

Members present: Tom Rosenberg, Arnie Schlei(c)-(via webex), Rick Seefeldt-(via webex)

Also present: Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley-Director, Chad Keranen-DNR Liaison-(via webex)

1. Call Meeting to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chairman Schlei at 1:30pm, Rm. 5, 212 River Dr., Wausau. Official notice and the agenda for the meeting was posted publicly in accordance with State statutes.

2. Public Comment – none brought forward

3. Approve Minutes – **Motion** / second by Schlei / Rosenberg to approve the minutes from the January 5, 2021 regular Forestry/Recreation Committee meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.

4. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Update on the Cash Farm Lease – Town of Easton – Lovlien explained that the person farming the land has paid his 2020 rent and requested to terminate the cash farm lease. Schlei checked to see if another farmer was interested in leasing but they declined. They did give another possible name but he has not contacted him yet. Lovlien explained that there has been a new development since the last meeting.

2. Consider Hiring an Appraiser to Determine Market Values on 80 Acres in the Town of Easton and 40 Acres in the Town of Hewitt for a Potential Land Trade – Lovlien gave history on the eighty acres of land in the Town of Easton. It has been held since 1980 for a potential trade to improve blocking of County forest lands. Revenues have been realized from using a cash farm lease on the land. Recently, Lovlien received a call from a landowner who has forty acres bordered on four sides by County forest in the Town of Harrison who is interested in trading that land for the eighty acres in the Town of Easton. He also owns land just to the north of the eighty-acre parcel. The landowner has agreed to pay for half of the appraisal costs on the properties. Lovlien said the Town Chairman of Harrison is supportive of County ownership. Lovlien is recommending appraisals on both properties and said the difference of the two will be the start of negotiations assuming the County property is worth more. Questions were answered. **Motion** / Seefeldt, second by Rosenberg to obtain the two appraisals from Steigerwaldt Land Services with the landowner paying half or \$1,900.00 and permission for Lovlien to negotiate and bring back a recommendation to Committee for a possible trade. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.

B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration

1. 2020 County Forest Division Annual Report – Lovlien discussed some of the program highlights including revenue and expenses, certification, timber management, road and trail maintenance, wildlife management, recreation, public outreach and professional development.

5. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee – None

6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. Forestry Division Expense/Revenue Report – Lovlien reported that over the last ten years over four million dollars in gross timber was sold. The net is the amount of revenue to the County after the twenty percent payment to the State for interest free loans and ten percent payment to the townships. The County sets an even-flow budget because timber revenues fluctuate each year depending on weather and markets. Timber sale contracts are typically two to three years.

B. Wisconsin County Forests Association Fact Sheet – The fact sheet gave information on how important forestry is in Wisconsin. It's the number one employer in ten counties and in output for fourteen counties. Wisconsin is the #1 producer of paper and wood manufacturing in the United States. The sheet explained forest certification and what the Wisconsin County Forests Association is all about. It also discussed the important role county forests play in total recreation programming which includes miles of ATV, snowmobile, hiking, snowshoe, cross-country skiing, horse and bicycle trails; boat landings; campsites; day use area and beaches.

C. Update on Meeting objective 5.2 Outcome Measure 3 of the 2018-2022 Marathon County Strategic Plan – Park and Forest Land Acquisitions – Lovlien said this Strategic Plan objective adopted by the County Board is to attempt to acquire 320 acres of land per year for the Marathon County parks and forest system. Over the last three years County Forest land acquisition totaled 519.51 acres and park land 3.99 acres. Lovlien described some of the lands recently acquired. He noted that park land acquisition doesn't always come up every year like forest lands. Recently, there has been opportunity to acquire forest lands from willing sellers. Funds in the Segregated Land Account paired with Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grants is used. Lovlien noted that the County has acquired 1,997 acres from 2006 to 2020. The County was not eligible for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship funding until 2010 and purchases of 877.5 acres since then utilized almost \$925,000 of Stewardship funds which were matched with County funds.

D. County Forest Harvest Acreage Totals 2006-2020 – The DNR report shows totals of all the counties harvest acreage throughout the years. Marathon County has been harvesting an average of 593 acres over the last fifteen years. Marathon County has been successful over the years at harvesting the acreage it has established.

7. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: March 2, 2021, 1:30pm, Rm. 5 and webex, 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence – Seefeldt thanked Lovlien for his work on land acquisitions, Lovlien gave members details of the WCFA Spring meeting.

B. Future Agenda Items: Closeout Timber Sale, WCFA Spring Meeting, Timber Stumpage Payments to Townships, Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association Magazine Article on County Forest Recreation.

8. Adjourn – Motion / second by Rosenberg / Seefeldt to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.