

FORESTRY, LAND, & RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: February 10, 2026

TIME: 8:00 a.m. County Board Room, 2nd Floor, Court House, Rhinelander, WI

PRESENT: Committee Members: Almekinder, Briggs, Schultz, Sorgel (via zoom), Ives (via zoom)
Forestry Staff: Nemeč, Rady, Tischendorf
WDNR: John Gillen, Curt Rollman

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Almekinder called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.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 Schultz to approve the agenda with the order of agenda items at Chair's discretion. Second by Briggs. All aye, motion carried.

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion by Briggs to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2026 meeting. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

2025 Final Timber Stumpage Report – Rady reported final stumpage revenue for December came in at \$236,310.03, bringing the final 2025 gross timber revenue to \$1,033,814.30. This includes a small non-county forest sale of \$1,547.90. Final gross stumpage revenue came in approximately \$72,000 below budget.

YTD Stumpage Report - Rady reported January stumpage of \$36,952.38, significantly below the 5-year YTD average. Rady noted the hardwood markets are not doing well; however, a few aspen jobs have started within the last few weeks.

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Nemeč informed the committee updated legislation has increased ATV/UTV weight limits to 3,500 lbs. (previous limit was 3,000 lbs.). Increased weight will have some impact on trail maintenance and sustainability.

Nemeč provided an update on the Town of Little Rice and their approved vote to abandon parts of Gobbler Lake Road and Kelly Fire Lane. Once finalized, the committee/county, as the primary landowner, will have several options to consider regarding future maintenance and access of these roads. Chair Almekinder requested another update at the March committee meeting.

WDNR REPORTS

DNR Liaison – Gillen represented Wells as she was not able to attend. Gillen reported the team has been working on timber sales for the County's spring bid opening and some timber reconnaissance.

DNR Wildlife Biologist – Rollman reported that mowing of the Town of Lynne wildlife openings is scheduled for 2026 and Rollman is looking for additional external grant funding to help cover costs. Information provided on the new deer management units and the need for public representatives for the new unit committees.

WCFA SPRING CONFERENCE – MARCH 19-20, 2026 IN ROTHSCILD

Approve Staff & Committee Attendance – Nemeč stated this is the bi-annual Wisconsin County Forest Association Conference and due to the proximity, the department will commute both days.

Motion by Schultz to approve staff & committee attendance. Second by Sorgel. All aye, motion carried.

AWARD BID FOR INDIAN VILLAGE GMA DEVELOPMENT

The committee was provided a copy of the bids received. Nemec informed the committee, this is a grant funded project and the department would like to award the grant to the low bidder, Bowen Bus Service for \$46,830.00.

Motion by Schultz to award the bid to Bowens Bus Service. Second by Briggs. All aye, motion carried.

DISCUSS / APPROVE NOTICE FOR BIDS TO REPLACE 2002 FORESTRY UTILITY TRAILER

Nemec explained the department budgeted to replace a 2002 utility trailer that transports the Gravely mower. In addition to the age of the trailer, the replacement trailer would be a bit wider to allow extra safety when loading/unloading the mower. The old trailer will be sold at auction and the remainder of the funds will come from the Forestry Equipment account.

Motion by Schultz to approve the notice for bid for a new trailer. Second by Briggs. All aye, motion carried.

DISCUSS / APPROVE 2026 APHIS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Nemec stated this is an annual agreement to mitigate beaver issues on county forest lands.

Motion by Briggs to approve the 2026 APHIS agreement. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.

DISCUSS / APPROVE COUNTY CODE ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

Nemec explained that with the recent changes to dispersed camping and campground regulations and online registrations, the county code ordinances were in need of updating. With these updates, it is good practice to review county code for additional necessary updates. Committee reviewed and agreed with proposed updates.

Motion by Schultz to approve proposed updates to county code. Second by Briggs. All aye, motion carried.

INVOICES PAID REPORT

The committee received the list of invoices paid in January 2026.

Vouchers for the month totaled \$82,999.92 including \$60,930.42 for grant funded and/or reimbursed expenses. Large grant funded expenses include an ATV trail rehabilitation project for \$58,339.32. Operational expenses include \$12,450 to RASTA for the first half of the 2026 trail maintenance contract.

Informational only.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW (BUDGET / ACTUAL REPORT)

The committee was provided a copy of the department's January report. Tischendorf explained 2025 line item transfers and charge backs continue to happen. Expenses should be within budget; however, forestry revenue will be down from budget due to the timber stumpage shortfall.

Informational only.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Guy Hansen reported the Nose Lake trail that allows dogs has been getting a lot of use.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/MEETINGS

- Next meeting – March 10, 2026
- Gobbler Lake Rd & Kelly Fire Ln Abandonment Update
- FTLLP 2026 Park Maintenance Agreement
- Timber Sale Extensions
- Private Utility Access Permit & Fees
- Luber Lane Cell Tower Lease Proposal
- Proposed Ordinance Amendment Resolution

ADJOURNMENT

With business completed, Chair Almekinder adjourned the meeting at 8:28 a.m.

ROBERT ALMEKINDER
COMMITTEE CHAIR

TANYA TISCHENDORF
COMMITTEE SECRETARY