaser looking to secure an access permit to cross county forest land across land that is 225' in width. The seller had secured an access permit 50 years ago; however, the actual permit has not been located. The Department was not aware of the past access. J. Bodine recommends approval.

Private property purchasers are having difficulty securing bank loans because of the temporary nature of the

access permit. Lenders are increasingly requesting borrowers secure either longer (than 10 years) term temporary access permits or permanent easements if land purchase is not available. The county's standard has been to grant 10-year temporary permits. There is reluctance now to circumvent the standard of 10 years; however, longer term options could be researched.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Fickbohm) to approve an access permit for Matthew Stewart for 10 years and we will do further research on extending for longer terms, for all in the future. All: Yes. Carried.*

**13. Access Permit Request. Jerry Marsland.**

For the purposes of refinancing, J. Marsland has requested a [10 year] access permit to private property using an existing logging road. This is a new request for this private property access. J. Bodine recommends approval.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Zepczyk) to approve an access permit for Jerry Marsland. All: Yes. Carried.*

**14. Access Permit Request. Dean Castle.**

This is a new permit for D. Castle and previous property owners who did not have an access permit to the portion of the abandoned Old Sand Road that dips onto county forest land. D. Castle is requesting a permit to maintain access that crosses county forest land. A significant portion of the road was abandoned by the Town of Oulu years ago. A reciprocal agreement will be pursued so that the Department may access county forest land via a portion of the road.

***MOTION:** (Fickbohm, Zepczyk) to approve an access permit for Dean Castle as recommended. All: Yes. Carried.*

**15. Wisconsin Counties Association Potential Resolutions.**

Mark Abeles-Allison is seeking a list of potential resolutions for the county board and Wisconsin Counties Association to consider. The Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) to towns program has been proposed in past years. Another resolution of support could be to request increase Recreational Trails Aid (RTA) Program funding focusing on non-motorized trails versus motorized. No action taken.

**16. Strategic Plan Development.**

A 15-year comprehensive plan is in place; however, this is more of a short term plan to address more critical, immediate concerns. J. Bodine reviewed ways (see handout) that the county forest land impacts the following: local and international recreational visitors and the forest industry. No action taken.

**17. Joseph LeBouton, DNR Representative.**

J. LeBouton was not present at the meeting.

***MOTION at 8:35 PM:** (Silbert, Fickbohm) to enter into Executive Session.. All: Yes. Carried.*

**18. Executive Session.** The Committee may enter in and out of Executive Session pursuant to Wisconsin Statute 19.85(1)(e), for the purposes of negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of

public funds, or conducting other specified business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session:

**A. Approval of the October 9, 2017 Executive Session Minutes.**

**B. Easement Request. Jeff Pipgras.** Discussion and possible action on a request for an easement along a portion of shared boundary next to the Forestry and Parks Department shop (lot) in the City of Washburn.

***MOTION at 8:50 PM:** (Fickbohm, Silbert) to close executive session. All Yes. Carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 P.M.

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting and timber sale bid opening will be held **Monday, June 11, 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**