

FOREST, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Douglas County Board of Supervisors
Monday, February 24, 2020, 9:30 a.m., Forestry Headquarters
9182 East Hughes Avenue, Solon Springs, Wisconsin

Meeting called to order by Chair Liebaert.

ROLL CALL: Present- Mark Liebaert, Mary Lou Bergman, Joseph Moen, Nick Baker. Absent- Steve Long. Others present- Jon Harris, Craig Golembiewski, Clint Meyer, Chuck Stensland, Lance Wegner, Jim Latvala, Keb Guralski, Candy Holm Anderson, Jake Engelman, Gary Ball, John Johnson, Christopher Deegan, Tom Stewart, and Acting Secretary, Catherine Khalar.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Bergman, second Moen to approve the minutes from the December 30 2019, meeting. Motion carried.

Department Staffing Update and Staff Recognition (Agenda Item Moved): Retiring staff members recognized for years of service. Lance Wegner has been with the Forestry Department for 38+ years, retired February 3, 2020, and Chuck Stensland has been with the Department for 42+ years, to retire March 3, 2020. Liebaert presented Certificate of Recognition on behalf of the County Board.

Department Reports:

Budget: Anderson reviewed the budget for the time period ending December 31, 2019.

Forest Management Operations: Golembiewski reported 12 active sales; 3 hauling. Markets and harvesting remain good. Prospectus went out for the March auction with a total of 25 timber sales. Provided reforestation and regeneration activity updates. Recently hired 2 seasonal foresters.

Parks and Recreation: Meyer reported Cranberry Creek Dam removal bid opening held last week with 7 proposals submitted. Anna Gene Play Area project proposal closes March 13, 2020. Working on hiring full-time and seasonal staff; WDNR trail aids and dam removal grant applications, summer construction projects and winter trail updates.

SUSPEND THE RULES: Motion by Bergman, second Moen, to take up item 5(a). Motion carried.

2019 Annual Department Law Enforcement Report (Sheriff's Department): Engelman reported on 2019 law enforcement summary. Due to increased Sheriff's Department presence in the parks and forest during events, holidays, and busy weekends, a diminished number of issues resulted.

ACTION ITEMS/REFERRALS:

County Forest Land Exchange Request: Survey of county land ownership around Lake Minnesuing, including Lake Minnesuing County Park and boat launch, completed in 2019. Encroachments of maintained lawn and firewood areas identified along eastern boundary line of boat launch parcel. Cease and desist letter sent to adjacent landowner who operates a youth camp on the property (Wisconsin and Northern Michigan District Council Assembly of God).

John Johnson, partnering with the youth camp, requesting a land exchange with the county to acquire up to 10 acres of the current boat launch parcel for the purpose of youth camp expansion. Johnson offering 2 exchange options to the county, a 10 acre parcel in Wascott or an approximate 66 acre parcel in Hawthorne. No action recommended at this time, allowing more time to acquire additional information.

ACTION (REFERRAL): Motion by Liebaert, second Baker, to refer item to a future meeting. Motion carried.

County Forest Land Sale Exchange Request: Landowner not ready to bring proposal forward.

County Forest Land Real Estate Corrections: Survey of county land ownership around Lake Minnesuing, including Lake Minnesuing County Park and boat launch, completed in 2019. Survey of the county land ownership east of the lake identified three issues. Map included with agenda packet identifying issues #1, #2 and #3.

Granting of Easement Exchange: Issue #1: Two landowners currently using old Highway P as a driveway to access their property. When old Highway P was vacated it was no longer a public road right of way, adjacent landowners assumed equal ownership. Therefore, landowners have a long history of utilizing a portion of county ownership along this driveway to access their respective properties. Equally, the county has utilized a portion of these other ownerships to access its property. Due to long standing use by all involved parties, an access easement exchange between all parties is being recommended as best option for resolution.

ACTION (RESOLUTION): Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to grant access easement exchange amongst all involved parties, and forward to County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Transfer of Property: Issue #2: A small piece of land along the west side of Highway P was inadvertently created by an erroneous legal description in historical real estate records. Transferring ownership of this 0.06 acre parcel to the adjacent landowner utilizing a correction deed is being recommended as best option for resolution.

ACTION: Motion by Baker, second Moen, to approve transfer of the property to adjacent landowner. Motion carried.

