

FOREST, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Douglas County Board of Supervisors
Monday, February 28, 2022, 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, Nick Baker, Joseph Moen. Absent – Steve Long. Others present – Paul La Liberte, Jon Harris, Craig Golembiewski, Justin Holmes, Jake Engelman, Jim Latvala, Clint Meyer, Brian Torgerson, Candy Holm Anderson, Cheryl Westman, Committee Clerk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Bergman, second Moen, to approve the minutes from the December 20, 2021 meeting. Motion carried.

Department Reports:

Budget: Anderson reviewed the budget ending December 31, 2021.

Forest Management Operations: Golembiewski reported excellent winter for harvesting, and markets remain strong, with 11 sales actively harvesting and 3 hauling. All December 2018 sold straight county land sales should be completed shortly, advertising Highway Department Hawthorne shop sale soon. Timber sale auction is scheduled for next Tuesday, with 14 sales being offered, and 8 sales remain on the website ready for direct purchase. Reforestation: sending out bid packets soon for 2022 hand planting. Inventory Forester/GIS Specialist position to be filled shortly; and LTE Forester interviews completed, with offers going out to four candidates.

Parks and Recreation: Meyer reported campground advance reservation software goes live tomorrow, but sites are still available on a first come first serve basis, as long as they are not already reserved; Lucius Woods upper shower house and lower restroom projects will go out for bid soon; still looking for seasonal park applicants, extended opening until March 13th; trail season to remain open at least a few more weeks; and new geo-tech system ski trail groomer has been procured. Brian Torgerson, citizen, spoke on concerns about snowmobile trails being plowed by logging contractors when trails are used as timber sale access roads, making it hazardous for snowmobile riders, especially on trails in the Milchesky Road area. Harris advised that is a very active timber sale area this winter and impacts to the snowmobile trails were expected but not anticipated to be long-term. The lack of snowfall during December and January exacerbate the issue this winter. Weekly trail report notifications are made advising the public where logging activity is occurring on trails. Continued vigilance by loggers leaving some snow cover on trails and posting caution signage for snowmobiles suggested. Working together with a variety of uses in a working forest is a balancing act.

ACTION ITEMS/REFERRALS:

Request to Enter into Communication Tower Space Land Use Agreements with Douglas County Emergency Management: Agreements (three communication tower locations) were previously approved in 2015 by this committee and referred to Public Safety, but never officially approved or executed. Reaffirming first approval from 2015, adding Dave Sletten's name for Emergency Management General Services Director signature, with an adjusted ten year timeframe of 2022 to 2032, to formalize purpose and existence of towers as originally suggested.

ACTION (REFERRAL): Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to approve entering into Communication Tower Space Land-Use Agreements between Douglas County Forestry and Douglas County Emergency Management, and refer to Public Safety. Harris directed to send letter to Public Safety Committee denoting inherent value of offering land at no cost for placement of towers. Motion carried.

Resolution Concerning Wisconsin Wolf Population Goal to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Wolf Management Plan: WDNR in process of redrafting 1999 wolf management plan. Plan established a wolf population goal of 350 animals in the state, number has been surpassed. 2010 approved resolution #92-10 on

record supporting 350 animals or less. Requesting reaffirmed support by Douglas County for a wolf population goal of 350 animals or less.

ACTION (RESOLUTION): Motion by Bergman, second Baker, to approve resolution concerning wolf population goal to the WDNR and Wolf Management Plan, supporting population goal of 350 animals or less, and forward to County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Request to Increase Timber Sales Revenue Reserve Cap from Current Amount of \$1 Million Dollars (Declaration of Unassigned General Fund Prior Year Surplus Policy): Discussion about needing a larger reserve fund due to market volatility and future economic uncertainty. Suggestion to increase the current cap from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 maintaining the current 15% funding mechanism.

