

FOREST, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Douglas County Board of Supervisors
Monday, February 27, 2023, 9:33 a.m., Forestry Headquarters
9182 East Hughes Avenue, Solon Springs, Wisconsin

Meeting called to order by Chair Liebaert.

ROLL CALL: Present – Mark Liebaert, Joseph Moen, Steve Long. Absent – Mary Lou Bergman, Nick Baker. Others present – Colton Erikson, Bill Whiteside, Craig Golembiewski, Sarah Kendall, Jim Latvala, Matt Izzard, Jake Engelman, Jon Harris, Greg Kessler, Cheryl Westman, Committee Clerk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Long, second Moen, to approve the minutes from the December 19, 2022, meeting. Motion carried.

Department Reports:

Budget: Whiteside reviewed the budget ending December 31, 2022.

Forest Management Operations: Golembiewski reported 12 sales actively harvesting, and 3 additional hauling - challenging winter due to weather conditions. Reforestation – hand planting bid packets sent out. First EAB salvage pre-planting being planned; WDNR nursery reporting seed shortage, with only 1 year inventory on some species. Four interviews held for two open LTE Forester positions.

Parks and Recreation: Meyer reported trail clean-up from mid-December storm completed early February, costing clubs \$90,000; busy rec trail project year planned for 2023 totaling \$1.3 million in state grant funding, working on 2024 rec trail grants. Winter trail reroute request from Get-er-Done Club from last meeting completed; seasonal park worker positions posted.

ACTION ITEMS/REFERRALS:

Memorandum of Agreement for Forest Management Services (Douglas County Land and Development Committee): Agreement term has expired: perpetual renewal suggested.

ACTION (REFERRAL): Motion by Long, second Liebaert, to continue Memorandum of Agreement for Forest Management Services agreement until unnecessary, or until either party opts out, and refer to Land and Development Committee. Motion carried.

Snow Loading Damage Aerial Imagery Acquisition Funding Request: Map in meeting packet highlights proposed imagery capture area. December 14, 2022 winter storm caused wide scale snow loading tree damage to many forested stands, with west and southwest areas of county getting hit the hardest. Imagery would serve the purpose as a crucial tool used to detect damaged stands, facilitating salvage response planning. High resolution imagery capture to occur spring 2023 after snow melt and before leaf-out at a cost of approximately \$45,000; grants and/or ARPA funds will be explored.

ACTION (REFERRAL/RESOLUTION): Motion by Liebaert, second Long, to approve up to \$45,000 for aerial imagery acquisition funding, utilization of ARPA funding if necessary, and forward to Administration Committee and County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

WDNR Sustainable Forestry Grant Application: Harris to apply for up to \$45,000 in grant monies for aerial imagery acquisition to detect snow loading tree damage resulting from the December 14, 2022 winter storm.

ACTION: Motion by Long, second Moen, to approve WDNR sustainable forestry grant application up to \$45,000 for aerial imagery acquisition funding. Motion carried.

2022 Budget:

Carryovers/Reserves: Whiteside and Harris provided overview of summary sheets.

Release of Reserve and Capital Reserve Funding: Included with agenda.

Year-end Transfer of Excess Revenue to the General Fund: Zero dollars to be transferred. First time in many years that there will not be a transfer from Forestry due to stagnant timber prices.

ACTION (REFERRAL/RESOLUTION): Motion by Liebaert, second Moen, to approve carryovers/reserves and release of capital reserve funding as presented, and forward to Administration Committee and County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Recreational Vehicle (ATV/UTV) Operation in County Park Policy: Draft policy distributed. Harris requesting direction from committee on what day use parks and/or campgrounds to include for the upcoming 2023 season. New policy would be reviewed at end of the season and would remain in effect unless changed by committee. Implementation would require public education and Ordinance #7.2 updates.

ACTION: Motion by Long, second Moen, to approve recreational vehicle (ATV/UTV) operation in county park policy, to include all day use parks and campgrounds managed by the Forestry Department, and direct Harris to update Ordinance #7.2 and bring back to committee. Motion carried.

Department Access Easement Acquisition Policy: Draft policy in packet. Departmental access easement acquisition policy proposed to aid in efficiency and expediency for access easement acquisitions granting the Director of Forestry and Natural Resources authority to act in the best interests of Douglas County and acquire access easements.

ACTION: Motion by Liebaert, second Long, to approve department access easement acquisition policy as presented. Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/CORRESPONDENCE/UPDATES/REPORTS:

2022 Annual Department Law Enforcement Report (Sheriff's Department): Summary report of citations issued in meeting packet – total of 128 with revenue of \$17,230.00. Jake Engelman provided overview of activities from 2022.

Wildlife Update Report (WDNR Wildlife Biologist): Kessler distributed handouts and map of 2022 completed and 2023 planned DCWA prescribed burns. DCWA brush mowing to be done in the spring of 2023; DCWA horse trail had 12 areas of repair renovated fall of 2022; new DCWA horse trail signage to be installed and map of a proposed DCWA timber sale for habitat management distributed. Wildlife updates handout distributed.

USDA/DATCP Spongy Moth Quarantine Update: Map of quarantined counties included in meeting packet effective March 1, 2021, along with 2022 trapping survey result map. USDA currently proposing that Douglas County be included in the quarantine due to increasing trapping numbers over the last 2 years. Potential impacts to forest operations are unknown at this time.

Campground Campsite Advance Reservation Policy Update: Meyer advised things are going well with the new system, with \$22,000 in advanced campsite reservation revenue for all three campgrounds to date.

Forest Carbon Project Update: Contract signed with Anew Climate; company requested initial data from Forestry Department and is currently building the inventory model to determine a baseline.

2022 Public Land Timber Sale Report: Reviewed – WDNR report in meeting packet – includes closed out sales of \$4,672,954.49. Figures based off WDNR reporting method (revenue is accrued when timber sales are closed out).

2022 Timber Sale Revenue Record: Reviewed – County report in meeting packet; total wood cut value of \$3,253,700.25. Figures based off county reporting method (revenue is accrued when payments are received).

Extended Timber Sale Contracts Update: Reviewed – many contracts in 5th and 6th years.

ACTION: Motion by Moen, second Long, to extend the meeting beyond the two-hour time limit. Motion carried.

2022 Town Severance and Acreage Share Payments Record: Reviewed – report in meeting packet. State acreage payments increased to \$.63/acre in 2022.

Huber Engineered Woods Cohasset, MN Mill Update: Construction of new mill withdrawn.

2023 Spring Logger’s Discussion Forum: Committee in favor of moving forward with event.

March 7, 2023, Timber Sale Reminder: Next timber sale set for March 7, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

WDNR County Forest Liaison Report: Latvala reported Brule team working on timber sale establishment and recon work for the county; two vacancies.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Moen, second Long, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Submitted by,

Cheryl Westman, Committee Clerk