

FORESTRY, LAND, & RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: February 3, 2021

TIME: 3:30 p.m. County Board Room, 2nd Floor, Court House, Rhinelander, WI

PRESENT: Committee Members: Sorensen, VanRaalte, Pence, Almekinder, Mott (via Zoom)
Forestry Staff: Fiene, Rady, Tischendorf
Bob Rynders, Curt Christiansen – Minocqua Forest Riders
Via Zoom: Assistant Corporation Counsel – Mike Fugle; DNR Liaison – Manny Oradei

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Sorensen called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. The meeting has 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

Motion by VanRaalte to approve the current agenda with the order of agenda items at Chair's discretion. Second by Almekinder. All aye, motion carried.

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion by Pence to approve the minutes of January 6, 2021 and January 12, 2021 meetings. Second by VanRaalte. All aye, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sorensen stated that public comments are allowed during the public comment sections at the beginning and end of the meeting as well as during a specific agenda item.

Gary Zarda commented on the potential Townline Park sale. He hopes the committee will sincerely listen to the comments from the group trying to save the park.

FOREST MANAGEMENT – YTD STUMPAGE REPORT

YTD Stumpage Report – Fiene reported current county forest stumpage for January was \$138,743.85 slightly above the 5-year average for January. Markets continue to struggle. February is off to a good start with \$44,000 invoiced so far.

Fink Forest Products – Requesting 6-month 0% increase extension for #1727 – Timber sale purchased in May 2019, and is a two year contract that is set to expire in May 2021. Fink has tried to work on the job two times; however, conditions got too wet and muddy and he had to stop operations. The job is about 50% complete. Fiene's recommendation is to approve the request.

Motion by Almekinder to approve the six-month extension. Second by Mott. All aye, motion carried.

REVIEW/RECONSIDER PRIOR ACTION TAKEN AT DECEMBER 2, 2020 MEETING OF FORESTRY, LAND AND RECREATION COMMITTEE RE: MINOCQUA FOREST RIDERS TRAIL ISSUES/RYNDERS

Motion by Sorensen to reconsider prior action taken at December 2, 2020 meeting. Second by Almekinder. Roll call vote – Mott no; VanRaalte no; Almekinder, aye; Pence aye; Sorensen aye. Motion passed with a 3-2 vote.

Bob Rynders was provided the opportunity to speak on his behalf regarding the trail issues presented to the committee. Rynders stated that the issues prior to 2020 were Willow Region club projects that he was contracted to complete and understood (from Willow Region Club) were approved by the county. The conditions at the time were not good and the intention was to clean up the area the following spring.

Later, Broquard contacted MFR (after the merger of Willow Region and Minocqua Forest Riders) to fix these areas as well as some additional areas. Rynders stated very little direction was provided and conflicting feedback regarding the quality of the work was received. In Rynders opinion, if Broquard insisted on being on-site during the work, then he should have been on site to supervise.

Curt Christensen, MFR President, spoke in favor of Mr. Rynders. Christensen feels that several of the issues were the responsibility of the Willow Region Club, not Rynders (as the contractor) or MFR. Re-iterated there was conflicting feedback regarding the quality of work from Rynders. The current decision limits the MFR club's resources and requests the committee to reconsider the prior decision.

Fiene and Rady reiterated that the department did not authorize some of the work completed and that it is the club's responsibility to ensure all necessary permits are approved and regulations are followed. Rynders and Christensen feel this was the Willow Region Club's responsibility, not the contractor.

VanRaalte cited verbiage from Wis. Statute, section 28.11 supporting the prior decision made by the committee on December 2, 2020 based on the information provided at the time, while protecting the county's certification.

Additional discussion on behalf of the committee and forestry department regarding whether to allow Rynders to perform work on county land in the future. All agreed that communication and documentation needs to improve to insure permits are approved and regulations followed.

Motion by Pence to allow Mr. Bob Rynders to work on county forest land. Second by Almekinder. All aye, motion carried.

DISCUSS OPEN RECORDS REQUEST REGARDING BURROWS BRIDGE PROJECT AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLOSED SESSION MATERIALS

Fiene informed the committee that the Forestry Department received an open records request regarding what is termed the Burrows boardwalk bridges which are ATV/snowmobile bridges located in the town of Little Rice. There are four bridges that were constructed around 2013. A couple of years later, there were concerns with the bridges that resulted in closed session meeting due to potential litigation regarding repair of the bridges. Bridges have been repaired to the County's satisfaction without litigation. In order to release information discussed during closed meetings, the committee would need to approve the release of these documents minus any attorney/client privileged information which would need County Board approval.

