

Boone County Conservation Board regular meeting
Monday, July 10, 2023
Boone County Courthouse 4th floor conference room

Members present: Jennifer Schieltz, Greg Stotts, Marilyn Jordan, Pat Hagan, Randy Johnson

Members absent:

Employees present: Ex. Dir. Katie Taylor, former park ranger (as of July 4) Blayne Sunstrom

Chair Jordan officially called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Stotts made a motion to approve the agenda, 2nd by Hagan. Motion passed.

Approval of minutes of the previous meeting was tabled until the next meeting, as they are not yet ready to approve.

Ex. Dir. Taylor presented the monthly bills totaling \$52,751.65. Now that it is a new fiscal year, bills for this month (July) include several large items that are being paid with the new fiscal year funds. With ranger Sunstrom's resignation and move to a job at the Boone County Sheriff's office, we had to pay out his vacation and comp time to the sheriff's office. This month also includes charges for rental of the 16 golf carts we maintain for the summer and for an additional 10 carts for the month of July to make up for some of the carts lost in the cart shed fire last month. We recently purchased a used zero-turn mower to mow the campgrounds. There are a few outstanding bills that have not come thru yet for this month. Motion made by Hagan to approve the bills, seconded by Stotts. Passed.

Old Business:

Don Williams clubhouse request for proposals (RFP) update: Ex. Dir. Taylor worked with county engineer Bullock to put together the RFP and decided that it needed to be sent to both contractors and firms. It was sent out June 23 and the due date for proposal submission is the end of this week, July 14, 2023. Once proposals are received they will be sent to the board for individual review and then a meeting date will be set to discuss.

Ex. Dir. Taylor gave an update on the Don Williams cart shed cleanup after the fire. We have requested that every person who had a cart in the shed give us a written release of their cart – either they chose to clean it up, their insurance removed it, or they are releasing it to us to clean up. The deadline for this is this Wednesday July 12. Once all releases are received, info will be sent to the auditor's office to issue refunds to those people. Ex. Dir. Taylor has still not gotten a response from the Iowa DNR about whether we need to do any asbestos testing or cleanup.

Ex. Dir. Taylor reports that our insurance company is uncertain whether they will reimburse us for lost revenue. This includes both the refunds we need to give for cart rental space and for the extra money we are spending to rent an additional 10 carts, which is costing \$3,000 a month. The board discussed how long we want to keep renting these 10 extra carts, perhaps through August but not for September. We also still do not yet have clarification on how much insurance will pay out to replace the shed.

Ex. Dir. Taylor discussed removal of hazard dead ash trees in Don Williams. Most are near the campground or playgrounds and need to be removed for safety. We got quotes from three different companies. D&J's complete tree service gave a quote for removal and chipping of the 6 hazard trees at \$1,000 per tree, or \$6,000 total, but he will reduce the price by half (\$3,000) as a donation to Boone County Conservation. Hagan made a motion, 2nd by Johnson to accept this quote and move forward with D&J's tree service.

New Business:

Bill Grieser gave a Friends of Don Williams update. They have submitted an application for a grant that would allow them to do repairs and construction of shelters on the golf course. They also have several contractors willing to be involved and donate time and expertise when they are ready to move forward.

The board noted the resignation of Blayne Sunstrom, park ranger since 2019, as he takes a new job with the Boone County Sheriff's office. The board thanked him for his service and looks forward to still having his collaboration in his new position. He is currently still residing in the Swede Pointe house and so the board discussed what date he needs to vacate that residence by. The board will keep in touch as he works on buying a house and we start the process of hiring a replacement. The board agreed to guarantee him 60 days in the house (until Sept 4), with a possible 30-day extension. The board is mindful that we may need the house for the new incoming ranger and want to make sure it is available to that person.

There will be an employee/board potluck event on Thursday, July 20 at 6pm in Don Williams campground B.

Ex. Dir. Taylor discussed possible seasonal cabin closures. We have learned over the last few years that the Don Williams cabins do not handle cold well; there have been several burst pipes and other issues. We generally do not get very many days of rentals in November and December anyway, so she proposes closing them to rentals for the winter on November 15. This would also give us time to figure out better winterizing or insulation options and possibly an employee renting cabin 3 for the whole winter. Cabins re-open April 1. The board approved of closing the cabins on November 15 this year.

Staff on call discussion: Ex. Dir. Taylor feels it is more important to have a maintenance on call plan than a law enforcement on call plan. Someone would go on call overnight each night, from 4:30pm until 6:30 or 7am, and be available to come in for emergency maintenance issues like shutting off the water. Ex. Dir. Taylor is working with HR to figure out the additional wage that will be paid for these on-call hours. We might need a budget amendment to cover this additional cost once it is finalized.

Other Board Discussion:

RAGBRAI is coming up, passing through Boone County July 25 and 26. Madrid and the High Trestle trail will feature prominently, so we are planning a law enforcement presence on the trail. We are coordinating with the county engineer to broom and blow off the trail on Monday.

Staff has now put a boat in the marina at Don Williams to aid in emergency response on the water when needed. Ranger Cooper Sanor has put together a list of items needed to make it law enforcement ready and will work on getting those things to outfit the boat.

Motion to adjourn by Schieltz, 2nd by Stotts. Passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:19 pm.

Marilyn Jordan, Chair

Jennifer Schieltz, Secretary