

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

July 13, 2020

Remotely held via Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Fred Strand, Chairperson; Jeffrey Silbert, Steve Sandstrom, David Zepczyk, Larry Fickbohm arrived at 6:15pm

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

Others in Attendance: Joseph LeBouton, DNR Liaison; Nikki Marten, DNR

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

This meeting was called to order at 6:02pm.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Approval of the June 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: (Zepczyk, Sandstrom) to approve the minutes as presented. All: Yes. Carried.

4. Resolution: Sale of Land to the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

This project has previously been approved by the committee. A draft resolution has been provided to the committee, which includes a summary of the project. Roughly 210 acres sold to the Tribe for \$315,000, all proceeds from the sale would be used to purchase other lands, preferably as a match for a stewardship project, to be enrolled in county forest law. The next step is withdrawal from County Forest Law. Nicky Martin from the DNR states this will be done like all withdrawals have been done in the past. Should go smoothly.

Silbert states the resolution is in agreement with our memorandum of agreement with the Red Cliff tribe. States this transaction will be very beneficial to the Frog Bay ecosystem.

MOTION: (Silbert, Zepczyk) approve the resolution for the sale of county forest land to Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; and withdraw from county forest law; and the application for the Knowles Nelson Stewardship program county forest land acquisition grant. All: Yes. Carried.

Chairman Strand clarifies that this is a recommendation to the Full County Board who will act on this.

5. Resolution: Purchase of Land in the Town of Bayfield and Entry into County Forest Law.

This resolution addresses the purchase of 30 acres of land near Pratt Road securing ¼ of snowmobile trail, a snowmobile bridge and merchantable timber. This land would be enrolled in County Forest Law. Our application has been submitted for a snowmobile trail grant, used to purchase the vast majority of this property. If the grant is not awarded, we would use funds from the NL land acquisition account to make the purchase.

MOTION: (Sandstrom, Silbert) approve the resolution and recommend to the full county board. All: Yes. Carried.

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

a. Forestry (all updates):

- a) 2020 Budget. Revenues to date are \$1.75M. Are roughly \$.25M less than at this point last year. This was to be expected but COVID-19 seems to be accelerating this loss in revenue. This might be the first year we come in under budget. Expenses on target or even under.
- b) 2021 Budget. More to come, will have a draft budget for the August meeting. Trying to figure our Revenues for next year
- c) Carbon Offset/Marketing. We continue to work with the carbon consultants regarding the development of a potential project. The voluntary carbon market has been expanding, with most project occurring on the east and west coasts. There are not many projects in the Midwest. And even fewer than involve a large public landowner. It has been presented to us that, currently, the voluntary market can accommodate a large project in the range of 500,000-750,000 total units/tons of carbon. That's approximately what we have in the Bayfield peninsula alone. If we enrolled just that portion into a carbon project, it would only be a small fraction of the county forest. Currently, a ton of carbon can sell anywhere from \$6-10/ton. We would have about 750,000 of those to sell. The large revenue comes in the first few years and less each year thereafter. Still very much in the beginning stages of this project. Exciting project, much more to come.

Some discussion from Committee on this topic.

- d) Xcel temporary Bypass Line. J. Bodine looked at the route. The bypass line would primarily be in the road right of way on town roads, few trees would be cut mostly just brushing. There might be a few trees at Big Rock that need to be removed. In total it might be close to 10 cords of timber.

Concerns voiced by the Town of Bayfield Planning Commission has Xcel looking at moving the bypass route OFF most of Star Route Rd onto Echo Valley Rd. If this happens, we would need a separate agreement for this portion of the route, as it would ultimately end up alongside a county forest trail. This bypass route does not seem to have a significant impact on county forest.

