

DRAFT
MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: December 3, 2019 at 2:00 pm

Meeting Location: Conference Room 3, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

Park Commissioners present: Connie Conrad, Gary Gisselman, Allen Opall, Pat Peckham, John Durham, Rick Seefeldt, Dennis Smith

Staff present: Jamie Polley, Greg Freix, Dan Fiorenza

Others present: Brian Kowalski – City Pages

Call to Order – President Gary Gisselman called the Park Commission meeting to order. Official notice and the agenda for the meeting was posted publicly in accordance with the State statutes.

Public Comment Period – none

Approval of Minutes of the Nov. 5, 2019 Park Commission Meeting – **Motion** by Durham, second by Conrad to approve the minutes of the Nov. 5, 2019 Park Commission meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:

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

1. 2020-2024 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – Discussion and Possible Action Approving a Resolution to Adopt the 2020-2024 County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Update – Polley explained that a staffing requirement section was added in Chapter Six. If the Department continues to add facilities and demands on staff to be involved in events and programs keep increasing then it will have to look at more staffing. Staff doesn't just maintain parks and as the nature of the work evolves so do the staffing needs.

Peckham requested that the development of a plan for access to Lake Dubay at Ashley Park be moved up from a low to a medium priority. After discussion, Commission members agreed. Durham asked about the Trappe River property access and after discussion it was decided to keep that as a medium priority. Polley noted that a chart of neighboring counties will be included in the final plan that is going to County Board. Durham felt eventually there will be an economic downturn and hopes the park system won't be harshly affected when it is most needed by the public. Polley said that the Department has to do a better job of educating the community and the elected officials about what it is they are involved with, what they maintain, and how they play a role in all the events that organizations put on multiple times a year so that when tough conversations start the Department is not left behind. Conrad thought that having the new position focus more on customer service was good strategic positioning for them as competition for events gets tighter. Polley discussed Chapter One where items were added that point out how the Department is aligning with other state and local initiatives in the area to promote outdoor recreation. She said the Governor of Wisconsin has established an Office of Outdoor Recreation because tourism is a key driver of the economy. She noted that the greater Wausau Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan talks about outdoor recreation and the assets that Marathon County has to bring economic development into the County. She said the Department will be involved in the Rib Mountain State Park initiative that the DNR is currently doing. She also discussed the language added under goals that involve marketing and promoting outdoor recreation. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Conrad to approve the 2020-2024 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and send it to the Environmental Resource Committee for their consideration. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee

A. Discussion and Possible Action Approving a Department Restructuring Plan – Polley discussed the current organization. She noted that there have been a couple of retirements and one more with Fiorenza retiring in January. Currently the Deputy position is being run with the Sheriff's Department and seems to be working well. With the City Forester's retirement, one of the managers has taken that position so now his position is being filled. She said staff had discussed Fiorenza's management position and also the Assistant Director position. It became apparent through those discussions that the Department needed that manager position in operations. That position would manage the four facility managers as well as a number of complexes including the ice arena, Sylvan Hill tubing, building rentals and special events. They would concentrate on the customer service side in the operations portion of it.

In looking at the Assistant Director position, Polley noted that seventy percent of the organization as a whole is under Freix. She has re-worked the structuring and is proposing to change Freix's position into an Assistant Director of Operations. He will gain an employee, the small project side that the previous Assistant Director did, and the capital project planning which he was already doing. The other position would be an Assistant Director of Community Services. That position would include marketing, grant writing, sponsorships, the registration process, procedures and policies, oversee the ATV/Snowmobile Coordinator and the Recreation Superintendent, be the liaison between the Deputies and the Sheriff's Department, be the staff liaison to different user groups and take the lead on special events before handing them off to operations. Polley said all of this restructuring is within the budget allocated for 2020. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Conrad to approve the Department restructuring plan and move it on to the Environmental Resource Committee for their consideration. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

B. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Wausau Area Softball Association's Use of Sunny Vale Softball Complex
Polley explained that last month the Commission was informed that the Wausau Area Softball Association's outstanding balance was going to be turned over to Corporation Counsel. Corporation Counsel will then decide a date that the Association has to provide payment by otherwise their use of the Sunny Vale Complex for 2020 will be restricted. Polley explained that prior to the last meeting the Association had been sent a letter giving them a notice that this item was going to be placed on the November Park Commission agenda if it wasn't resolved. The Association came in and paid their 2019 bill except for \$2,500 that was for the use of the concession stand and told Polley they would put a proposal together regarding payment and have made not contact with her since. Polley said that further communication to them will come directly from Corporation Counsel on behalf of the County regarding the outstanding balance deadline as well as information regarding a contract signing deadline. Discussion followed. **Motion** by Opall, second by Peckham to fully support sending the issue to Corporation Counsel and putting the Wausau Area Softball Association on notice. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

C. Discussion and Possible Action Updating the 2019-2020 Fee Schedule for Ice Fees for School District Games –
Fiorenza said that a scenario was caught that wasn't fair to the schools so the rate was broken down to an hourly rate versus a game rate. It's still the same amount of money but when there is a JV game that is not two and a half hours it charges them more fairly. **Motion** by Conrad, second by Peckham to approve updating the fee schedule for ice fees for School District games. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. Project Update - Eastbay Sports Complex: Staff is just completing work on the open shelter adjacent to the championship field. Eau Claire Dells Campground: New electric service work continues; underground wiring is complete and most pedestals are wired. Site remediation will continue as weather allows. Nine Mile Cross Country Trails: Trail work (grading, soil work and brushing) was completed last week. Grooming operations will begin next week as new snow compresses and cooler temperatures arrive. Holiday Trees: Staff has obtained, delivered, set up and decorated trees at the 400 Block, Marathon County Courthouse, Wausau City Hall and the corner of Stewart and First Avenues. Routine Operations/Programs: Snow Removal Operations; Urban forestry program-tree trimming, removals, stump grinding; Building and structure maintenance; Shelter reservations and Special Events; Equipment maintenance and repair; Sports Facilities (Marathon Park Indoor Ice Arenas)

Freix noted that they groomed Nine Mile at the conclusion of the nine day gun season. Polley said officially the trails and chalet are not open until all gun deer seasons are over so this year the earliest it would officially open is Dec. 16th. Currently the trails are groomed and lights are on at night.

B. Program Update – Staff is working on contracts and details for numerous events for 2020, including: Badger State Games Nordic Skiing, Winter Triathlon, Special Olympics Polar Plunge, Pond Hockey at Sunny Vale Lake, Special Olympics Nordic/Snowshoe, IronBull events, mountain bike races, and the Ragnar Trail Relay. It was noted that a new three year contract is nearing completion with Ragnar.

Announcements

- A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – Tues., Jan., 7, 2020 at 2:00 pm, Rm 3, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403
- B. Future Agenda Items – none brought forward

Adjourn–**Motion** by Conrad, second by Opall to adjourn at 3:05 pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.