Motion by Pence to release closed session documents that are not attorney/client privilege. Second by VanRaalte. All aye, motion carried.

TOWNLINELAKE PARK ISSUES

Abandonment of Public Access to a Protected Public Waterway – Sorensen explained that the committee has never requested any closure of public access to Townline Lake. The closing of the public access is not an issue. The public access will remain open and is not part of the proposed sale.

Public Comments: JoAnne Rajek, Rhinelander, spoke in opposition of the sale of Townline Lake Park and encouraged the committee to reconsider the sale.

David Walters, Rhinelander, spoke in opposition of the sale of Townline Lake Park and sees regular use of the park. There is a petition of over 1,300 of citizens willing to work with you to restore the park experience.

Joe Fierst, Rhinelander, (provided an email to the committee) spoke in opposition of the sale of Townline Lake Park and asks the committee to reconsider.

Beth Follenweider spoke regarding the obstacles (withdrawal from CFL process, recreational encumbrances, financial need, etc.) related to selling Townline Lake Park and feels this committee has no authority to even bring forth a motion or a resolution to sell this property. Asking the committee to work with us to save the park.

Jeremy VanKemp, Rhinelander, spoke in opposition to sell the park and stated the park has a lot of activity.

Tracy Beckman, Rhinelander, spoke on behalf of others that were not able to attend the meeting. Nancy Watry of Rhinelander is looking forward to being an active participant in Townline Lake Park. John Thomas Cahak would volunteer to help clean the beach area and opposes selling the park. Scott Schremper recently returned

to Rhinelander and would be willing to donate time and money to ensure future enjoyment of the park. John Schneider and Alan Boyer offered to help with lake health. Stephanie Boismenu volunteered to help with citizen science projects. Elliot Boyer offered to help with landscaping. Shared a letter written by Frederick Fisher of Rhinelander regarding "The Bottom Line".

Dave Dement, Rhinelander requested to know why the county needs to pursue this sale, what the people would gain from this sale. Why do you want to sell your park? It is time to be responsive to the people. Please work with us instead of selling it.

Eric Vevea of Enterprise – question regarding the abandonment of Townline Lake Road by the Town of Crescent citing Wisconsin Statute NR 1.92 section 1a. Also wants to know if the committee feels the proposed changes will improve or degrade the public's access to this landing.

Kerry Bloedorn, Town of Pelican, he and his family are opposed to the sale and asks the committee to reconsider.

David Schmitz, Town of Newbold, thank you to the committee for your time serving Oneida County. The location of Townline Lake park is convenient and opposes the sale of the park.

Michael Schultz, Rhinelander opposes the sale of Townline Lake park and asks the county to work with us to save the park.

Sherrie Belleview, Rhinelander (sent an email to the committee) is opposed to the sale of the park and hopes the committee will listen to the voices speaking.

Kelby Scheel, Rhinelander is opposed to the sale of the park and states there is significant public interest in keeping and maintaining the park. Asks the committee to listen to your constituents and stop the proceedings for the sale of the park and work with the community to save the park.

Sarah, Rhinelander is opposed to the sale of the park.

Kathy Cutforth, Rhinelander, has worked with the City of Rhinelander with parks sub-committee. Spoke in opposition of the sale of the park.

Dave Dement, Rhinelander, \$30,000 was set aside for maintenance of Townline Park in the past and it was used for something else.

Beth Follenweider, Rhinelander, the property is close to the Forestry shop and asking you to work with us to save our park and ask you to decide today not to move forward with this.

Ann Kipper, Town of Crescent, asking the committee to reconsider the sale of this park and is opposed to the sale.

Tracy Beckman, Rhinelander, is the committee going to allow public comment after committee discussion? Yes, there is public comment at the end of the meeting.

Renee Savage, Rhinelander, Townline Park is opposed to the sale.

Review/Approve Withdrawal Resolution – Motion by Mott to table the proposed resolution for sale until the May meeting. At that time, we can have a report presented by the Forestry staff outlining possible uses. This will allow the committee and/or department to work with the public. Second by Almekinder. 4 aye - Sorensen, Almekinder, Pence, Mott; 1 Nay - VanRaalte, motion carried.

