

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING
January 9, 2023
County Board Room**

Members Present: Jeffrey Silbert; Larry Fickbohm; Charly Ray; Steve Sandstrom

Staff in Attendance: Jason Bodine, Administrator; Cassie Taylor, Office Manager

Others in Attendance: Joseph Lebouton, WI DNR

1. Call to Order of Forestry and Parks Committee Meeting.

This meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM.

2. Public Comment: None.

3. Approval of the December 12th Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: (Fickbohm, Ray) Approve and place on file. All: Yes. Carried.

4. Monthly Reports.

- a) Forestry (all updates): Bodine presents 2022 total stumpage revenue just under \$4.68 million, making it the fourth best stumpage revenue year on record and the most since 2017. Net levy contribution of nearly \$3.2 million; surplus of nearly \$1.3 million above budgeted net contribution. Stumpage revenue will continue to be impossible to predict. A year end budget amendment (addressed later) will be required for payment to towns and grants received this year.
 - a. Carbon Project. Verification process is still ongoing with nothing new to report. Anticipating first payment in Q2 2023. High volumes mean credits might sell in fragments, and payments may come in multiple small distributions rather than one lump sum. Anew is advertising to local market (i.e. – Xcel) but credits aren't available for purchase yet.
 - b. FCOR. Bodine revised FCOR to align with Administrator's three-year CCOR vision. Draft of FCOR and CCOR were reviewed by Executive Committee in December.
 - c. Land Acquisition Project(s). Status of four current projects below:
 - a. East Eight Mile Lake. Roughly 1 acre. Completed in December.
 - b. Lost Creek. Roughly 160 acres, completed on December 16. Still have not received the Coastal grant but were given financial assurances to complete the project. Thank you to Landmark Conservancy for their assistance. Landmark will likely put together a press release package for this acquisition. Area is pine with old growth characteristics in a rugged ravine – department will explore potential for trail expansion.
 - c. Sand River. This 2,000-acre project is being held by TPL.
 - d. Town of Clover. Roughly 1,580-acre acquisition is still hinging on the final outcome of the Sand River project. Offer is valid through February 2023; funding may be resolved by end of February, but will need to extend closing into March. More time and approval from landowner, and Board's formal approval will be needed.
 - d. Encroachment in Town of Hughes. This item will be on the agenda during the next board meeting. If approved, the official withdrawal letter will be sent to the DNR. It has taken up to 2 months for the DNR to process.

- b) Campgrounds and Day Use Parks (update). Year-end camping revenue a little over \$144,500. Current campground manager contract runs through 2023 season and will be revisited next spring/summer.
- c) Trails and Recreation.
 - a. Motorized Trails: Recent heavy snow has wreaked havoc on snowmobile trails. Trails were officially opened December 23rd, though a few sections remained closed. Trail counters will be installed in major areas to get better use information.
 - b. Non-Motorized Trails: Bayfield Nordic will be assessing Siskiwit location regarding cross country grooming this month; may involve compensation for grooming. A goal this season is to build relationships with club members and familiarize department with winter trail maintenance.
 - c. Yurts. Current occupancy rates presented by Bodine.
 - d. Events. Mt. Ashwabay requested permission to host two previously approved events: fat bike race on Feb 11 and Summit cross country ski race on Feb 4. Little Bellas has also requested permission to host their mountain bike mentoring program in May-June 2023. All three events were approved previously.
- d) Delta Landfill Update. Nothing new to report. A short presentation of this project is being planned for the next board meeting.

MOTION: (Ray, Fickbohm) Receive reports as presented and place on file. All: Yes. Carried.

- 5. **Special Use Request. Across the Pond Veterans Park.** Asking to harvest small portion (appx. 500 yd³) of fill material currently located on south side of Highway 2, west of Iron River, to assist in developing two stormwater retention ponds. Discussion is had regarding the habitat type and proximity to barrens, but such a small area would not warrant reseeding in a particular way.

MOTION: (Sandstrom, Ray) Approve request at no charge, but with requirement to restore disturbed area upon completion. All: Yes. Carried.

- 6. **Resolution: 2022 Year-End Budget Amendment.** Two major items associated with amendment: 10% payment to towns and larger than estimated snowmobile supplemental payment. All expenses will be offset by increased revenue.

MOTION: (Ray, Sandstrom) Approve budget amendment resolution. All: Yes. Carried.

- 7. **2023 Annual Workplan.** Discussion is had regarding the evolving responsibilities and associated workloads of the Department. Harvest goals are coming down to the lowest in a decade; around 500 acres less than in 2022 and around 1,000 acres less than peak harvest. Carbon may drop this as well. A combination of lower-than-expected germination rates and higher-than-expected deer browse will result in a seedling protection program being reintroduced, likely involving bud-capping. County forest will need to be (re)inventoried, one compartment at a time. An increase in planning workloads is anticipated, and CFI plots will require more work contracted out. Other additional workloads including wildlife projects, prescribed burns, Siskiwit prairie restoration, barrens work, and carbon market planning. Bodine sees need for developing a harvest plan model to determine carbon impacts, volume impacts, and net return over “x” number of years. Future land acquisition projects are being considered and various recreation improvements and additions (i.e. – fourth yurt) are in the works. Silbert comments on the diversity of the work plan and recommends advancing the work plan to the full board for approval.

MOTION: (Silbert, Fickbohm) Receive workplan as presented and bring forward to County Board. All: Yes. Carried.

- 8. Resolution: Purchase of roughly 1,580 acres in the Town of Clover.** Final large land acquisition project of 2022 – contingent upon outcome of various grant applications for the Sand River project. Bodine recommends approval of purchase, contingent upon full available funding after the Sand River project has been finalized.

MOTION: (Sandstrom, Ray) Pre-approve resolution (including final budget numbers) to proceed to County Board. All: Yes. Carried.

- 9. Committee Members Discussion.** Silbert comments on an excellent, dynamic, and realistic workplan, and extends a thank you to employees of the department. Ray inquires whether DNR has any concern about carbon sequestration management and Joseph comments that Doug Brown and DNR attorneys have expressed no concerns; everyone is interested in how it will play out. Sandstrom responds to a statistic and requests that it is emphasized to the public: of around 175,000 acres of Bayfield County Forest, only around 4,000 acres are harvested for timber sales per year.

- 10. Joseph Lebouton:** No comments.

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting has been scheduled for **Monday, February 13th at 6:00 P.M.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 PM.

Submitted by,
Cassie Taylor