

Wapello County Conservation Board
Regular Meeting Notice
Monday, March 13th, 2023
5:30 PM Meeting
Pioneer Ridge Nature Center (1339 HWY 63, Bloomfield)

Call to Order:

Beth Doggett called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Roll Call:

Beth Doggett, Jeff Layton, Marsha Parker (zoom), John Henschied, and Aaron Ruff

Staff Present:

Rick Tebbs, Paul Totten, Mike McCall, Sara Runyan, Amanda Jones, Rachel Godby, and Austin Roe

Approval of Agenda:

Jeff moved to approve the meeting agenda, Aaron seconded, the agenda was approved.

Approval of Previous Monthly Meeting Minutes:

Jeff moved to approve the previous monthly meeting minutes, John seconded, the minutes were approved.

Guests:

None

Claims:

- WCCB claims for the month of February were submitted for approval.

Marsha questioned the four months' worth of payments for retiree health insurance. Rick explained that it was the last four months of Retiree Insurance due to pay out and after that the payments will be complete. Aaron moved to approve the claims, Jeff seconded, the claims were approved.

- The American Gothic House Center claims for the month of February were submitted for approval.

Jeff moved to approve the claims, Aaron seconded, the claims were approved.

Old Business:

- **Office Space for Naturalist**

The board received a price list for supplies needed to complete the naturalist office in the nature center. Sara then went through and explained the items needed and cost of the project. Discussion was then had about furnishing the office. Sara explained that most things they already have at the nature center, excluding the shelves which were included in the quote. Staff then discussed this office option versus the original office plan for the foyer. Overall the cost of this project will cost less and be less invasive. This new office space would also be able to accommodate a larger staff in the future. Sara explained that the displays that are currently in the future office space would be reworked into the main floor area. There is also room in the budget next year for new displays. Aaron moved to proceed with the new office plan including the shelving and hiring of an electrician, Jeff seconded, the motion was approved.

- **Saturday PRNC Summer Schedule**

Discussion continued over the possibility of staff working Saturdays during the summer to have the Nature Center Open. Board and staff discussed hours and work to be done on Saturdays. Hours could be 10-2 with programming or special attractions. The board would like to see a sample schedule of the Saturdays. Rick

instructed staff to send a mockup of Saturdays to Amanda and she could compile a sample schedule. The topic was tabled until next meeting.

- **Wetland Banking at Ajinomoto**

Rick attended a meeting at Ajinomoto to discuss the wetland banking. Ajinomoto would like WCC to monitor their wetland banking to make sure that all needs are being met, but the property would not be open to the public. Rick asked the board if they would like to charge for this service. He spoke to a company that does hired monitoring. They recommended charging \$25k a year at least for the service. The board asked if Monroe County was interested in this project, but Rick has not heard anything from their director after the meeting. Rick stated he will continue to keep the board up to date on this project, and no motion was needed at this time.

- **American Gothic House Center Grant**

Rick informed the board that the American Gothic House was not awarded the grant with Destination Iowa. Cari is still pursuing other revenues to fund the project.

- **Lake at Pioneer Ridge Nature Area**

The engineer study quote for the lake came in at \$24k for phase one and two. Discussion was had concerning the location of the lake and the mitigation match for removed forest. Rick explained that all of that would be covered in the engineer study as we move forward. No motion was needed at this time.

New Business:

- **Cabin Rental Special**

Amanda informed the board that she would like to run a special for cabins. The special would be if they purchased Friday and Saturday night they would get Sunday for free. She hopes this will increase renters for the slow months. The board that it was a good idea and encouraged it. No motion was needed at this time.

- **Boy Scout Trail**

Rick was approached by the Boy Scouts to take over their part of the Wapello Trail. Rick asked them to send and agreement about the donation, but has not received anything yet. Discussion was had over who would be allowed to use the trail and if the Wapello County Trails Committee would help. Rick said no more information was needed before any decision was made, and will keep the board up to date. No motion was needed at this time.

American Gothic Board Updates

None.

Staff Reports and Comments:

Rick informed the board that he was approached by the gentlemen that rent the silos at Eddyville about purchasing a motor in the horse barn at the Eddyville Sand Prairie. Discussion was had over the motor and who owned it. Rick will have another discussion with the renters and let the board know what was decided.

Rick received word from the insurance adjusters that they are looking into the skid steer fire again and will be giving a new adjustment. Most likely they will be paying now.

Rick informed the board that interviews to fill the roadside biologist position begin this week.

Conservation Board Comments:

Jeff had questions about new legislature and the forest reserve. Rick then discussed that state code is soon changing and there are things on the horizon for new administrative rules.

Beth asked for an update on the trust fund, and Rick informed her that it will hopefully be discussed again at the next supervisors meeting.

Adjournment:

Aaron moved to adjourn the meeting, Jeff seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 PM.