

## **FORESTRY, LAND, & RECREATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** May 4, 2016

**TIME:** 4:00 p.m. Committee Room 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Court House, Rhinelander, WI

**PRESENT:** Chair Sorensen; Committee Members: Mott, Van Raalte, Zunker  
Forestry Staff: Bilogan, Fiene, Bradley.

**OTHERS:** Sen. Tiffany; Rep. Czaja

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER—** At 4:00 p.m. Chair Sorensen called the meeting to order, noting that it had been properly posted in accordance with the procedures set forth by the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.

**APPROVE CURRENT AGENDA WITH THE ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS AT CHAIR'S DISCRETION—** It was moved by Van Raalte, seconded by Mott, to approve the current agenda with the order of agenda items at Chair's discretion. All aye. Motion carried.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF THE FORESTRY COMMITTEE MEETING—** It was moved by Zunker, seconded by Van Raalte to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2016 FLR Committee meetings. All aye. Motion carried.

**ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR—** Van Raalte moved to nominate Zunker as vice-chair of the committee. Zunker declined. Mott moved to nominate Van Raalte as vice-chair. Zunker seconded. All aye, motion carried.

### **FOREST MANAGEMENT:**

- a) YEAR-TO-DATE TIMBER STUMPAGE REVENUE REPORT—\$450,819.78  
Fiene reported April earnings of \$1750.60 due to break-up and road postings.
- b) TIMBER SALES FOR DISPOSITION—Zunker moved to approve close of Fink Forest Products' contract #1626 and return the deposit. Van Raalte seconded. All aye, carried.
- c) NEW TIMBER SALE CONTRACTS— One sale had no bidders. Van Raalte moved to award 13 timber sale contracts to highest eligible bidders, as recommended by Fiene after checking bids for accuracy. Mott seconded. All aye, motion carried.

### **KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP LAND ACQUISITION GRANT OBJECTION.**

Sen. Tiffany reported that the Little Rice Town Board Chairman, Steve Margitan, asked him to look at the application as the town Board had concerns with regard to future development in the town of Little Rice. Tiffany stated that the intent was not to stop it, but to review it. Sorensen noted that the objection came at the last minute and as a result the seller withdrew. Rep. Czaja explained the process, and said the objector is kept confidential. It is not unusual, and the DNR is notified when an objection is filed, so they may have informed the landowner. Sorensen asked if the purchase parcel was associated with the town of Little Rice. Bilogan explained that the Oneida County grant application did not include the purchase any new land in the Town of Little Rice. However, the grant application did a proposal to enroll three existing county owned parcels, that are located in the Town of Little Rice, into the County Forest Law Program (CFLP). In terms of the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Land Acquisition Grant program, existing county owned parcels being

proposed for enrollment into the CFLP are referred to as “Match” parcels. Bilogan went on to say that the concerns submitted by the Town of Little Rice pertained to the three county owned match parcels located in their town. Those concerns were: 1) the productivity of the match parcels, 2) how long the match parcels had been owned by the county, and 3) was there an alternate or better use for the match parcels beyond that of enrolling them into the County Forest program. Sorenson questioned why the Town of Little Rice would and/or could question or object to what the county proposed to do with existing county owned land? No answer was provided. Sorenson also stated that this has cost the County up to \$5,000 for appraisals and staff time. Czaja stated that those costs would be incurred for any application. She said that going forward funding is tight and not all projects will be approved.

Bilogan asked if the guidelines for the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Land Acquisition Grant program could be modified to clearly state the criteria for eligible match parcels and to define the criteria for filing concerns or objections. Czaja responded that the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) had not asked that question. Jane Severt said those questions came from the Fiscal Bureau. Czaja commented that anyone can ask the Fiscal Bureau questions. Tiffany summarized the issue by saying everyone should sit down and review the process. He should have let Bilogan know, and he accepted the responsibility that Oneida County was not notified at once. Van Raalte questioned why the Town had an issue with the parcels, since they were in line to receive severance money if the project went through. Mott commented that it was an amazing coincidence that the owner of the parcel in question withdrew at virtually the moment there was an objection. He asked if there are certain areas that the JFC will be looking at more closely. Czaja responded that they are looking for money being spent wisely and enhancing multi-use, recreation, and wildlife projects.

Sorenson stated he is pleased that property like the Heal Creek parcel has been going back into the private sector and is still available for public use. He believes property should be held privately as much as possible. However, he feels that parcels surrounded by County Forest, offered to the county by owners, are not in that category, as they are needed to block in the County Forest.

Bilogan was unsure the Little Rice Town Chairmen had submitted the objections. He knew that Mr. Margitan had a phone conversation with Joe Schwantes (WDNR County & Public Forest Specialist), about this project, at which time Mr. Margitan did not allude to the objections mentioned above. Members of the Forestry Committee also mentioned that they did not understand why the Town objected. Tiffany noted that several towns have very little development opportunities because most of their land is county-owned, not on the tax base. Bilogan also added that he had met with Mr. Margitan several days ago and believes he has cleared up some misconceptions the Town had pertaining to the length of time Oneida County had owned these parcels. The Civil Conservation Corp. (CCC) parcel has been owned by the county since 1940.

