

**DRAFT**  
**MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION**

Date and Time of Meeting: October 5, 2021 at 10:30 am

Meeting Location: Conference Room 5, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

Park Commissioners present: Dawn Herbst, Jean Maszk, Allen Opall, Pat Peckham, Rick Seefeldt, James Wadinski, Kelly Zagrzebski

Staff present: Jamie Polley-Director, Marcus Aumann-Assistant Director of Community Services, Greg Freix – Assistant Director of Operations, Andy Sims-City Forester, Mai Vue-Administrative Manager

**1. Call to Order** – President Peckham called the Park Commission meeting to order at 10:30am. Official notice and the agenda for the meeting was posted publicly in accordance with the State statutes.

**2. Public Comment** – none brought forward

**3. Approval of the Minutes of the August 31, 2021 Park Commission Meeting – Motion** by Opall, second by Maszk to approve the August 31, 2021 Park Commission meeting minutes. Peckham requested that in the future a little more detail is included in the minutes when there are public comments. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

**4. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination**

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Proposed Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department 2022-2023 Facility and Program Fees – Polley explained that the shelter rates and camping fees are set for 2023 because users can book them twelve months in advance. She discussed other fee increases and questions were answered. Maszk was interested in a half-day option for non-exclusive use of a park as well as the full-day option. Polley said it would require that staff make sure the occupied space was ready for the next user group. She also noted that if an organization had a request about their fees they could come to the Park Commission about it. Wadinski suggested if they go to a half-day option that they make it a third off the price but not half price. He noted that organizations he has been in have not had problems with the fee. **Motion** by Maszk, second by Opall to offer a half-day option for non-exclusive use of a park at two-thirds of the full-day rate. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 6-1 with Wadinski dissenting. Peckham requested if the costs of memorial benches come down that it's reflected in the fee to a customer. **Motion** by Wadinski, second by Herbst to approve the new fee schedule as amended Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

2. Proposed Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department 2022 Budget – Polley said personnel costs include a 3% wage increase for full time employees and a 6% increase in the health insurance premiums. The total increase to personnel is lower than expected due to cost savings of three higher level retirements. Polley discussed some of the increases to the budget which included motor vehicle parts, motor vehicle and equipment repairs, various supplies and liability insurance. Overall revenue increases were seen in camping, recreation, organized hockey rent, and timbersale revenues. In 2021 the County borrowed some revenue from the timber sale account to lower the Department's tax levy and this has been offset with the increases to revenues for 2022. Polley discussed the small project maintenance list. Questions were answered. **Motion** by Herbst, second by Maszk to approve the proposed Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department's 2022 Budget as proposed and send to the County Administrator. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

**5. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:**

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Consider Big Eau Pleine Park Timber Bid(s) and Award Contract – The bid opening on the first timber sale at Big Eau Pleine County Park had been held on October 4<sup>th</sup> with two bids coming in. The County Forest Administrator recommends that the sale be awarded to the high bidder, Flannel Fleet Logging. **Motion** by Opall, second by Wadinski to award tract 10-21 to the high bidder, Flannel Fleet Logging. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

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

## 6. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee

A. Seidler – Property Donation – The Seidler family is interested in donating a 40 acre parcel in the Village of Maine to the County for a nature preserve/park. The property is part of 200 acres owned by the Seidler Family and currently the only way to get to the parcel is through the southernmost 40 acres via a current logging road. The property is under Managed Forest Law (MFL) and is set to be cut in 2033. The Seidler family have laid out their desires for the parcel if the County chooses to accept it and these include items that would be considered capital projects. Polley discussed a few concerns staff had in reviewing the parcel. They include the high costs of accessing the parcel, future MFL management and aesthetics, questions regarding the Town Road, adjacent hunting, and what the real benefit of that property would be compared to other properties that the County already has that are yet to be developed. The Seidler family has not given a timeframe for development, and there may not be one, but currently the County doesn't have the resources to develop it. To cut down on some of the access costs Polley had asked Seidler if he would also consider donating a corner of the lower southeast quadrant where there already is a logging road and a culvert but currently he is not. Polley said at this point there is no recommendation from staff until there is more discussion and members have seen the property. Peckham thought a big plus about the property was its proximity to the City. He would like to learn more, see the property, and asked about getting an estimate to cross the ravine. Maszk thought it seemed kind of difficult and pricey even just to access it when there were a lot of other properties they would also like to develop. Discussion followed on access to the property. Peckham said if members are willing to keep this open he would look at other donations. He thought maybe a stipulation if they continue is that the only way the County accepts the property is if a corner of the lower southeast quadrant is donated as well.

