

MINUTES

Eau Claire County

• Committee on Parks & Forest • Committee on Budget and Finance •

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

5:45 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

Parks and Forest Members present: Kevin Stelljes, Joe Knight, Missy Christopherson, Tami Schraufnagel

Ex Officio Member present: Nick Smiar

Budget and Finance Members present: Stella Pagonis, Gerald Wilkie, Jim Dunning, Robin Leary, Steve Chilson

Others Present: Josh Pedersen – Director, Jody Gindt – Supervisor, Winnie Parker – Administrative Specialist III (Committee Clerk), Erika Gullerud – Finance Analyst, Amy Weis – Senior Accounting Manager, Norb Kirk – Finance Director, Kathryn Shauf – County Administrator, Stella Pagonis – Altoona Dist. 4

Chair Selljes called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. and confirmed public posting of the meeting.

Chair Pagonis called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm.

Verbal roll call was taken by the committee clerk and is noted above under present.

No members of the public were present.

Parks and Forest Director, Josh Pedersen presented the 2022 Budget to the Committee on Parks and Forest and the Committee on Budget and Finance. He highlighted that during 2021 Parks and Forest experienced budget cuts and operated on a “bare bones” budget due to Covid. He is requesting the 2022 Budget reflect the pre-pandemic budget amounts. The recent 15-Year Plan and the Outdoor Recreation Plan are what drive the budget presented. Despite and because of Covid, usage in the parks for the past two years is at an all-time high. For instance, we have sold over 5,500 Annual Vehicle Park Passes so far this year and expect to sell more. In 2019, only 4,000 Annual Vehicle Park Passes were sold. Parks and Forest would like to get back to their pre-pandemic staffing numbers of 15 seasonal employees.

Director Pedersen highlighted projects intended for 2022 which include, but are not limited to, Lake Altoona Park parking lot renovation which is a part of phase #1 of the master plan. This project is long overdue and includes recontouring for optimal drainage, keeping Lake Altoona free from unnecessary water runoff which pollutes the lake.

The snowmobile and ATV trails are also projects scheduled for 2022. This project is 100% funded with trail registration revenues and a trail grant.

Revenue generated from the Parks and Forest Department will exceed that of previous years and it is anticipated this trend will continue with our healthy timber revenue. We continue to monitor the

pulp market as it has declined while the more desirable timber markets have remained steady. Most of the timber sales offered by Eau Claire County are being sold while other counties around Eau Claire are only selling at a rate of 50-60%.

After outlining and discussing the full proposed budget (see attached), it was decided that capital acquisition of mentioned properties will be presented to the County Board as a separate agenda item.

Joe Knight moved to approve the budget as presented. All in favor, none opposed.

The next Parks and Forest Committee meeting date is set for September 13, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. virtually.

The Committee on Finance & Budget adjourned at 6:40 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Winnie Parker".

Winnie Parker
Committee Clerk
Administrative Specialist III – Parks and Forest