

Minutes of the Pierce County Parks Committee
January 09, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.
County Board Room
Pierce County Courthouse – Ellsworth, WI

Committee Members Present: Scott Bjork, Kevin Coulson, Rodney Gilles (Remote), Mel Pittman and Kris Sampson

Others Present: Jason Matthys, Brad Lawrence, Andy Pichotta, Gregory Weaver, Sarah Nigbor (Remote), Scott Schoepp and Travis Campbell

Chairman S. Bjork called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Public Comment

Chairman S. Bjork called for public comment. No public comment made.

Minutes

The August 30, 2022 minutes were presented. Motion by K. Sampson, second by M. Pittman, to approve the August 30, 2022 minutes as presented. Motion carried with all in favor.

Park Report

S. Schoepp updated the committee on the dredging project stating they are in the process of getting the proper permits and there has been some difficulty meeting with the DNR. There is a pre application meeting tomorrow with the consulting firm and DNR staff to discuss the project and how to proceed. M. Pittman asked what the meeting entailed and if it involved the engineering firm that was hired. S. Schoepp explained that the meeting would be with staff, the hired engineering firm and the DNR to go over how to proceed, what permits were needed, deadlines and cover the beginning process of the dredge project. J. Matthys stated that he assumes that the engineering firm would meet with this committee and would be providing the committee recommendations are, timeframes, cost in the future. S. Schoepp confirmed that and stated once they figure out what volume we are dealing with and what they will permit. M. Pittman asked how involved the DNR was going to be with the disposal of the sediment. S. Schoepp stated he didn't think they would be involved much with the disposal site, they do look at the contents and the heavy metals, slope, he's hoping to find out more when he meets with them. S. Bjork inquired if there had been a cost estimate provided yet. S. Schoepp stated that the engineering firm provided an initial cost estimate of 1.8-2.1 million based on similar projects in the southeastern part of the state. He added that those cost were based on the inflated Covid inflated prices and is hopeful that this project comes in closer to 1.3-1.8 million. Once it's determined the volume then a better figure can be determined. S. Schoepp went on to update the committee on three snowmobile grant projects stating that two of the three re-decking projects are completed. The third project is the Mines Creek bridge replacement which was supposed to be done by December 15 but the DNR didn't get the permit to him until the 7th and with weather issues it hasn't gotten done yet but will be soon.

The permit was applied for in June and it was received until December so that held that project up.

S. Schoepp provided the committee with the park user fee income report stating that revenues were about \$194,000 when you subtract credit card fees and sales tax it still leaves around \$179,000 which is still our second best year in the history of the park so that was something to be proud of. K. Sampson thanked him for providing that information.

Discuss/take action to approve the updated Park Superintendent position description

S.Schoepp stated that J. Matthys was leading that one and that he had stepped out of the room. Motion by K. Sampson, second by K. Coulson to Table it until J. Matthys returns.

Discuss/take action on 2023 snowmobile trail program grant application request from the Pierce County Snowmobile Council

S. Schoepp stated that like the grants reported on earlier, every year it is up to the committee to approve grants that are applied for by staff since it does take man hours. The snowmobile council has requested three grants to be applied for which include the general maintenance grant which is required to have the snowmobile trails program in the county for \$71,370 which consist of 232.6 miles funded at \$300 a mile. The other two are bridge related. A re-deck and rip rap project on a Plum Creek bridge for \$14,000 and a bridge re-deck project for \$8,500 for the Nelson/Village Bridge on Eau Galle River. S. Schoepp added that the maintenance grant is basically guaranteed and stated that both the bridge rehab projects are reasonable projects and he recommends that they be approved. Motion by M. Pittman, Second by K. Sampson to approve the 2023-24 snowmobile program grant requests as provide by the Pierce County Snowmobile Council. Motion carried with all in favor.