- e) Stewardship Land Acquisition Project. J. Bodine displayed a map for the committee. The map shows potential Stewardship projects. Bodine is working with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) regarding the development of a large Stewardship project. Other smaller projects are in the works as well.
- f) Jackman Lake Land Sale. The property is now sold. All proceeds will be placed in the non-lapse Land Acquisition account to be used toward other land acquisition projects.
- g) Verso Update. With Verso recently announcing the idling of their Duluth and Rapids mills Bodine provided a table to summarize Bayfield County's transactions with Verso. Not a significant amount of our timber is sent to Verso mills, but the Rapids mill is said to consume 25% of all pulpwood produced in the State of Wisconsin. If these mills stay closed indefinitely, the ripple effect will be significant. We will most likely see a decrease in stumpage prices and an increase in sales with no bids.

b. Parks:

All seasonal sites have been reserved. Recent storms created some damage to the shower building. We had a contractor come in to remove some more serious down trees that our staff couldn't handle.

- a) Pigeon Lake Field Station Tour Summary. Numerous Board members and staff took part in an organized tour of the Pigeon Lake Field Station west of Drummond. A summary by Jen Bratsch (Rec Forester) was provided to the committee.
Discussion from the committee about future uses, all in agreement that the county (Forestry Dept.) does not have the resources to manage this property.

c. Trails and Recreation:

- a) Motorized Trail Updates: RFP will be out this week for the picnic shelter.
- b) Non-Motorized Trail Updates: The RFP for Siskiwit will also go out this week.

- c) Yurt Updates: All days that we have not blocked are rented. A lot more calls/emails from renters than normal. Cable has picked up more than a normal summer. Some committee discussion on cleaning schedule.
- d) Events. No recurring events approved. Most events have been cancelled. There are some big events coming up in Cable that haven't been cancelled yet. There are some concerns if those go on as planned.
- d. Delta Landfill Update: Still back and forth with the DNR with questions. Once all questions have been answered, the plans with them be sent to Wisconsin Emergency Management for review. The temporary fix is so far holding up to the most recent storms.

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

7. New Town Road Designation

The Town of Bell approached Bodine about turning a logging road into a Town Road. Once the logging was completed we were going to designate this road as a primary road which would make it eligible for county forest road aid money (\$336/mile) As a town road it would be eligible for far more funding. If approved, this would be an easement road so the county would retain ownership, but could also be addressed via a permit. Bodine recommends approval.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Zepczyk) Pursue discussion with the town to designate this as a town road. All: Yes. Carried.*

Some committee discussion on the motion.

8. Sustainable Forestry Grant

Every year, all county forest programs are eligible for sustainable forestry grant funds. In the past we've used the funds for drone purchases, CFI plot establishment and barrens work. Bodine is now proposing some biotic inventory work in the barrens. We are currently working with the DNR wildlife on developing a sharp-tailed grouse monitoring project. The USF and NRRI have also been part of this collaboration. The goal of this project would be to see how local wildlife species currently use the barrens habitat and how our forest management practices influence that use, good or bad. We are looking at using available DNR wildlife funds to address most of the cost, but we are still waiting on the proposal from NRRI before applying for the grant. Committee approval is part of the application process.

***MOTION:** (Sandstrom, Zepczyk) Approve the grant application as proposed. All: Yes. Carried.*

9. Bayfield County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan Revision

- a. Chapters 800: A draft chapter was provided to the committee. Bodine opens it up to the committee for questions or comments. Discussion on different timber types and chemical site prep.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Sandstrom) Accept Chapter 800 as presented and make it available for the public for comment. All: Yes. Carried.*

- b. Chapter 4000: A draft chapter of chapter 4000 was provided for the committee. This chapter focuses primarily on the Barnes Barrens and the Bass Lake Barrens management areas. The Bass Lake Barrens is a future project identified in this chapter. These barrens areas have been the focus of many tours and has generated a lot of interest and support. Discussion on management tools for maintaining these barrens, mainly prescribed burns and some chemicals. Some discussion on Kirtland's Warbler in the Barrens area.

***MOTION:** (Strand, Silbert) Approve the release of chapter 4000 for public review and comment.
All: Yes. Carried.*

10. Joseph LeBouton, DNR – Appreciative of all the hard work the Forestry and Parks Department and Committee does.

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting has been scheduled for **Monday, August 10 at 6:00 P.M.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM

Submitted by,
Lindley Mattson