

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

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

1. Call meeting to order – The meeting was called to order by Chairman Schlei at 1:30pm, Rm. 2, 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. Approval of the Forestry Portion of the Minutes of the Tuesday, June 30, 2020 Joint Park Commission Forestry/Recreation Committee Meeting – **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Seefeldt to approve the forestry portion of the minutes of the Tuesday, June 30, 2020 Joint Park Commission and Forestry/Recreation Committee meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, no dissent.

4. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Public Listening session for Forestry/Recreation Committee to Accept Comments on the Draft Marathon County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan – A revised plan will be brought back to Committee at the September meeting and then the plan will go to the DNR for their 30-day review period. The final plan will go to County Board for approval in November. No public comment was given during the listening session either in person or by phone. Lovlien said the 30-day public comment period will end August 14th.

2. County Forest Citizen Advisory Subcommittee Appointments – Lovlien explained that six of the member's terms are expiring. They are in good standing and Lovlien has asked them if they wish to remain on the Committee. He has heard back from five of the six members and the sixth member said he would stay on if he could not find a replacement. Lovlien recommends the six members be reappointed for another two-year term. **Motion** / second by Seefeldt / Rosenberg to reappoint Chickering, Burke, Klos, Haug and Lane, and Stomieroski to the County Forest Citizen Advisory Subcommittee. Motion **carried** by voice vote, no dissent.

B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration - None

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

6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. Begin Discussion on Timber Sale Extensions Due to Impacts of Covid-19 and Mill Closures – Lovlien explained that due to Covid-19 and the Verso mill closure in Wisconsin Rapids, the DNR is giving an additional year on their contracts that expire December 31, 2020 and June 30, 2021 if they have had one extension or less. Lovlien also discussed the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association requests and said the County already meets most of them. He has a question related to request about minimum bid requirements because while the County doesn't advertise its minimum bid requirements it does have to have a minimum set for the timber sale per State Statute. He is not in favor of their request to reduce performance bonds to 5%. Currently, the County's performance bond is 25% and Lovlien said consideration could be made to lower it to 20% but in his opinion 5% wouldn't protect the County in case of default.

Lovlien explained there are five contracts that will expire December 2020 which will most likely need a first extension. There are also five contracts that expire June 2021 that also may need extensions. There are two contracts that concern him the most which are five years old at the end of 2020 and have already had a free extension and an extension at twenty percent. They are winter only sales and the contractors have had multiple winters to cut them. Some of those winters were poor that was why they were given a zero percent increase on the first extension. Lovlien hasn't talked to the contractors yet about extensions but is hesitant to give another free year extension without some assurances from them. He will have some options at a future meeting for the Committee to consider on these contracts. He wanted members to know that there will be some extensions needed and there are problems with the market.

Lovlien hoped the Verso mill opens up at some capacity and more wood starts moving. He felt that Marathon County was in good shape in relation to the markets that remain because it is centrally located and relatively close to markets but he believes the price of wood could go down. Lovlien distributed a five year analysis of how much wood the County has sold to Verso compared to other mills. The volumes ranged between thirty and forty percent and the values ranged between twenty-three and thirty-four percent that went to Verso. When Verso was running they were using 1600 cords a day 365 days a year which is 2.4 million tons of wood. Currently, there is not the capacity to use this much wood elsewhere. The hope is that the mill will re-open with some type of a co-op or other buyer that would re-tool it and produce products that consumers continue to use.

B. Marathon County Forest Sustainable Forestry initiative (SFI) Field Audit – August 5, 2020 – Lovlien said the auditors will be here in person instead of holding a virtual field audit. Lovlien hoped that Committee members could attend the audit but one of their guidelines was to have a group of eight or less people. Lovlien said the auditors, DNR staff, and County foresters will be attending. Lovlien will have preliminary findings of the audit at the next meeting. He hopes that Committee members and/or County Board can tour the County forests in the future again.

C. History of Public Timber Sales, Completed in Fiscal Year 2020 – Lovlien discussed the report that shows completed timber sales on State forests, County forests, other State lands and State lands total. In 2018 and 2019 between 43 and 45 million dollars came from county forests timber revenues, Last year it dropped off a bit as did the State forest and lands. Lovlien said Marathon County revenues have been exceptionally high in the last two years and are now sitting \$110,000 under the projected value. This fall there could be some sales harvested so there is a chance that the even-flow projection of \$245,000 will be met. Questions were answered.

7. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: September 1, 2020, 1:30pm, Rm. 2, 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence – none brought forward

B. Future Agenda Items: Preliminary Results of the Forest Certification Audit, Consider Approving Fall 2020 Timber Sale Package, WCFA Annual Fall Meeting, Review Revised 15-Year Comprehensive Land Use Plan Changes and Send to DNR for 30-Day Review.

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