Sorenson asked, “So if this committee, the county board, the DNR, all these intelligent people feel it is appropriate, then the JFC can still say no?” Czaja replied yes, because we write the checks.

Jane Severt noted WCFA projects are all ranked and if they don’t score 5.0 they are not sent forward. This project ranked pretty high.

**MITCHELL IVES**—Sorenson read a letter from Mitchell Ives resigning from the Forestry Committee.

**CLOSED SESSION:** It was moved, seconded and approved by roll call vote to enter into closed session pursuant to Sec. 19.85(1) (e)(g) conferring with legal counsel concerning strategy to be adopted by the governmental body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved. Topic: Burrows ATV Bridges

Van Raalte moved to return to open session. Mott seconded. All aye. Committee returned to open session. During closed session, a motion was made by Mott, seconded by Zunker and approved by roll call vote to have Corporation Counsel draft a letter to the contractor.

#### **LAND ACQUISITION ISSUES**

- a. Langlois land purchase resolution, Sec. 29, T37N-R4E. The offer to purchase was accepted by the owner. Mott moved a resolution be submitted to Oneida County Board for approval of the purchase. Zunker seconded. All aye, motion carried.
- b. Private inquiry re: Forestry Department interest in purchasing Sec. 19, T35N R9E. Referred to as the Gillette Lake parcel. Bilogan described the parcel, which the owner would like to sell to Oneida County. The owner states there is access via another private owner to the south. A timber sale is being set up alongside this parcel, and there is merchantable timber. Bilogan noted that the first step would be to contact the Town of Enterprise for the town's opinion. Mott moved to proceed with the possible purchase, if the current owner will provide a current appraisal.

**BURROWS LAKE GRAVEL PIT RECLAMATION.** The Town of Little Rice would like to proceed with reclamation. They asked if they could bury the stumps in the low wet areas of the pit. The Army Corps of Engineers and the Forestry Dept both agree that the water is a result of gravel digging, however, the DNR Water Specialist is claiming it is now a wetland and under DNR jurisdiction. Sen. Tiffany felt that the County should express their concerns to his office and that of Rep. Czaja, as wetland delineation is becoming more common. Bilogan stated that this progression will begin to affect logging roads and recreational trails. In addition, the crumbling retaining wall in Almon Park beach is now being classified by the DNR as a seawall and is not allowed to be repaired.

**ATV ROUTES ON CO FOREST ROADS & LOGGING OPERATIONS.** Dennis Schoeneck spoke about his perception that logging is secondary after recreation. Sorensen seconded that logging and public safety is the number one priority and everything else follows. Generating revenue is the County Forest's primary function. Mitch Ives said that there is conflict between loggers and clubs as to the responsibility of the ATV trails being repaired. Mott noted that in the State forest, rec trails may be closed for logging operations. Sorensen asked the loggers and ATV clubs to get together and find solutions to present to the committee.

**ATV/UTV 2016 TRAIL OPENING.** The early spring led to a proposal to open the ATV trails on May 13, 2016. Van Raalte moved to approve, Mott seconded. All aye, motion carried.

**CONSIDERATION OF CREATING AN ADDITIONAL FORESTRY DEPT. POSITION.** In the past several years, the department has difficulty hiring or keeping LTE Foresters. In order to obtain a trained forester, Bilogan proposes to use the funds previously targeting LTE's to hire a full time, permanent forester. He feels that the benefit package will draw candidates; the current situation is wasting money on training that is lost when the LTE leaves. The situation is steadily deteriorating. Mott moved to support the creation of a new position. Van Raalte seconded. All aye, motion carried.

#### **COMMITTEE/STAFF MEETING ATTENDANCE**

- a. Vilas Co Trails Ad Hoc meeting May 20, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.
- b. WCFA 2016 Summer Tour, June 16-17 in Forest County. Zunker moved to allow staff and committee members to attend. Mott seconded, all aye. Motion carried.

**CHANGES IN MFL PROGRAM (MANNY ORADEI, DNR)** He distributed handouts outlining changes. Highlights are be a change in severance tax, landowners will be able to enclose more acres and there will be a 10 year maximum on withdrawal fees.

**RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE THE DNR TO SELECT ONEIDA COUNTY AS NEW HOME OF THE DNR.** Mott moved to present the resolution to Oneida County Board, Zunker seconded. All aye, motion carried. Bilogan suggested a group be prepared to lend support.

**COMMENTS—** Bob Mott thanked Thomas Rudolph for his many years of service. He was also sorry Mitch Ives was unable to join the committee. State law says he cannot have any dealings with anyone who has purchased timber from the County.

**VOUCHERS AND LINE ITEM TRANSFERS**

Vouchers totaled \$8,849.36 were approved by the committee.

**AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE FORESTRY COMMITTEE MEETINGS:**

- Update on trails and logging
- Burrows Pit reclamation update
- Knowles-Nelson objections made by Town of Little Rice; clarify with landowner.
- RASTA
- Gillette Lake update; owner interest in selling; will he pay for appropriate appraisal
- Proposed Forestry position
- New ATV Trail requests
- Introduction new committee member

**ADJOURNMENT—**With business completed, it was moved by Van Raalte, seconded by Zunker, to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 p.m.. All aye. Motion carried.

---

JACK SORENSEN  
CHAIR

---

JILL BRADLEY  
RECORDING SECRETARY