**MINUTES**Eau Claire County
• **Committee on Parks & Forest** *•*

Monday, August 9, 2021 **5:00 p.m.**
Virtual Meeting

Members: Kevin Stelljes, Joe Knight, Missy Christopherson, Gary Gibson, Tami Schraufnagel, Nick Smiar

Others Present: Josh Pedersen – Director, Jody Gindt – Supervisor, Winnie Parker – Administrative Specialist III (Committee Clerk), Kyle Johnson – DNR County Forest Liaison, Jacob Tumm – EC County Forester, Erika Gullerud – Finance Analyst,

Chairman Kevin Stelljes called the meeting to order at 5 p.m. and confirmed public posting of the meeting.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the July 12, 2021, meeting. Tami Schraufnagel made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. It passed unanimously.

No members of the public were present.

A joint meeting with the Committee on Parks and Forest and the Committee on Finance and Budget will be held on Tuesday, August 17, 2021, at 5:45 p.m.

Potential County Forest Land Acquisition Projects – Josh Pedersen is waiting to hear back about the appraisal for the Sand Mine property.

The Anderson Family, who own a 240-acre parcel of land along the Eau Claire River, has recently indicated they are ready to sell. The asking price for this property, in the Town of Lincoln off Lincoln Drive, is 1.32 million dollars or $5,500/acre. The many benefits of this parcel include Eau Claire River frontage (a number one county priority in land acquisition) future revenue gain by the existing pine plantation, an already developed trail system throughout the property, and it provides access to land locked property already owned by the county and state. The next step is to get the land appraised. Tami Schraufnagel moved to authorize Steigerwaldt to complete an appraisal. All in favor, none opposed.

2021 Carry Forward Capital Projects – Because some projects came in under budget and/or were deferred, there is a surplus of funds in the 2021 Carry Forward Account. Josh Pedersen sent a list of potential projects to Norb Kirk – Finance Director and Matt Thiessen – Facilities Director. Harstad Pavilion is in such disrepair that the pavilion needs to be removed entirely and a new pavilion constructed. The estimated cost, depending on the features, would be approximately $200,000.

The Lake Eau Claire Clubhouse has a mold and mildew issue, of which a new ventilation system helped but it has not mitigated the problems entirely. Matt Thiessen has suggested we hire a consultant to recommend next steps to ensure the building is clean, safe, and more desirable for holding functions. The estimated cost is $15,000.

Lake Altoona Park needs a new dock. The former dock was damaged last year beyond repair and has been removed entirely for safety reasons. The estimated cost is $15,000.

Big Falls North’s parking lot needs to be repaved. We would collaborate with the Highway Department for this project. The estimated cost is $37,000.

Big Falls Park has 2 pit toilets that need to be replaced and made handicap accessible. The estimated cost is $60,000.

Kevin Stelljes made a motion to forward these proposed projects to the Finance and Budget Committee for consideration for the 2021 Carry Forward funds. All in favor, none opposed.

2021 Forest Certification Audit – Eau Claire County hosted the 7 Year Audit for the following counties: Clark, Polk, Chippewa, and Eau Claire. According to the preliminary report based on the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and the SFI (Sustainable Forestry Initiative), the auditors did not find any major corrective actions to report (CAR’s) for the third audit in a row. The final report, once it is finalized and submitted, will be shared with the committee. Congratulations to the entire team for all the effort in hosting the audit and in the excellent reporting.

2021-2026 Outdoor Recreation Plan Update – In previous years, the Planning and Development Department took the lead on drafting this plan, which is up for renewal. Because, this year, they are not taking as much of a role, the Parks and Forest Department has proposed the West Central Regional Planning to draft a plan. The timeline for this plan is to review the draft created over the winter and adopt it by April. This will allow us plenty of time to be eligible for grant application in the spring.

Park Falls Mill Cooperative Equity Opportunity – This group, which has taken over operations and ownership of the Park Falls Mill, is seeking financial investment. The pros and cons were discussed, and it was decided that there were too many unknown variables and unknown risks.

Director Pedersen gave an update on the dredging project at Eau Claire River near the head of the lake. There is a new president of the Lake Altoona Association, Michelle Skinner. There are homeless persons living in Harstad Park but are abiding by the rules. The Sherriff’s Department is called when evictions are needed. Electrifying and updating amenities could make Harstad more family friendly.

The next meeting is a joint meeting with the Committee on Finance and Budget scheduled August 17, 2021, at 5:45 p.m. virtually.

The next regular committee meeting date is set for September 13, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. virtually.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,



Winnie Parker

Committee Clerk

Administrative Specialist III – Parks & Forest