

FORESTRY, LAND, & RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: March 10, 2026

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

PRESENT: Committee Members: Almekinder, Briggs, Schultz, Sorgel, Ives
Forestry Staff: Nemeč, Rady, Tischendorf
WDNR: Kristina Wells, 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 Briggs to approve the agenda with the order of agenda items at Chair's discretion. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion by Schultz to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2026 meeting. Second by Sorgel. All aye, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

YTD Stumpage Report - Rady reported February stumpage of \$114,147.98 bringing the year-to-date total to \$151,100.36. Rady noted there are two active jobs, but some town road limits have started so there will be very little hauling done until after spring break up.

Timber Sale Extensions:

1781 – Scott Kremsreiter - Rady explained most timber sales are given up to four-years (including extensions) to complete the sale. In the past, the committee has approved an additional year; however, these were for extenuating circumstances (Verso mill shut down, harvesting of major storm blowdown, etc.). Rady stated this was a four-year contract and the job has not been started. Kremsreiter was in attendance and requested the committee approve an extension. Recommendation is to adhere to contract extension guidelines and cancel the contract, retain the bond and re-sell the timber sale.

Motion by Almekinder to deny the extension, cancel the contract, retain the bond and offer for re-sale. Second by Ives. All aye, motion carried.

1782 – Central Wisconsin Lumber – Rady stated this was a three-year contract with a previous extension. Recommend to cancel the contract, retain the bond and re-sell the timber sale.

Motion by Ives to cancel the contract, retain the bond and offer for re-sale. Second by Briggs. All aye, motion carried.

1783 – Kleinschmidt Logging – Rady stated this was a four-year contract and has not been started. Recommend to cancel the contract, retain the bond and re-sell the timber sale.

Motion by Ives to cancel the contract, retain the bond and offer for re-sale. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.

1790 – McKee Logging – Rady stated this was a two-year contract with two previous extensions and has not been started. Recommend to cancel the contract, retain the bond and re-sell the timber sale.

Motion by Briggs to cancel the contract, retain the bond and offer for re-sale. Second by Ives. All aye, motion carried.

1791 – McKee Logging – Rady stated this was a three-year contract with a previous extension and has not been started. Recommend to cancel the contract, retain the bond and re-sell the timber sale.

Motion by Sorgel to cancel the contract, retain the bond and offer for re-sale. Second by Ives. All aye, motion carried.

1809 – Wiitala & Vozka Logging – Rady stated this was a three-year contract and the majority of the sale has been harvested. Recommend a year extension with a 15% increase in stumpage.

Motion by Ives to offer a year extension with a 15% increase in stumpage. Second by Briggs. All aye, motion carried.

1813 – Wiitala & Vozka Logging – Rady stated this was a three-year contract and has not been started. Recommend a year extension with a 15% increase in stumpage.

Motion by Briggs to offer a year extension with a 15% increase in stumpage. Second by Ives. All aye, motion carried.

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Nemec informed the committee of the upcoming Mosinee pulp mill closure later this year. We will see some effects, but unknown to what extent at this time.

Nemec explained that the Town of Lynne is looking to change the classification of Willow Road, which would restrict the amount of weight that could be hauled. More information to come as it becomes available.

WDNR REPORTS

DNR Liaison – Wells stating the Rhinelander team is wrapping up work for the Oneida County spring bid opening and transitioning to fire season. Wells will not be fire staffing this year and will focus on 15-year recon instead.

DNR Wildlife Biologist – Rollman continues to look for external funding to help with the costs to mow the Town of Lynne wildlife openings. Oneida County deer advisory council meetings will be held in late April and the Wisconsin Conservation Congress spring hearing is scheduled for mid-April at James Williams Middle School.

DISCUSS / APPROVE NEXT STEPS FOR GOBLER LAKE ROAD & KELLY FIRE LANE ABANDONMENT BY TOWN OF LITTLE RICE

Nemec provided an update including the receipt of the Highway Order Discontinuance that was recorded by the Town of Little Rice. Additionally Nemec had a conversation with the Little Rice Town Chair stating they are done with everything with the abandonment and the County is free to do what they choose with the roads.