Discuss/take action to approve the updated Park Superintendent position description

Previously tabled. J. Matthys explained that HR director and himself had worked with S. Schoepp and had reviewed the position description to make sure that it was up to date and included everything that was needed. Minimal things were added and removed mostly based around the snowmobile trail grants, changes were in red on the sheet in the packet. K. Sampson stated that she didn't feel that the title of Parks Superintendent encompassed everything that is done since it is more than just Nugget Lake County Park for the position. Discussion took place on different title possibilities. J. Matthys explained that the CDL class B with N endorsements, CPR, AED and the law enforcement requirements may reduce the availability of qualified applicants and offered for consideration adding the ability to obtain a CDL within a period of time. Discussion took place on that and S. Schoepp felt it was 6 months would be the best since the CDL is needed during the summer season. J. Matthys stated that based on the discussion they would add the ability to obtain a valid class B CDL with tanker endorsements within the first 6 months of employment. Motion by M. Pittman, second by K. Sampson to approve the Parks Superintendent job description as presented with the addition of allowing for 6 months to obtain a CDL Class B with N endorsement. Motion carried with all in favor.

Discuss the possibility of relocating the boat landing at Nugget Lake

S. Schoepp stated that M. Pittman requested a discussion on other possibilities for the Nugget Lake boat landing in lieu of the dredge project. S. Schoepp provided the committee with a handout that provided two other possible boat landing options. The first one would consist of coming in at the existing easement by the Smith Farm and running down to the lake. This option is very steep at about 26% slope the other option was using the emergency spillway of the dam. He had talked with Rod Webb in Land Conservation and it was indicated that this is a possibility. M. Pittman stated that his reasoning for the request is that the last dredge project was only around 15 years ago and wanted to explore all possibilities for options. Further discussion took place on the other possibilities but it was generally agreed that these options were too steep to access and or provided too little parking area. K. Coulson informed the committee that currently the lake is hard to navigate on the upper end. It was also discussed that the upper end of the lake is where the existing infrastructure is and if not dredged, it would slowly lower attendance at the campground and park. S. Scheopp stated that with this new dredge project he hopes to remove significantly more material than the last dredge project.

Closed Session

Chairman S. Bjork read the closed session language verbatim. Motion by M. Pittman, Second by K. Sampson to go into closed session at 9:57 a.m. pursuant to: §19.85(1)(e) Wis. Stats. for the purpose of deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive bargaining reasons require a closed session for the purpose. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Open Session

The committee returned to open session at 10:29 a.m. by motion of K. Sampson, second by K. Coulson. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

From Closed Session item - Discuss/ take action to consider a request from the Village of Bay City regarding the possibility of the county conveying a small piece of property known as Sand Island to the village for recreational purposes

B. Lawrence explained that in approximately 1995 the county participated in a flood buyout program and acquired numerous properties along the Mississippi River. The Village of Bay City is interested in acquiring the property known as Sand Island from the county and has adopted a resolution. If they did acquire it they would use it for recreation purposes. The properties part of the flood buyout program can only be transferred from Pierce County to other governmental entities and there are various conditions that need to be flowed if that occurs. This is a very time consuming process. The county was involved in a similar process with the Town of Trenton back in the 2000's and most of the properties acquired in the flood buyout program were conveyed to the Town of Trenton at that time, the county retained approximately 4 parcels of properties. At this time, the purpose of this is to see if this committee is interested in pursuing request of the Village of Bay City about potentially conveying the Sand Island property to the village for the purpose of recreational purposes. This is an opportunity to make sure that the public is given the opportunity to speak on this matter and if there is interest, this committee could take action to indicate that there is interest for such a transfer of ownership, subject to attending further appropriate approvals from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, State of Wisconsin

Emergency Management and the Pierce County. This is something that takes a lot of time and effort to do it, but that it would also come back not only to this committee but also the Finance and Personnel Committee for further approvals. K. Coulson asked if it would be the responsibility of Bay City to do some of the work on this. B. Lawrence stated they may be able to take some of the work but a majority of it would fall on county staff based on his recollection from the previous time. Motion by K. Coulson, second by K. Sampson that there is interest in considering a transfer of ownership subject to obtaining further appropriate approval from FEMA, the State Department of Emergency Management and the County and direct staff to follow accordingly. Motion carried with all in favor.

Next Meeting Date

To be determined.

Motion by K. Sampson, second by K. Coulson to adjourn. Motion carried with all in favor.