B. Update to Chapter 19, Sec. 19.07 – Animals of the Marathon County Code of Ordinances - The Peoples Sports Complex is a special use County Park that contains premiere athletics fields that are managed to host a multitude of events. When it was constructed, specific rules were established to assist with keeping this facility a high quality facility. One of the rules established was that pets are not allowed either on or off leash. One of the activities that has tried to take place at the complex (not scheduled) is the training of law enforcement K9 units. Staff has addressed this usage and has not allowed it to take place. This is being consistent with the desire to not allow dogs on the complex fields and to help show consistency to the general public. Staff supports this activity and has offered other County and City locations for the training. The Wausau Police Department is questioning the Ordinance that reads; **Sec. 19.07. - Animals. (1) Animals in public facilities. (a)Restricted.** No person having immediate custody, care or control of a dog or other animal, shall permit said animal to enter and/or remain in any public park building, bathing beach, the Marathon County Sports Complex, the Marathon Park Amphitheater or playground safety surface area in any County park, except assistance dogs or animals being used or trained to assist emergency services workers or as authorized by the Commission. Staff believes the intention of this ordinance is to restrict animals from the facilities listed except assistance dogs. Staff recommends that the section stating “or animals being used or trained to assist emergency services workers” be stricken from the ordinance. If there is a need for specific training within one of these facilities the option for the Commission to authorize such training would still be available.

Peckham wanted to make sure that they are not trying to prohibit use of law enforcement dogs to assist emergency service workers in case of a natural emergency. He felt just the words “or trained” should be removed from the ordinance. Other members also felt the sports complex shouldn't be used for training any type of service animal. They felt there was a myriad of other places that could be done but shouldn't be done on any sports fields. Wadinski said that the ordinance shouldn't restrict in any way when law enforcement is on duty. Polley asked if the words “or their designee” could be added after the words “authorized by Commission”. It is this way in other ordinances and it would allow her or the Department to authorize a training if law enforcement came to the Department without having to come back to the Commission. Maszk mentioned an email from a Wausau lieutenant wanting Commission to retain the ordinance exempting emergency dogs being restricted from local parks for their training. Polley said they must get permission for training if they are going into a specific area like a building, beach, a playground, etc. but if they are just within green space of a park they can go and do that now. **Motion** by Herbst, second by Maszk to take out the words “or trained” and add the words “or their designee” from the ordinance and forward the proposed amendment on for consideration and action. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

## 7. Educational Presentation/Outcome Monitoring Reports for Discussion

A. Park Update - Big Eau Pleine Campground Electrical Upgrade: South Unit is currently closed for work; existing conductor wire and pedestals have been removed; staff is installing new service (switchgear) panels; contractor is scheduled to start next week to install new conductor wire and make connections at site pedestals. Big Eau Pleine Disc Golf Course: Staff is continuing (from earlier this season) concrete tee pad installations as ready-mix is being delivered for electrical

project. BEP South Unit picnic Area Open Shelter: Staff is completing reroofing (asphalt shingles) and some re-decking of the open shelter. Memorial Benches: Staff is preparing sites and forms for memorial bench installations in several city and county park locations. Water Systems: Winterization procedures are underway for facilities/areas that are currently done for the season. I.e. Pools, sports facilities, restrooms and irrigation systems. Dells of the Eau Claire High Bridge Re-decking: Staff is completing trail work and site work for future (winter) access to the work site. Amco Park Restroom: Old restroom is demolished. New restroom is scheduled for an October installation. Sports Complex Irrigation System: Contractor will work with staff on the installation of a strainer system along with replacement of the RPZ/backflow preventer. Marathon Park: Boat and camper storage starts this week. MPB #1 Arena; Staff recently completed ice installation; customer use begins this week. Routine Operations/Programs: Mowing Operations, Urban forestry program; tree trimming, removals, Building and structure maintenance, Shelter reservations and Special Events, Equipment maintenance and repair

## **8. Announcements**

Polley said Greg Freix will be retiring after 31 years with the department. She introduced Andy Sims as the new Assistant Director of Operations. Greg was thanked for his many years of service.

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location–Tue., November 2, 2021 at 10:30am, 212 River Dr., Rm 5, Wausau WI 54403

B. Future Agenda Items – none brought forward

**9. Adjourn – Motion** by Maszk, second by Opall to adjourn at 12:00pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.