

Forestry and Recreation Committee

June 8, 2017

8:30 a.m.

Members Present: Chairman Ronald Nye, Donald Scupien, Sam Hardin, Duff Leaver, and David Solin

Members Absent: Joe Novak

Others Present: Erik Rantala, Joe Jopek, and Terry Poltrock

Location: Conference Room, Forestry Office, Fairgrounds, Antigo

1. Call to Order – Chairman Nye called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Minutes - A motion was made by Scupien, seconded by Leaver, to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2017 meeting. All ayes. Motion carried.
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items and Consideration of Requests for Items to be Added to Future Meeting Agendas – Joe Jopek stated that he and Nathan Gilbert met on Wednesday to look at the reroute of the Ice Age Trail due to the ATV trail location.
4. Discuss Request for Memorial Bench at Moose Lake Park – Rantala informed the committee that he was contacted by a gentleman last week regarding a request to put a picnic table or bench at Moose Lake Park in honor of his wife, who had passed away and who was very active in the Friends of Moose Lake Association. After discussion, motion by Scupien, seconded by Solin to approve the memorial bench at Moose Lake Park. All ayes. Motion carried.

The committee requested that Rantala, in conjunction with the corporation counsel, draft a policy for future memorial requests on county property and present to the Executive Committee for approval.

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5. Discuss Governor Walker’s Budget Proposal to Eliminate the Forestry Mill Tax – Rantala stated that the Governor’s budget calls for the elimination of the forestry mill tax. This was a segregated forestry account, now it will be funded through General Purpose Revenue. With this proposal, this will be fully funded in the ’17-’19 biennium. The Wisconsin County Forests Association is looking for another source of funding for this revenue. The Great Lakes Timber Producers Association has come out in opposition to this proposal. Joe Jopek mentioned that he believed that the forestry mill tax is covered under the State Constitution so there would need to be a constitutional amendment in order to eliminate the forestry mill tax. Rantala shared some resolutions from other counties in opposition to eliminating the forestry mill tax. Motion by Scupien, seconded by Solin to forward a resolution to county board similar to the Washburn County resolution in opposition to eliminating the forestry mill tax, but to check with the corporation counsel in regard to incorporating language from the State Constitution in regard to the forestry mill tax. All ayes. Motion carried.
6. Discuss Road Damage on County Forest – Rantala shared with the committee photos of damage to the county forest mainly caused by pick-ups. Due to the fact that our budget cannot fund maintaining all roads, Rantala suggested doing an access study of all roads in order to decide which roads should be maintained and which roads to limit motorized access to protect the integrity of the road. Information only.
7. DNR Liaison Report – Rantala informed the committee that Josh Waukau, DNR liaison, will be leaving his position as liaison with the Antigo Ranger Station on June 26, 2017.
8. Administrator Report – Rantala reported that some logging activity is starting on the County Forest, but it is really slow compared to previous years. Six sales are going with more expected to start this summer. He met with DNR water regs and representatives with mountain bike club to look at wetland issues. DNR and I were satisfied that no wetlands will be impacted, and they will be issuing permit to allow construction. They hope to start work on June 12. Nathan Gilbert met with Ice Age Trail to look at reroute due to ATV trail location. The veterans’ discount at Veteran’s Memorial Park has been really well received and appreciated. Many are using this discount with positive feedback. Michelle’s Lodge is under construction. Elcho School District finished up last week. They were able to get further along than they thought due to being able to build on site and how close it is to the school. Electric is in and project is going well. Assembly Bill 338 introduced into Assembly. This bill would allow the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands to sell their lands to the State, which the State would be required to use Stewardship dollars for the purchase of said BCPL lands. The counties could elect to manage these lands consistent with other county lands and keep timber sale revenue. Initial sale of properties would fund scholarships for college students.
9. Review Budget Summary - Rantala reviewed with the committee the budget summary report of the forestry department revenues and expenditures through May 31, 2017.

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10. Closed Session – At approximately 9:15 a.m., consider moving into closed session pursuant to Section 19.85 (1)(e), Wisconsin Statutes, deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons required a closed session, to discuss land for sale. Motion by Hardin, seconded by Leaver to go into closed session at 9:30 a.m. Roll call vote: Leaver – aye, Hardin – aye, Solin – aye, Scupien – aye, and Nye - aye. Motion carried.

11. Open Session – Motion by Solin, seconded by Hardin to return to open session at 10:05 a.m. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Solin, seconded by Nye to authorize Rantala to proceed as directed in closed session. All ayes. Motion carried.

12. Set Next Meeting Date - The next meeting will be scheduled for Thursday, July 13, 2017, at 8:30 a.m., in the forestry office conference room, Fairgrounds, Antigo.

13. Adjournment – Motion by Hardin, seconded by Scupien to adjourn at 10:01 a.m. All ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Poltrock
Recording Secretary