ACTION (REFERRAL/RESOLUTION): Motion by Liebaert, second Baker, to increase timber sales revenue reserve cap from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 maintaining the current 15% funding mechanism, and forward to Administration Committee and County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Request to Resolve Town of Summit Encroachment on County Forest Land: Map in packet identifying property in question in the Town of Summit. Request to authorize Liebaert and Harris to negotiate a settlement with landowner to include one or a combination of the following resolutions: land exchange, land sale, or removal of encroachment items from county land, possibly seeking county expense reimbursement for related work from landowner.

ACTION: Motion by Bergman, second Baker, to authorize Liebaert and Harris to negotiate a settlement with landowner to resolve encroachment. Motion carried.

2021 Budget:

Carryovers/Reserves: Harris reviewed - Land Acquisition corrected to \$171,519 for new total of \$1,334,284.

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.

Release of Reserve and Capital Reserve Funding: Harris reviewed list.

ACTION (REFERRAL/RESOLUTION): Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to approve release of reserve and capital reserve funding 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. Transfer amount corrected to \$100,000.

ACTION (REFERRAL/RESOLUTION): Motion by Bergman, second Moen, to approve the transfer of \$100,000 to the General Fund, and refer to Administration Committee and County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/CORRESPONDENCE/UPDATES/REPORTS:

2021 Summary for Forestry Department (Sheriff's Department): Engelman reported on 2021 law enforcement summary for county ordinance violations. Citations (32); total incidents (140) issued totaling citation revenue of \$6,238.80. Overall number of incidents significantly up from last year and seeing a trend of more forest related offenses on undeveloped forest lands.

Village of Solon Springs Railroad Road Crossing Reduction: Letter to village from Harris in packet advising of concerns if Marion Avenue is selected for closure. A public informational meeting is scheduled today at 6:00 p.m.

at the Solon Springs Community Center, and a public hearing is scheduled for March 16, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. for final recommendation.

Mooney Dam County Park Campground Expansion: Committee requested Mooney Dam County Park Campground Expansion be included in the 2022 Annual Work Plan during the December 2021 meeting. Intent was to explore the idea, no firm plans currently in place. Correspondence from Mooney Dam area landowners opposing expansion reviewed. Cover letter addressed to Moen distributed to committee members. Map in packet showing current campground and adjacent county owned lands. 13 sites at current campground. Cost of professional services to complete a full expansion design estimated at \$5,000. Department seeking next step direction from committee in regards to potential project. Committee would like to see some possible expansion options and related information.

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

Campground Campsite Advance Reservation Policy: Advanced online reservation system going live tomorrow; current policy in packet. Public notification will be posted on the department's website and Facebook page.

Forest Carbon Program: Harris has received project proposals from developers and signed non-disclosure agreements. If the county would like to move forward with a carbon project, next step is to compare and select one, looking into a third party consultant to assist with process. Liebaert, Harris and County Administrator are meeting later today to further discuss the topic and potential decision making process.

Active Timber Sale Contract Oak Wilt Policy: Of the three affected sales due to the December 2021 oak wilt policy: one forfeited back to the county and will be re-advertised with oak wilt restrictions, the other two are being kept by the logger at a 15% price reduction.

2021 Public Land Timber Sale Report: Reviewed. Figures based off WDNR reporting method (revenue is accrued when timber sales are closed out). Douglas County completed 56 timber sales with total revenue of \$5,431,097.02.

2021 Timber Sale Revenue Record: Reviewed. Figures based off county reporting method (revenue is accrued when payments are received). Total wood cut value was \$4,425,980.73.

Extended Timber Sale Contracts: Contract list reviewed.

2021 Town Severance and Acreage Share Payments Record: Reviewed. Severance and acreage payments totaled \$518,574.12.

March 8, 2022 Timber Sale Reminder: Reminder of March 8, 2022, timber sale meeting starting at 6:00 p.m. at Forestry headquarters.

Future Agenda Items: Mooney Dam Expansion, Forest Carbon Program.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Submitted by,

Cheryl Westman, Committee Clerk