

DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
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Brian Preston, Director
Board Members:
George Davis
Mark Wagner
Jim Pfeiler
Stacy Conforti

MARCH 21, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

Dubuque County Conservation Board meeting was called to order by George Davis 4:00 P.M. In person meeting at the Swiss Valley Nature Center with a Zoom link, <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84403978826?pwd=roOa19JGlqWVb5l88D2aE3hfU1uZ.1>
Meeting ID: 844 0397 8826 Passcode: 427713

ROLL CALL:

Board Members Present: George Davis and Mark Wagner. Zoom: Stacy Conforti. Absent: Jim Pfeiler. Jackie Kehr resigned as of March 7, 2024.

Staff Members Present: Brian Preston, Nate Sisler, Lisa Schroeder and Addy Schober (4:06 P.M.).

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to approve the February 15, 2024, meeting minutes was made by Wagner and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Blair Gleason, 1000 Clare Ct NW, Cascade, IA 52033, would like to recommend the Conservation Board hire Ray Martin as the Greens Superintendent for Fillmore Fairways. Gleason thanked the Conservation Board and appreciates everything they do for the county areas. Gleason is a supporter of Ray Martin as well as other golfers at the course. Over the past five years Fillmore Fairways has been the best maintained and groomed course in the Tri-State Area.

SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATIONS:

Northeast Iowa Council, Spring Camporee, April 18, 2024 thru April 21, 2024 at New Wine Park. Tent camping in the picnic area. Preston recommended approval of the Spring Camporee application. Motion to approve the special event application for the Northeast Iowa Council, Spring Camporee at New Wine Park was made by Wagner and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried.

MVRA (Mississippi Valley Running Association), Fun run 5K/10K, May 11, 2024 at Heritage Trail, Durango Depot. Sheriff's department handles traffic control. This is the 30th annual event with MVRA. Preston recommend approval of the MVRA application. Motion to approve the special event application for the MVRA, Fun run at Heritage Trail was made by Wagner and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF FISH HABITAT AGREEMENT #24-17F CATFISH CREEK FISH HABITAT IMPROVEMENT:

The Natural Resource Commission approved the Dubuque County Conservation Board application for Fish Habitat Stamp funds. The cost-share agreement is not to exceed \$17,000.00. The upper Catfish Creek stabilization project must be completed by December 31, 2025. Motion to approve the Fish Habitat Agreement #24-17F, Catfish Creek Fish Habitat improvement was made by Wagner and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried.

FILLMORE ELECTRICAL UPGRADE:

Along White Water Creek, power line grandfathered in, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funds were used when purchased. The current line is only 7 ft above ground. LWCF requires the electrical line underground. This upgrade is not budgeted but needs to take priority before anyone is hurt or killed. Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative Service Agreement estimates a total cost of \$17,775.00. Preston

said there is no other option. Motion to approve Fillmore electrical upgrade for \$17,775.00 was made by Wagner and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried.

PERMISSION TO ORDER RESTROOM PARTITIONS FOR MASSEY MARINA AND MUD LAKE:

Current partitions are a pressed wood product. FEMA mitigation, replace with a solid plastic partition. Which would not be damaged by future flooding. Only two estimates, Spahn & Rose Lumber \$14,035.79 and Tri State Building Supply \$10,990.00. Preston recommends going with Tri State Building Supply. At this time FEMA would cover 75% of the cost. Typically, we require three bids, but we were not able to get three bids. Motion to approve ordering restroom partitions thru Tri State Building Supply for \$10,990.00 was made by Conforti and seconded by Wagner. Motion carried.

REQUEST FOR BUDGET AMENDMENTS FOR FY 2024:

Balltown Overlook, third truck in twelve months that has damaged the railing. The driver's insurance company has sent a check for \$5,600.00. The Budget Director requests an amendment to revenue to receive the money so we may offset with the expense to Rich Clemens Welding. We would also like to advertise for the Greens Superintendent position. To advertise the position before Mike White has been paid benefits, we would need to amend \$9,104.36 in expenses. Preston said we are not able to wait during this time of the year. Motion to approve budget amendments of \$5,600.00 and \$9,104.36 for FY 2024 was made by Davis and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried.

PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE FOR GREENS SUPERINTENDENT:

In conjunction with the wage study, they will be providing up to date job descriptions. Preston will be meeting with the Human Resource Director on April 2nd. They were asked to make this position a priority so it may be posted next week. Motion to approve advertising for Greens Superintendent with the new job description being reviewed by Preston, Human Resource Director and third party consultant was made by Conforti and seconded by Davis. Motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT:

None

STAFF REPORTS:

DIRECTOR REPORT: Preston said he was at the County Conservation Directors meeting last week. It was a good meeting. He spoke with Senator Dan Dawson about Iowa sales tax. Representative Shannon Lundgren working on revision to the Forest Reserve Laws. Preston volunteered to represent our district in discussion about the Forest Reserve. HR held a session at the conference, they no longer feel that it's a good practice to have employees share hotel rooms. This might limit the number of staff that would be able to attend conferences or training. This might be a budget item we look at increasing in the future. Meeting with the HR director on April 2nd to review compensation and titles for the Conservation staff. All staff will receive a letter. Senator Dan Dawson is a Republican from Council Bluffs. Dubuque County, property tax not taken on 16,500 acres, 2,500 residential acres not taxed, just at a 2-acre minimum. Option to raise the acres to qualify. Wagner said the purpose is to provide habitat. Some counties in Iowa, non-Resident ownership, use for hunting, not paying taxes. No official way to get out of forest reserve. You would have to break the rules to get out of forest reserve. A lot of things that need to be reviewed.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT: Sisler said in the past month, cleaning and cutting trees at Fillmore golf course 96 total. Still more trees to remove. Repaired docks at Massey. Mud Lake shelter almost complete. Produced a lot of fire wood, made maple syrup, fire arms training, cut woody debris on Heritage Trail, courteous dock back in at Massey, water is very low. Invasive specie removal at IPC, Fillmore burned large debris piles. Put shower houses back together for turning on water.

NATURALIST REPORT: Schober reported 22 programs and 605 participants for March. Highlights include 1st grade Outdoor Adventures – Planetarium, library bat program, Forest School – Bird Survey, Take CAARE High School group. Upcoming events: Skunk cabbage hike, Blue Bird workshop, remnant prairie surveys, BOW (Becoming an Outdoor Women), 4th Grade Outdoor Adventures, Easter Egg hunt, Spring field trips and Summer Outreach programs.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

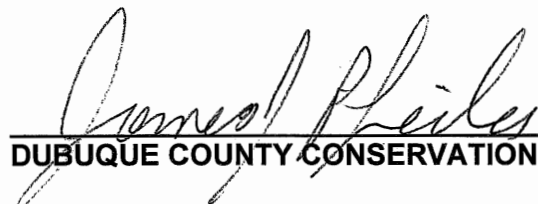
Motion to approve the March 2024 payables was made by Davis and seconded by Wagner. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, April 18, 2024, at 4:00 P.M., Swiss Valley Nature Center.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn was made by Davis and seconded by Wagner. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 4:47 P.M.


DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBER


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