

Members present: Taylor Dorsey-(via webex), Susan Haug, Paul Klocko, Greg Klos, Mike Lane, Aaron Ruff-(via webex), Marcell Wieloch

Members excused: John Burke, Carmen Engleman, Dale Heil, Gary Weiland

Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Rec, and Forestry Dept. staff present: Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley-Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director, Joe Tucker-County Forester

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Lane.

I. Minutes

Motion by Klos to approve the December 13, 2023 minutes. Motion **carried** unanimously 7-0.

II. New Business

A. 2023 County Forest Division Annual Report

Lovlien discussed some of the program highlights including revenue and expenses, certification, timber management, road and trail management, wildlife management, recreation, public outreach, and professional development.

B. 2023 Year in Review and 2024 Parks, Recreation and Forestry Work Plan

Polley highlighted some of the work planned which includes Eastgate Hall renovation, dump station installation at Dells of the Eau Claire Park, Nine Mile septic system replacement, Amco and Marathon Park Campground playgrounds, build skatepark, treating and removing ash trees, planning the Department consolidation, and ice arena feasibility study. Polley discussed upcoming small County and City projects. Some forestry work includes administering timber sales, planting 60,000 red pine trees on 60 acres, and establishing another timber sale at Big Eau Pleine Park. Staff will also be working on the Rib Falls Master Plan, Big Rapids Dam Removal, County CORP Update, AED/Save Station Grant, and Athletic Park Clubhouse Review.

C. Forestry Division Expense/Revenue Reports

Lovlien explained the ten-year period showed over that period revenue from timber stumpage was \$850,968 over expenses and the twenty-year period showed timber stumpage revenues of \$1,153,241 over expenses. The reports don't include recreation programs which are tracked in separate budgets. The forestry program is paying for itself with timber stumpage revenues and helps with tax levy relief.

D. 2024 Spring Timber Sales Being Advertised for Purchase

The spring timber sale package offers 285 acres of timber on five tracts with an estimated volume of 12,065 tons and 343.0 thousand board feet. The sales will be advertised and the bid opening is April 29. There will be a secondary bid opening on May 30 if necessary. Joe Tucker, County Forester discussed all the sales. Questions were answered. Committee had no issues with any of the sales.

E. Parks, Recreation and Forestry Law Enforcement Annual Report

Lovlien reported on law enforcement activity in the forest units and parks. Information included patrols, complaints, citations, warnings, criminal charges, arrests, and tree stand/trail camera enforcement. Also included were the hours spent on Recreation Motor Vehicle Patrols (snowmobile, boat, ATV) which are reimbursed through a DNR grant.

F. Governor Evers Announces Approval of Largest Conservation Effort in State History

Lovlien discussed a press release which announced the approval of an additional conservation easement covering 54,898 acres of the Pelican River Forest which completes one of the largest conservation projects in Wisconsin history. Altogether, over 67,000 acres of the Pelican River Forest will be protected, ensuring the forest will remain open to the public in perpetuity for outdoor recreation activities such as fishing, hunting, skiing, trapping, and hiking.

G. Member Items

Haug has been updating the Bird Club records since 1951 when they started the annual spring migration count and will provide the data to members and staff. Wieloch said the DNR and Conservation Congress will hold their spring hearing in person from 6pm to 9pm on April 8th at DC Everest Middle School on Schofield Avenue.

