

Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee Minutes

4 April 2012

Members Present: Stephen Favorite, Chair
Bob Egan, Vice Chair
Leon Kukanich
Sig Hjenvick
Ralph Sitzberger
Others Present: Lawrence Stevens, CF, Forest Administrator
Constance Valkenaar, Administrative Secretary
Dale Mayo, Parks Tech/Snowmo Prog. Coordinator
Jill Nemec, DNR Forestry Liaison
Ken Anderson, Media
Dan Balog, Land O'Lakes Town Chair
Ken Storms, Holly Tomlanovich, Sno-Eagles
Gary Metster, Jeff Currie, Great Headwaters Trails
Gary Dalbeck, Superior Electric
Carolyn Scholl, Land & Water Dept.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman Favorite, who advised that this was a public meeting and that notification of the meeting with the agenda was sent to the Committee members, the County Board Chairman, the Vilas County Clerk, the Vilas County Corporation Counsel, the Vilas County News-Review, the Lakeland Times, FYI Wisconsin, Radio Stations WRJO and Coyote 93.7, and the Northwoods River News. The notice and agenda were also posted on the Courthouse and Forestry Department bulletin boards. This notification was verified by the Forestry Department Administrative Secretary.

- 1) Motion by Kukanich, seconded by Egan to approve the agenda in any order at the discretion of the Chair. Motion carried unanimously.
- 2) Motion by Egan, seconded by Sitzberger, to approve the minutes of the 7 March 2012 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
- 3) Land & Water Conservation Dept. Request: Scholl addressed the Committee. L & W has a project planned to place downed trees, including tops, into the beds of selected lakes in order to combat shore erosion and enhance wildlife habitat. Her Dept. is requesting that the Forestry Dept. provide these trees at no cost to L&W. L&W will bear any transportation expense. Discussion. Motion by Hjenvick, seconded by Sitzberger, that the Forestry Dept. shall provide the approximately 40 trees to L & W for a shoreland erosion control project. Motion carried unanimously.
- 4) Trails Policy – Environmental Review of New Trails: In accordance with the Committee's direction that the Department should work with L&W on the environmental assessment aspect of Vilas County Trails Policy, Stevens and Scholl have met to discuss this. Mayo advised he feels that the trail user groups want to have some say in the policy. Mayo asked that the Committee entertain a motion, saying that he would like to see a specific trail user group sit down and look at the policy, along with Gagnon, since he is involved in the issue of invasive species, and listen to their concerns. Mayo said he thinks they could come up with a policy that's a little more

user friendly while still being responsible as far as taking care of the County Forest. Stevens advised that the DNR does have to review things when it involves their money. Stevens advised that in speaking with Scholl, he has been advised that providing this service is not in her Department plan. Scholl did advise that she can come up with protocol for situations where the DNR will not be doing the EA and that job will fall to the County. Scholl advised that Quita Sheehan of L&W does have experience in this area. Scholl advised that this could be a fairly substantial project, done correctly. She suggested that L&W could create and provide a template which the Forestry Dept. could use, and went into some detail with this idea. In order to assign staff to do this project, she would need to budget for it. The Chair expressed his concern that he does not wish to see unnecessary duplication of services. Discussion. Stevens said that in regard to the Natural Resources Review, Scholl has advised that she and Sheehan may be able to construct a short outline of the items which need to be looked at in an EA. This would create a protocol which would be helpful for all involved in a trail project. The Chair summed up the plan: to direct Forestry Department to work with L&W to develop & improve the protocol for environmental review & the Department will continue to work on fine tuning the policy.

- 5) OSP Field Lighting Project: Stevens advised that according to information received from the Dept. of Work Force Development, this project meets the criteria for Prevailing Wage requirements. Hence, the contract was amended to include acknowledgment from Dalbeck that he will comply with this requirement. The adjusted labor price for the project is \$40,217.21; this is included in the amended contract. Musco will be given the go-ahead to ship the products; Superior Electric and the Department will coordinate with Musco and WPS. Stevens will also ask Maines (surveyor) to go out to the site to verify locations. Motion by Egan, seconded by Sitzberger, to approve the amended contract. Motion carried unanimously. Egan and Dalbeck then signed the amended contract.
- 6) Scat Lake Mismeander: Stevens reported that he has received a letter from Bureau of Land Mgt. in which they advised that the Federal Gov't asserts no claim in these lands. The next step is to come up with criteria to divide up this land and bid it out to a surveyor. Discussion. The Committee suggested requesting an RFP. Stevens was directed to obtain proposals from surveyors asking them to explain how they would lay out the mismeander on the ground and map it, and how they will consult the State law and divide that land up.
- 7) Tax Deed Parcel 26-2889 – Twp. Of Washington: This parcel remains unsold after several years of attempts to sell it via the established practice. Stevens suggested that the Highway Dept. might be interested in taking over management of the parcel, as it is quite small, and lies partially in Hwy 70 ROW. The Committee directed that the adjacent property owners be contacted one more time (they have been contacted numerous times in the past), to see if they are interested in acquiring the parcel.
- 8) Timber Sales Contracts/Forest Management: Stevens gave the report, a copy of which is attached. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Kukanich, to approve one year extensions for contracts #846, 853, 855, and 857 with stumpage increases according to the terms of the contract. Motion carried unanimously. Also, motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Sitzberger, to approve 1 year extensions to Sales #865 & 866 without stumpage increases, due to the fact that the contractor, McKee Trucking, has been otherwise occupied harvesting storm damage/salvage sales. Motion carried unanimously. Timber Sale Contract Amendment – Stevens advised that for certification purposes, contract language is needed regarding chain of custody of wood