Sorensen Letter to DNR re: Townline Lake Lot Sale Timeline – Sorensen had a brief discussion with Doug Brown, WDNR. This letter was a follow-up to that conversation showing the timeline of activities by the Committee with regards to Townline Lake. The committee was never informed that we could not retro-actively remove property from CFL.

SNOWMOBILE TRAIL OPENING UPDATE

Fiene stated the snowmobile trails were opened on January 26, 2021. Conditions are poor to fair at this point; however, if we get the 4-8 inches as predicted, the trails should be in pretty good shape.

SET RATES AND APPROVE RECREATIONAL CLUB FIREWOOD PERMIT

At the previous meeting, the committee discussed and approved the department creating a separate firewood permit for recreational clubs. A copy was provided to the committee for review. Discussion regarding any applicable fee. Committee feels there should not be a fee as the club is performing work on county trails.

Motion by VanRaalte to approve the recreational club firewood permit as presented with no fee. Second by Pence. All aye, motion carried.

DISCUSS/APPROVE ATV REHAB TRAIL PROJECT – BURROWS LAKE ROAD & KELLY FIRE LANE

Rady explained this is a four-mile ATV trail rehabilitation grant project. Hoping to get the project bid out within the next month and completed by the end of the year.

Motion by VanRaalte to approve the rehab specs and contract as presented. Second by Almekinder. All aye, motion carried.

DISCUSS MILITARY/VETERAN USER FEES

Pence requested the agenda item to potentially waive user fees for active military and veterans. Fiene polled several counties and provided a spreadsheet showing the results. A couple counties provide discounts; however, there is concern on how to verify military status utilizing self-registration at the campground and trail kiosks.

Motion by Almekinder to table at this time. Second by VanRaalte. All aye, motion carried.

DISCUSS/APPROVE FORESTRY DEPARTMENT TO SELL FORESTRY TRUCK VS. TRADE-IN

The forestry department is looking for approval to have the option to sell the old forestry truck out right versus a trade-in if it is financially advantageous to the county.

Motion by VanRaalte to allow the department to go ahead and accept an outright sale. Second by Pence. All aye, motion carried.

APPROVE SURVEY CONTRACT SECTIONS 3 & 10, T37N R4E, TOWN OF LYNNE

During timber sale setup in the Town of Lynne, there are several areas on the property line that may have potential encroachments. Proposal by JW Austin & Associates to survey and put in markers.

Motion by Pence to approve the contract with grammar correction. Second by Almekinder. All aye, motion carried.

REVIEW/APPROVE APHIS 2021 COOPERATIVE SERVICES AGREEMENT

This is the beaver control agreement with APHIS and has been reviewed by Corporation Counsel.

Motion by Almekinder to approve the agreement. Second by Mott. All aye, motion carried.

APPROVAL FOR ATTENDANCE AND OUT OF COUNTY TRAVEL – WCFA SPRING MEETING IN MARSHFIELD MARCH 17-19, 2021

Motion by VanRaalte to approve attendance and out of county travel for the WCFA spring meeting. Second by Almekinder. All aye, motion carried.

VOUCHERS/LINE ITEM TRANSFERS

Vouchers presented totaling \$293,855.25 which includes 2020 town stumpage severance of \$135,491.66 and \$124,050.00 for snowmobile maintenance. Additional expenses included WCFA dues of \$6,575.78 which will

be offset with a \$1,700.00 grant reimbursement and RASTA trail maintenance for the first half of the year of \$9,950.00.

Motion by VanRaalte to approve the vouchers as presented. Second by Pence. All aye, motion carried.

Motion by VanRaalte to approve the 2020 end of year line item transfers of \$6,166.00 as presented. Second by Almekinder. All aye, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dave Dement thanked the committee for listening and willing to work with the Townline group.

Beth Follenweider thanked the committee for listening and is looking forward to working with the committee.

Kelby Scheel thanked the committee for being open to possibilities for Townline Park and looks forward to working with the committee.

Tracy Beckman thank you for acknowledging the group's hard work and looking forward to working on this together.

Kathy Cutforth inquired about the procedure for meeting with the department/committee.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/MEETINGS

- Next meeting – March 3, 2021
- Potential sub-committee for Townline Lake Park

ADJOURNMENT

With business completed, Chair Sorensen adjourned the meeting at 6:01p.m.

JACK SORENSEN
CHAIR

TANYA TISCHENDORF
RECORDING SECRETARY