

Members present: John Burke, Mark Chickering, Susan Haug, Paul Klocko, Greg Klos, Dale Heil, Ryan Schleifer, Marcell Wieloch

Excused: Mike Lane, Gary Weiland

Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Rec, and Forestry Department staff present: Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley-Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director

Future member present: Susan Stomieroski

Others present: Pat Peckham

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Wieloch.

I. Minutes

Motion by Burke to approve the September 19, 2018 minutes. Motion **carried**.

III. New Business

A. Discussion on Equestrian Vacancy and Other Interest Group Possibilities

Lovlien introduced Susan Stomieroski as the future equestrian representative. Forestry/Recreation Committee will consider her appointment at their February 2019 meeting. Members introduced themselves and the groups they represent.

B. 2019 County Forest and Wildlife Work Plans

Lovlien said the County Board approved the Work plan for 2019. This is a statutory requirement because the County is in partnership with the State and it allows the County to receive numerous grants and loans. Lovlien gave highlights on upcoming work including timber management, invasive species management, road, trail and construction maintenance, conservation aids projects, land acquisitions, GIS work, professional development and administrative work which will include beginning to draft the 2021 – 2035 County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Questions were answered.

C. 2018 County Conservation Aids Project

Lovlien said each year the County receives \$4,314 from the State matched with County funds of the same to do fish and wildlife habitat work in the County. This year asphalt and boat launch planks will be replaced at the DC Everest Park boat landing. The DNR has approved the project. The County will be working on this project next summer or fall of 2019.

D. 2018 Fall Timber bid Opening and Summary

Lovlien said at the first bid opening only two sales out of seven were sold. The remaining sales were re-advertised and two bids came in that fell below the appraised value of the sales. The DNR allowed the sales to be sold below their appraised value. Six of the seven sales were sold for \$222,496.55 and the appraised value was \$288,901.50. Markets and weather has caused a downturn and it will improve when the industry needs wood.

E. Park Foundation Land Donation to Marathon County

Polley said the Park Foundation has donated 80 wooded acres to the County. County Board has accepted the donation which is in the Town of Easton north of Highway Z. A timber sale has been completed on half of the property but there were some challenges accessing land for the rest of the sale because of the river. The Foundation is reestablishing themselves as a 501c3 and shouldn't have assets such as land. This land will be enrolled into County Forest Special Use. In the long term the idea is to develop it with trails and a parking lot. Questions were answered.

F. Potential Land Acquisitions in the Town of Hewitt

Lovlien said he was approached about two properties. The Kerswill property abuts County forest land on two sides and Langlade County forest on the north. This property has 200 acres of fully wooded land with harvestable timber. The County Board has approved applying for a Knowles Nelson grant and contracting for appraisals. The second is owned by Ceres timber and is just across the road from County forest land. This property is 120 acres and has 80 acres of harvestable timber. Lovlien will be working on these acquisitions during the next several months.

G. 2019 Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Budget

An overview of the budget was previously distributed. There was a slight decrease in the Snowmobile Coordinator budget because more money could be charged to grants which means less levy. There was an increase of five percent in the total

it is something they can proceed with. They will then need to receive approvals and move forward with fundraising. Lovlien said it is a big project that would need support from the Department, numerous Committee's and County Board. Discussion followed regarding water storage, usage, power, etc. Maintenance and other uses affected during snowmaking will also need discussion. Lovlien said members will be kept apprised.

C. Update on the Process to Delist Wolves

B. Lovlien said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to delist wolves. Litigation continues on this issue. Delisting the wolf would allow management to return to the State level. Currently there is nothing the State can do with problem wolves causing depredation of animals.

D. 2018 Deer Season Harvest and Activity Levels on County Forest

Lovlien said the deer harvest was up seven percent over 2017. The DNR wildlife biologist will have more information once the bow hunting season is over in January. Then the County Deer Advisory Council (CDAC) will meet and set the harvest quotas for next year. The activity levels on County forests were similar to previous years even though license sales were down slightly.

E. E-Bike Discussion and Demonstration on Different Classes of Electric Assist Bikes

Polley reported that the Marathon County Pedestrian/Bike Committee had given a presentation about electric assist bikes to the Park Commission and the Forestry/Recreation Committee. Currently they are not allowed in the parks or forests. More people are using them and eventually there will be a request for the County to allow them. It will be up to the elected officials to decide if they want to add this use. Committee members would like to study the research and the pros and cons of the bikes. One question is how to regulate them. There are a lot of different classes of electric assist bikes and currently Class I is allowed on the Mountain Bay Trail.

IV. Tentative Meeting Dates – March 13, June 5, September 18 and December 18, 2019 at 6:00 pm.

V. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Burke. Motion **carried**. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Thomas Lovlien
Secretary