

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING
September 14, 2020
County Board Room and Microsoft Teams**

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

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

Others in Attendance: Joseph LeBouton, DNR Liaison; Brenda Jones, Campground Caretaker

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

This meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Approval of the July 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

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

Slight adjustment in the order of the meeting. Topic 8. Moved to 4.

4. 2021 Campground and Yurt Pricing and Policy Modifications

a. Price Modifications: Every three years or so we re-evaluate our pricing structure. This coincides with the expiration of the three year campground maintenance contract. We have done some research for comparable prices throughout the area. J Bodine presented a table to the committee with some recommendations on new 2021 pricing.

MOTION: (Fickbohm, Silbert) approve the 2021 fee structure for camping, boat launch and mooring fees. All: Yes. Carried.

b. Seasonal Camping Structure: With the camping season nearing the end we are looking at the seasonal structure for 2021. With Covid-19 being such an unknown Bodine presents three different options for the 2021 season.

- i. Follow 2020's seasonal only structure. Incorporate a slight increase in the total number of seasonal sites at Twin Bear and Delta and another year of no transient campers. Require self-contained camping units only. Big Rock would be open for transient use, as per normal. All campgrounds would be managed similar to this year.
- ii. Start the 2021 seasonal process with a higher number of seasonal sites (compared to 2019) 26 sites at Twin Bear and 18 at Delta. We would again do the random lottery selection process (was done in 2020, worked well) We would then wait and see how Covid-19 plays out over the course of the winter and spring. If Covid has improved, open the remaining sites to transient campers. If Covid hasn't improved, we add a few more seasonal sites, up to 85% capacity. This option

would allow the department to keep options open and make additional modifications if necessary.

- iii. Wait and see how Covid-19 develops over the next few months. Waiting until late winter or early spring to designate seasonal sites could run the risk of holding numerous vacant seasonal sites. This would not be a concern if we resumed transient camping but could be disadvantageous if we chose the seasonal only structure.

MOTION: (Silbert, Fickbohm) Accept option one, seasonal only structure for 2021. All: Yes. Carried.

Committee discussion: Committee members would like to be certain we do not adapt this seasonal only structure permanently. Committee would like campgrounds to be available for “spontaneous” getaways. Bodine reminds committee, Big Rock would be available as well as the Forest Service campgrounds.

- c. Caretaker Contract Renewal: The three year campground maintenance contract will expire at the end of the 2020 season. Brenda has been the campground manager since 2011 and has done an exceptional job each year. Bodine recommends we continue to work with Brenda (and her husband Jeff) for another three years, 2021-2023.

MOTION: (Sandstrom, Silbert) Approves Bodine to develop a contract for another three years of campground maintenance. All: Yes. Carried.

- d. Yurt Pricing: In 2020, all three yurts have different price structures. Bodine presented a table with prices since conception. With firewood use and firewood prices increasing, Bodine recommends price increases for both Cable and Evergreen to match Terra Cotta. All three yurts would then be at \$75/night. This price would go into effect immediately on all new reservations.

MOTION: (Fickbohm, Zepczyk) Accept the new fees for the yurts going forward. All: Yes. Carried.

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

- a. Forestry (all updates):
 - a) 2020 Budget. Timber sale revenues for August returned to normal. Nearly \$420k for August. Revenues are currently at \$2.5 million. It is likely that we will exceed \$3.0M which is still under budget expectations. Expenses are under budget.
 - b) Carbon Offset/Marketing. This has been developing nicely in the last few weeks. Bodine is expecting a formal proposal and will bring that as well as an analysis of the offer to the October meeting.
 - c) CFL Withdrawal/Red Cliff Land Sale. The DNR has review the application for withdrawal but we haven't received a formal response. Corp Counsel has all of the information and is preparing for the sale.
 - d) Stewardship Land Acquisition Project. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is still actively engaging with Ceres Timber on terms for a large acquisition project.
 - e) Verso Update. Nothing new to report. Lots of talk but nothing concrete.
- b. Parks:

Even though campgrounds opened late this year due to Covid, the total new campground revenue will exceed \$110k, which is what was budgeted for 2020. To date, there has been roughly 740 site rentals at Big Rock, previous record was 625 nights.
- c. Trails and Recreation:

- a) Motorized Trail Updates: There is a contractor under contract for the covered ATV shelter and will hopefully have that project done this year. The supplemental payment to the snowmobile Alliance was the most ever for 2019-2020, roughly \$170,500.
- b) Non-Motorized Trail Updates: The contractor has not yet started work at Siskiwit Falls but expect them to start still this month. The access road at Perch Lake is almost completed. As part of that project the old road was improved and a small parking area constructed. There will still be about 50-75 yards of wooded area to get to the lake. The department has received numerous inquiries from landowners around the lake on current improvements. The topic of port-a-potties at well used trails or recreation areas was discussed.
- c) Yurt Updates: Bodine presented the occupancy rates for July-Oct. Still continue to be very popular. All days that are not blocked for cleaning/replenishing supplies are booked. We are in process of improving the primary service road to the yurts. It is a steep uphill route needed for septic trucks, firewood delivery and emergency vehicles. Highway Dept. is assisting the department with this project.
- d) Events. Washburn High School will be hosting a cross-country meet at Ashwabay in October. The date hasn't been selected, options are: October 9,10,16 or 17. Most events have been cancelled due to COVID. The Berkie has worked with the Health Department to proceed with some portions of the event, safely.
- d. Delta Landfill Update: Application for change in scope has been submitted as well as a request for additional funding. Once we hear from WEM, we will have to apply for the proper permits. Chairman Strand comments that the Town of Delta has been reproached on their responsibilities to the damage.

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

6. Forestry and Parks Department 2021 Budget

J. Bodine presented the final 2021 budget narrative. County Administrator has made minor adjustments to the budget. No significant changes.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Sandstrom) Approve the 2021 budget narrative as presented. All: Yes. Carried.*

7. Salvage Timber Sale Summary

J. Bodine presented a summary of the salvage sales offered last month covering 420 acres, nearly 10,000 cords and 350 MBF, minimum value was just under \$117,000. Bids were opened on September 8. Four of the six sales sold on bids. One sale was later sold directly to North Country Lumber. Total value of salvage sale is \$128,500. If the sixth sale does not sell direct, it will be added to the 2020 Fall sale.

***MOTION:** (Sandstrom, Fickbohm) Approve the bids for the salvage timber sale. All: Yes. Carried.*

8. County Conservation Aid Grant

This is an annual state grant that requires a formal application, due October 1. Every year, we are allotted \$3,993 to help cover cost associated with various conservation related projects. Requires a county match.

***MOTION:** (Zepczyk, Silbert) Approve applying for County Consecration Aids Grants for lake access improvements. All: Yes. Carried.*

9. Bayfield County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan Revision

- a. Public Comment. Comments were provided to committee.
- b. Remaining Timeline. Still getting together maps, tables and data. J Bodine would like to get a final draft to the committee for the October meeting.

Some committee discussion on the comment submitted.

10. Joseph LeBouton, DNR – Joseph was attending remotely, he was difficult to hear.

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting has been scheduled for **Monday, October 12 at 6:00 P.M.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 PM

Submitted by,
Lindley Mattson