

Benton County Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 8, 2024 at 5:30pm

Benton County Nature Center, 5718 20th Ave Drive, Vinton, IA

1. Call to Order 5:35PM
Members present: Samantha Hunter, Randy Scheel, Becky VanWey, Dan Hill, Mike LaGrange, Liaison Tracy Seeman
Staff present: Ed Hach, Camryn Grubic, Faith Hunt, Shelby Williams, Zach Parmater, Aaron Askelson
2. Guests or public participation (kept to a maximum of 3 minutes): Kelly Philo, Tammy Hatfield, Hayley Rippel, Dave Hinkle, Ray Lough, Joyce Beene, Eric Shares, Mrs. Warner, Rhonda Warner, Jeff Warner, Bonnie Hilton, Bruce Hatfield, Randy Smelser, Liz Smelser, Dennis Halligan, Terry McMurray, Virginia McMurray, John McMurray
 - a. Dave Hinkle - Donated BCCF \$1,000 in memory of his son, Wade Henkel to the Wildcat Addition.
 - b. Eric Schares, Roadside Manager, introduced himself and gave a brief background. Stated his work for the City of Waverly, what he's accomplished previously, and is happy to be with Benton County Conservation.
 - c. Halligan family - Kelly Philo spoke on Halligan family reunion held at Minnie Estema since 1968. It was stated that the family have always broke rules and has never been good at following them, family has helped fix the park, revenue generated from their reunion doesn't equate to amenities of other parks, brings people from all over the world to the park. The family loves it and it is a tradition and would like their tradition to continue in this area, they like the centralized location the park offers. Two years ago, 289 people attended the reunion at the park. The reunion falls on the week between 3rd-4th weekend of July only. Hach discussed potential resolutions, Board said they will consider all this information in deciding how to move forward.
3. Consent Agenda (previous minutes and reports):
 - a. Hill made a motion to amend agenda - Move #5b New Business to open bids to the end of the meeting. Scheel second. All aye, motion passed.
 - b. Hill made a motion to amend agenda 6a One Acre Plots/Quit Claim Jackson Township Property to the beginning of the meeting. VanWey second. All Aye, motion passed.
 - c. Hill made a motion to amend agenda item Garrison Paha - Wildlife Habitat Stamp and put back on the agenda. VanWey second. All aye, motion passed.
 - d. Conservation expenditures and revenues
 - e. IRM expenditures and revenues
 - f. Tabled Items:
 - i. Winegar Equestrian Volunteers
 - ii. Animal Shelter/Old VFW Post
 - iii. Conservation Easements

iv. Atkins Roundhouse Lease

Hill made a motion to approve all changes and consent agenda, revenues and expenditures. Hunter second. All aye, motion passed.

a. One Acre Plots

- i. Quit Claim Jackson Township - Lough updated the Board on findings in the abstract on property ownership. Hill made a motion to approve the signing of the Quit Claim deed to Wayson Family Farms LLC from Benton County Conservation. Scheel second. All aye, motion passed.
- ii. Animal Shelter - Lough stated James Edmond gave Taylor Township the right to use the property, with the revision that the property reverts back to Edmonds. In the 1940s the school stopped usage, reverted to Ida Edmonds as owner. Ida Quit Claimed it to Benton County with the agreement for animal use. Code 614.24 states that the revision has to be renewed every 24 years. Lough suggests we file an affidavit to make sure it is Benton County's and discussed options moving forward.
- iii. Eden Township - Lough stated there's currently no abstract to breakdown ownership. Discussion on how to proceed. Lough will help Williams Quit Claim it. Seeman suggests that the property be Quit Claimed and asks for objections.
- iv. Big Grove – Can't find documentation on ownership. It is fenced. Beacon says it's adjoining landowners. Take property signs down and let neighbors know it is theirs.

2. Organizations

- a. Wildcat Disc Golf Volunteers (October)
 - i. Schedule and permit update – we have the full summer schedule for the tournaments.
- b. TriCounty Snowmobile Association (April) - TriCounty is content from the current MOU. Vinton and Mt Auburn boat ramps no longer need to be specified in MOU. Just make sure it stays clear they will not go on equine trails. Scheel made a motion to approve MOU, VanWay second, all aye, motion passed.
- c. Foundation – Next meeting: Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at Nature Center at 6:00pm. Iowa River apparel is selling shirts for Hannen Lake Park, the shirts come out on April 21st. Rough drafts on Wildcat Bluff shirts are being reviewed. Hill suggested someone from the Foundation attend the private Hannen Lake Park luncheon to promote the Foundation.
- d. OCNT Committee – Next meeting: April 15th, 2024



- i. Recent events - Private landowner had a fire getaway on along the trail, there was no damage. Staff is working with landowners on beaver dams and trespassing issues.
- e. REAP Committee – Next Meeting: Thursday, May 2nd, 2024 in the afternoon. Invites go out soon. Open to county and cities.