Quiet Title Action: Issue #3: A small piece of land along the east side of Highway P was inadvertently excluded through an erroneous legal description in historical real estate records resulting in no current, true established landowner. A portion of this 0.37 acre parcel is currently being utilized by an adjacent landowner with a residential dwelling deck and maintained lawn area. Pursuing a quiet title action whereby the county would lay ownership claim to a 0.34 acre portion of this parcel and the adjacent landowner would lay ownership claim to the remaining 0.13 acre portion is being recommended as best option for resolution.

ACTION: Motion by Bergman, second Baker, to approve pursuing a quiet title action. Motion carried.

Town of Solon Springs Property:

Acquisition: An opportunity exists to acquire a 70 acre parcel, abutting county forest land off of County Road A in the Town of Solon Springs. Parcel is partially timbered and has town road

access. Requesting \$28,000 to purchase the parcel with up to an additional \$2,000 for closing costs and other related acquisition expenses for a total not to exceed \$30,000.

ACTION (RESOLUTION): Motion by Baker, second Moen, to approve acquisition of 70 acre parcel located in the Town of Solon Springs at an amount up to \$30,000, and forward to County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Release of Capital Reserve Funding (Land Acquisition): Release reserve funding in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 requested.

ACTION (REFERRAL/RESOLUTION): Motion Bergman, second Baker, to approve release of capital reserve funding (land acquisition) in an amount not to exceed \$30,000, and refer to Administration Committee and County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Application for County Forest Law Entry:

ACTION (RESOLUTION): Motion by Liebaert, second Moen, to approve application for regular use County Forest Law Entry, and forward to County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Emerald Ash Borer Research Proposal and Pesticide Ordinance #1.17 Exemption Request (USDA-APHIS): Application in meeting packet. USDA-APHIS-PPQ looking to do a research study at 11 different sites in the Douglas County Forest starting in 2020 testing pesticide use to save larger sized, reproductive black ash trees following EAB detection, allowing time for population expansion of biological control agents. Initial pesticide treatment would take place upon initial EAB detection and follow-up monitoring with possible additional treatments requested for up to a 10 year term.

ACTION: Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to approve the proposed research project and Pesticide Ordinance #1.17 exemption request from USDA-APHIS-PPQ as outlined above for a 10 year term. Motion carried.

2019 Budget:

Carryovers/Reserves: Harris reviewed.

ACTION (REFERRAL/RESOLUTION): Motion by Baker, second Moen, to approve carryovers/reserves as presented, and refer to Administration Committee and County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Year End Transfer of Excess Revenue to the General Fund: Harris reviewed.

ACTION (REFERRAL/RESOLUTION): Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to approve the transfer of \$720,000 to the General Fund, and refer to Administration Committee and County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

ACTION: Motion made by Bergman, second Liebaert to extend the meeting beyond the two hour time limit. Motion carried.

Release of Reserve Funding: Release of reserve funding requested.

ACTION (REFERRAL/RESOLUTION): Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to approve release of reserve funding as presented, and refer to Administration Committee and County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Land Acquisition Reserve Account Cap Increase Request: The land acquisition capital reserve cap is currently \$350,000, established in 2007. Requesting to increase cap to \$500,000, allowing the reserve room to grow for future land acquisitions or urgent projects.

ACTION (REFERRAL/RESOLUTION): Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to approve increasing the land acquisition reserve from \$350,000 to \$500,000, and refer to Administration Committee and County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/CORRESPONDENCE/UPDATES/REPORTS:

Upper St. Croix Forest Land Conservation Project Update: Everything is on track for a March 5th closing date.

2019 Wisconsin County Forest Certification Audit Correspondence: Letter of recognition from WDNR County Forest Specialist regarding Douglas County's extraordinary performance during the 2019 full recertification audit reviewed.

Extended Timber Sale Contracts Update: Contract list reviewed (correspondence to contractors in packet).

2019 Public Land Timber Sale Report: Reviewed. Figures based off state accounting principles. Douglas County ranked highest in state at \$5,782,425.90 in total sales value and highest in total volume harvested at 124,192 cord equivalents. The total sales value of \$5,782,425.90 is the highest figure ever achieved off the 29 county forest and 14 state forest properties.

2019 Timber Sale Revenue Record: Reviewed.

2019 Town Severance Payment Record: Reviewed. Severance and acreage share payments totaled \$539,844.66.

2020 Spring Logger's Discussion Forum: April 6, 9, or 14th are potential dates for event.

March 10, 2020, Timber Sale reminder: Reminder issued to attend the March 10, 2020, timber sale meeting starting at 6:00 p.m.

WDNR County Forest Liaison: Latvala reported working on timber sale field work and starting on recon projects for the county; advised fire season refresher to be held in the next few weeks with county forestry staff.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

Catherine Khalar, Acting Secretary