

MINUTES

Eau Claire County

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

Monday, August 12, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Eau Claire County Boardroom

721 Oxford Ave. Eau Claire– Room 1277

Parks Members Present: Joe Knight, Tami Schraufnagel, Cory Sisk (Virtual), Christy Tomczak, Michele Skinner (Virtual)

Finance Members Present: Stella Pagonis, Jim Dunning, Dane Zook (Virtual), Jim Schumacher, Bob Swanson, Amy Weiss (Committee Clerk)

Others Present: Josh Pedersen – Director, Kimberly Watnemoe – Office Coordinator (Committee Clerk), Erika Gullerud – Finance Analyst, Kathryn Schauf – County Administrator, Kyle Johnson – DNR County Forest Liaison, Jason Szymanski – Director of Finance, Mark Bull – Sheriff’s Department

Call to Order Committee on Parks & Forest and confirmation of meeting notice

Chairman Knight called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m and confirmed public posting of the meeting.

Review of July 08, 2024, Committee Meeting Minutes

Supervisor Sisk motions to approve the minutes from July 08, 2024, All in favor.

Public Comment

No members of the public wished to make comment.

2025 Fee Schedule Changes

This item was moved from agenda item 8 to agenda item 6, so the Committee on Finance and Budget could hear what changes were not reflected in the proposed budget. Director Pedersen discussed the proposed changes starting with the Exposition Center. Proposed Exposition Center changes included increasing Building E’s rental rates, increasing the joint meeting room fee, and increasing winter storage rates. Next, park fees were discussed. Proposed Park fee changes were increasing daily fees to \$6 and annuals to \$35 with the additional vehicle pass also increasing from \$10 to \$15. The Parks department has always offered a senior discount of \$10 off the annual which would remain, making the new senior price \$25. Pedersen stated that he did consider the surrounding market for costs. Most surrounding counties don’t work on a fee system. However, Pedersen considered what other counties in Wisconsin charge as well as what the state parks charge. He also noted that the price has not gone up for vehicle passes in the last 6 years. Next proposed increase was \$5 per site at Coon Fork Campground. Increasing these sites by \$5 keeps the rates comparable to the market and Coon Fork continues to offer newer/better amenities for campers. Harstad was the next campground discussed where a \$3 increase on sites was proposed. This was a lesser increase due to the current amenities offered. Lastly, County Forest Camping rates would be increased from a total of \$10 for 14 days to a \$12 nightly fee. Supervisor Sisk motions to approve 2025 Fee Schedule Changes as presented. All in favor.

2025 Department Budget Submission

Pedersen started this presentation stating the budget proposed is similar to previous years, with the highest increase being personnel cost. Most programs and grants remain similar to last year as well. Pedersen pointed out on Page 10, overview of all revenue and expenditures, that all numbers are either a negative or single digit increase overall. Next, capital projects were discussed starting with the top three requests in the 2025 budget. The first request is the Lake Altoona Pavilion Project which would allow us to finish the parking lot/beach development area. This would also allow for terrace seating for the ski sprites shows. Number two was toolcat trailer. The department does have one currently, but

they have to use a heavy truck to pull it. The department would like to get a trailer to use with a lighter truck to haul. Supervisor Zook asked that the department check with the sheriff's department to see if they would have anything that would fit our needs, Pedersen will check on this. The last capital request that Pedersen outlined was mandatory for this year was the Coon Fork campground sign remarking. Coon Fork is now fully reservable, but this created a signage issue. Previously sites that were reservable were marked with an R, which is no longer needed. Supervisor Schraufnagel motions to approve 2025 Department Budget Submission with the additional fees mentioned previously. All in Favor.

Adjournment of Committee on Finance and Budget

Adjournment of Committee on Finance and Budget at 5:10 pm.

County Forest Camping Policy 16.30.520 A. 1

Pedersen revisited this topic from the previous meeting and shared the internal input he received on this issue. The department would like to change the fee from a onetime cost to a nightly fee which was passed in the 2025 fee schedule changes earlier in the meeting. Pedersen also proposed changing the length of required vacate time from 24 hours to 7 days. Deputy Bull and Park Manager Johnson shared some of their ideas with the committee, which included creating zoned areas close to the roads so campers were always easily visible. For the time being Johnson proposed shutting down camping until October 15th for the department and the committee to come to a final resolution on how to handle County Forest Dispersed Camping. Supervisor Sisk motions to shut the county forest program off effective Friday August 16th through October 15th. All in favor

Resolution 24-25.061 Authorizing the Parks and Forest Director to submit an Application to the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to apply for Cost Sharing Recreational Boating Grant.

Pedersen presented this as it is very similar to what was passed earlier in the year. Any resolution longer than 6 months old needs to be reapproved. This project is in already depicted in the 2024 capital budget plan. Supervisor Schraufnagel motions to approve. All in Favor.

Director's Report

No large update was provided. The committee would like to plan a Fall Tour. A date was set for October 4, 2024, at Noon leaving from the Ag Center.

Future Parks & Forest Committee Meetings and Items for Discussion

Next Parks & Forest committee meeting date is set for September 09, at 4:00 p.m. A fall tour is set for October 4, 2024 at Noon.

Skinner mentioned discussing better access for the Town of Seymour to get their rescue equipment onto Lake Altoona.

Committee on Parks & Forest Adjournment

The Committee on Parks & Forest adjourned at 5:47pm

Respectfully Submitted by,



Kimberly Watnemoe
Committee Clerk
Office Coordinator