3. New Business

- a. Events and Permitting - no updates.
- b. 5:45pm: Water Distribution System Improvements Bids – moved to end of meeting.
- c. ARPA Shower House Bids
 - i. Special Meeting - Tentative April 24 - Williams has requested a special meeting on 5PM on Monday, April 29th, to have bid packets ready May BCCB. Hill made a motion to send out bids publicly as Williams designated. Hunter second. All aye, motion passed.
- d. Mission Statement - Verbiage changes to mission statement. VanWey made a motion to approve the mission statement. Scheel Second. All aye, motion passed.
- e. Roadside Management Positions
 - i. Manager Position - Eric met with Ben Bonar to discuss the role and Eric is on the BOS agenda to be appointed as a Weed Commissioner.
 - ii. Technician Positions - Has two positions and is able to advertise now. He can decide responsibilities and pay as long as his budget allows. Positions will be open for 10 days.
- f. Conservation Positions - Rough drafts need to be converted into the new county format for job postings. Budget signing is upcoming. Ideally, we would be able to move forward with these positions and post them after HR approval.
 - i. Conservation Technician – Waiting on budget approval
 - ii. Office Coordinator - Waiting on budget approval
 - iii. Law Enforcement Coordinator - Waiting on budget approval
 - iv. PT Operations - Need to make a posting and description.
- g. Poweshiek Water – Water Conservation - Conserve water initiative for Hannen Lake.
- h. Cabin Rental
 - i. Agreements and layout - Cabin Rental Agreement for the general public. After receiving guidance, keep rental payments simple.
 - ii. Orders - Furnishing and purchasing new cabin items will cost \$6,000 plus. Working to have rental available end of May.
- i. Budget Updates - Updates on IRM budget. IRM is to manage ditches, 911 towers, all guard rails, plowing at the sheriff's office, all county sheds.

4. Old Business

- a. City of Atkins – Atkins Roundhouse



- i. Canopy Grant - Environmental Review has been filed, waiting on public comment for the review. Potentially by May, we will have funding and can move forward with bids and partnership with the City during the process.
 - b. Wildcat Bluff Recreation Area
 - i. Addition Funding/Outreach - Had another \$10,000 donation come in. Currently we have raised \$766,965 (match included), \$23,085 of matches have come in. Looking for roughly \$436,000. Still seeking more businesses to contribute. Hunter suggested making flyers to hand out.
 - c. Wells
 - i. Iowa Flood Center Hydrostation - Proposed drilling a sampling well at the end of week at Rodgers Park.
 - d. Winegar Tobin Wildlife Area
 - i. Easement - Draft of easement for 33 feet wide with corner markers for future. Easement is the current road. Remains the same and covers vegetation on each side.
5. Environmental Education
 - a. NAI in Council Bluffs conference. Naturalists received scholarships for \$250. Field Trips all through May
 - b. Hunt talked about info kayak, Rentfun, suggested the 4-kayak dock, it's been successful in other counties so far. It's a big buy in, need service like this in the county and we'd like to offer it.
6. Law Enforcement
 - a. CCPOA Spring Conference RECAP - It was a successful workshop at Hannen Lake Park. A total of 51 CCPOA members attended from across the state.
 - b. State CCPOA notes - County conservation law enforcement is under enquiry and the state is trying to change IPERS for park rangers.
7. Director Updates
 - a. Board of Supervisors meetings tomorrow for a security meeting approval and IRM Weed Commissioner. Looking to get uniform first aid kit for all buildings and go bags for all staff.
8. Set next meeting – Shower House Bid Meeting, Monday, April 29, 2024 at 5:00 pm at the Nature Center
9. Set next regular meeting Monday, May 13, 2024 at 5:30 pm, Benton County Nature Center
10. Adjourn: 7:50pm Scheel made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Hunter second, all aye.
11. LaGrange called meeting to order at 7:51pm

12. Paha Grant - VanWey made a motion to sign Paha Wildlife Habitat Grant contract with the state, Hill second. All aye, motion passed.
13. Water Distribution System Improvements Bids - Board opened bids for Water Distribution System Improvements. Hill made a motion for BCC to review this and send summary for Board to vote electronically. Scheel second. All aye, motion passed.
 - a. Vote was concluded April 11, 2024 via email in favor of Schminke Excavating to receive the Water Distribution System Improvements Project.
14. Adjourn. 7:59 Scheel made a motion to adjourn, VanWey second. All aye, motion passed.

Minutes Submitted by: Faith Hunt

Approved

Date