Several options have been identified; however, a lot of information is still needed before a recommendation is made to the committee. To help preserve the current conditions of the roads, the department is requesting to temporarily close these roads through spring break-up.

Motion by Almekinder to give the forestry department permission to temporarily close portions of Gobler Lake Road and Kelly Fire Lane. Second by Ives. All aye, motion carried.

FRIENDS OF TOWNLINE LAKE PARK (FTLLP) UPDATE

Discuss/Approve 2026 Friends of Townline Lake Park (FTLLP) Maintenance Agreement – Nemec explained this is the annual maintenance agreement to take care of basic maintenance at the park (mowing, trash, etc.).

Motion by Briggs to approve the Friends of Townline Lake Park 2026 Maintenance Agreement. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.

AWARD TRAILER BID

Truitt stated we received three bids for the tilt utility trailer; however, the low bid from Verne’s was not for the correct trailer specifications. Request approval to award bid to Sunset Trailer Sales.

Motion by Ives to award the bid to Sunset Trailer Sales for \$3,948.00. Second by Briggs. All aye, motion carried.

DISCUSS / AWARD SNOWMOBILE BRIDGE CONTRACTS – GILMORE CREEK & PELICAN RIVER TR. 17 BRIDGES

Rady provided background on two bridge projects (Gilmore Creek & Pelican River Tr. 17) approved from past meetings. Cedar Corporation was contracted to engineer bridge design and specifications. Unfortunately, due to the amount of time between the bridge estimates and bid process, the bids came in significantly higher than the funds currently available for each grant project (approximately \$300,000 short between both projects). Rady plans to request additional funds from the Governor’s Council; however, this could take several months to finalize. Requesting the committee to approve awarding of the bid contingent on receiving additional grant funds to cover the costs. Additional discussion of bridge projects and available funding.

Motion by Almekinder to award the contract to the low bidder with the contingency the County receives additional grant funding. Second by Ives. All aye, motion carried.

DISCUSS / APPROVE PRIVATE UTILITY ACCESS PERMITS & FEES

Nemec reminded the committee of the prior request from Charter Spectrum to utilize county forest land to place utility lines/equipment. At that time, the committee directed Nemec to develop a permit and fee for private utilities including a renewal fee structure. After further research, Nemec is proposing to eliminate the renewal fee structure and increase the initial fee. Current proposal to the committee is \$5,000 plus \$1/foot or \$500, whichever is greater.

Motion by Almekinder to send the current proposal to Charter Spectrum as see if they accept the terms. Second by Sorgel. All aye, motion carried.

REVIEW / APPROVE ORDINANCE AMENDMENT RESOLUTION

Nemec explained these ordinance amendments were approved at the last meeting; however, they were not presented in resolution form to take to County Board.

Motion by Ives to approve the resolution and forward to County Board as a consent agenda item. Second by Briggs. All aye, motion carried.

INVOICES PAID REPORT

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

Vouchers for the month totaled \$93,557.75 including \$78,543.46 for grant funded and/or reimbursed expenses. Large grant funded expenses include 2025-26 final snowmobile maintenance payments to the clubs and a repayment of grant funds to the WDNR for an ATV grant project that came in under budget. Operational expenses include \$5,438.97 for tree marking paint and \$3,534.00 for the annual USDA APHIS agreement.

Informational only.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW (BUDGET / ACTUAL REPORT)

The committee was provided a copy of the department’s February report. No concerns at this time.

Informational only.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/MEETINGS

- Next meeting – April 14, 2026
- Gobler Lake Rd & Kelly Fire Ln Abandonment Update
- Timber Sale Bids
- Forestry Director Performance Review
- WCFA Summer Tour
- Special Events Agreement - RNC
- Luber Lane Cell Tower Lease Proposal

ADJOURNMENT

With business completed, Chair Almekinder adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

ROBERT ALMEKINDER
COMMITTEE CHAIR

TANYA TISCHENDORF
COMMITTEE SECRETARY