

Wapello County Conservation Board
Regular Meeting Notice
Monday, June 12th, 2023
5:30 PM Meeting
Pioneer Ridge Nature Center (1339 HWY 63, Bloomfield)

Call to Order:

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

Roll Call:

Beth Doggett, Jeff Layton (Zoom), Marsha Parker, and Aaron Ruff **Absent**- John Henscheid

Staff Present:

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

Approval of Agenda:

Marsha moved to approve the agenda, Aaron seconded, the agenda was approved.

Approval of Previous Monthly Meeting Minutes:

Marsha moved to approve the previous monthly meeting minutes, Aaron seconded, the minutes were approved.

Guests:

None

Claims:

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

Aaron moved to approve the WCCB claims for the month of May, Marsha seconded, the claims were approved.

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

Marsha moved to approve the American Gothic House Center claims for the month of May, Aaron seconded, the claims were approved.

Old Business:

- **Kirkville Property Parking lot**

Rick informed the board there is no update on the Kirkville Property parking lot, but he is continuing to work on it.

- **Garrison Rock Property**

The property bordering the Garrison Rock property was last appraised in 2019 for \$68k. The supervisors expressed interest in purchasing the property. Rick contacted the land owner who offered to sell the property at the 2019 appraisal rate if he was allowed to farm 8 acres of the property for \$1 an acre for 10 years. Rick was able to find out that assessments in Wapello County have increased between 34-47% since 2019.

The board reviewed the property map and discussed the plan for the property in the future. After discussion the board determined that they would like to buy the property outright, but would agree to the land owners terms if that is the route the supervisors would like to take. Rick confirmed the county attorney or private lawyer would draw up the agreement.

Marsha moved to approve the purchase of the additional property bordering Garrison Rock with buying the property outright being preferred, but allow for the current owner to farm the designated 8 acres for 10 years if the supervisors would like to take that route, Aaron seconded, approved.

- **Parks rules and regulations**

The board received an update on the rules and regulations the staff has been working on for the Pioneer Ridge Nature Area. They were given a revised version. Aaron moved to table this discussion to allow for public input, Marsha seconded, the discussion was tabled.

Rick informed the board that a gentleman questioned if he would be able to ride an electric bike on the trails and the board reiterated that motorized vehicles are not prohibited on trails.

New Business:

- **Air conditioning for the Pioneer Ridge Nature Center**

Rick updated the board on the air conditioning at the nature center. One of the two air conditioners for the building broke the week prior. They have had five contractors out to place bids for replacing the air conditioning units as well as heating and cooling the main area of the nature center. Some contractors have expressed concern that the current loop for the geothermal units would not support a third unit to heat and cool the main area of the nature center and recommended forced air instead.

The board will wait for more bids, but would like to remain as conservation minded as possible and even explore the opportunity for solar power.

- **Annual conference**

Rick gave the board information about the upcoming annual conference. They will let him know if they are interested in going.

- **Wetland at DeVol**

NRCS spoke with the board of supervisors about wetland work at DeVol. They later were informed that they needed to speak with the Wapello County Conservation Board. After further research they found that the wetland project was not needed.

- **Hiring of Kaylea Hopkins**

Rick proposed Kaylea Hopkins as the new hire for the American Gothic House Center staff. Aaron moved to approve the hire of Kaylea Hopkins, Marsha seconded, the motion was approved.

- **Hiring of Ron Umlauf**

Rick proposed Ron Umlauf as the new hire for the Summer Conservation Aid. Aaron moved to approve the hire of Ron Umlauf, Marsha seconded, the motion was approved.

- **Diesel tank bill**

The diesel tank was ordered two weeks ago, but has not arrived yet. The bill will most likely be paid in the next budget year.

- **Concrete bill**

The bill for the concrete work at Pioneer Ridge Nature Area came in at \$9,999. The board and staff discussed the work that was done. Aaron moved to approve and pay the bill for the concrete work, Marsha seconded, the motion was approved.

- **Fishing tournament**

Rick informed the board that Sara was working the fishing tournament at the fair this weekend. Sara encouraged the board member to attend.

- **End of year spending**

Rick disbursed a list of items the field staff would like to purchase before the end of the budget year. Rick requested approval to purchase items needed that fit within the projected budget left for the end of the year.

Marsha asked for an update on replacing the doors and windows in the Pioneer Ridge Nature Center. Rick said that the company contacted for a bid has not been back to the nature center and has not given him a bid.

Aaron moved to approve the end of year spending for items within the budget with the director's discretion, Marsha seconded, the motion was approved.

American Gothic Board Updates

None.

Staff Reports and Comments:

Rick updated the board that we are receiving bids from cleaning companies to clean the Pioneer Ridge Nature Center and cabins once a week.

District meeting is June 15th.

Marsha asked about the carpenter bee traps being built for the outside of the cabins. Staff discussed the building process and what they are being used for.

Marsha asked how Saturdays were going at the nature center. Austin reported that he had 30 visitors and two built bluebird boxes. Sara requested that the staff or board member keeping the nature center open keep visitor numbers and keep the animal room door closed if they cannot directly be supervising the visitors in the room.

Marsha asked for an update on the naturalist office. The dry wall is up, but the room needs to be painted and have doors framed. It does not currently have any air-conditioning so ideally that would be fixed before they move into the office.

Conservation Board Comments:

Marsha asked for a date to reschedule the director evaluation. Marsha will discuss with other board members and reschedule.

The evaluation will be held at Gateway high school.

Adjournment:

Marsha moved to adjourn the meeting, Aaron seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 6:32PM.