products. It is important to establish that the County's ownership of the wood products ends when the product leaves the sale area. The State provided the suggested contract language, and the Dept. incorporated this language into the County contract. This contract amendment was reviewed and approved by Corp Counsel. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Favorite, to add this new paragraph to the existing contract as recommended by the DNR and approved by Corporation Counsel. Motion carried unanimously. Sustainable Forestry Grant – Stevens advised that funds are available for Sustainable Forestry projects. Stevens suggested work on recon backlog, plantation survival counts, and assisting with timber sales set up, by the Dept.'s Summer Intern, Jeremiah Oftadah, qualifies for a Sustainable Forestry Grant. The salary and benefits for this 6 month position would be paid via this state grant. This one time opportunity will save the County a substantial amount of funds and will help meet certification requirements. HR has placed this item on Personnel's agenda for approval. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Sitzberger, to apply for this grant. Motion carried unanimously. Brush Rake – Stevens explained that the brush rake, (purchased in 1996 for \$11,000.00, including extra parts), is seldom used by the Dept. Despite adding calcium to the skidder tires and adding extra weight onto the skidder, the skidder is very tippy with this attachment, except on level ground. This is a safety hazard for the operator. Another hazard is that the safety cage in the operator compartment is not adequate to prevent sticks from striking the operator. The Dept. has been contacted by a party interested in buying the brush rake. In summary, Stevens is asking the Committee their opinion as to what to do with the brush rake, since it is too heavy for use with the Dept.'s skidder. Discussion. The Committee directed Stevens to research the brush rake's value, so that it can be advertised for sale. Sitzberger suggested an online auction site, Wisconsin Surplus, and will forward the info to Stevens.

- 9) Parks & Recreation: Trails Policy - Mayo asked for a clarification on Item #7a, discussed above in #4. Mayo asked if the Committee's consensus was that Sitzberger, Mayo, and Gagnon would meet with the user groups to gather input on the County's Trail Policy. Sitzberger asked if there would be authorization to have this meeting. Favorite advised that opportunities for citizen input on the policy are available via attendance at the Committee's public meetings, and sending letters. Sitzberger asked if this item could be placed on the next agenda, to approve the proposed changes in the policy, and then send it on as policy. Favorite advised that this document is a work in progress and can remain on the agenda so that the Committee will continue working on it. Trail 13 Relocation (Eagle River to 3 Lakes) – Mayo reported that a possible proposed re-route (going south) would run Bloom Road from the Mud Creek crossing to Highway 45 then utilize the ROW. 1 ¼ mile in Vilas County is estimated at \$267,000.00, followed by an additional mile in Oneida County. Discussion. The Committee will be kept updated. Snowmobile Trail Opening Policy – Mayo reported that at the March meeting of the Vilas County Snowmobile Alliance, a motion was passed requesting a change in the policy to allow the County to close the trails and then allow the trails to re-open without a safety inspection. Mayo said that Corporation Counsel suggested that this matter be brought before the Snowmobile Safety Committee and be brought back to Forestry with their recommendations. Discussion.
- 10) Rock Concert Update: Egan reported that this event will take place at the Derby Track.
- 11) Snowmobile Safety Committee Report: Hjemvick noted that the PSA program went well, and Vilas County had a very safe season. Hjemvick will present a brief end of season report at the June Forestry meeting.

- 12) Resolutions: Motion by Kukanich, seconded by Hjemvick, to approve the Forest Plan amendment incorporating Tree Retention Guidelines. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Hjemvick, seconded by Egan, to approve resolution for Budget Amendment Fish & Game Revenue. Motion carried unanimously.
- 13) Letters & Communications: Town of Phelps – 3 items sent re ATV use on County Hwys. Town requests joint meeting of Hwy & Forestry; Favorite will coordinate this with Hwy Chair later this spring. Valkenaar reported a phone call from Phelps property taxpayer Robert Rodwill, who advised that he is strongly opposed to ATV use on Town roads. Rodwill asked Valkenaar to pass his sentiments on to the Committee.
- 14) Meetings/Education/Out of County Travel: Stevens reminded the Committee about the annual Sustainable Conference on 19 April in Florence; interested Committee members are already authorized to attend.
- 15) Truck Purchase: Delivery of the 2012 pickup is set for later this month; the voucher is with the monthly bills. Advance reimbursement has been received from the State in the amount of \$20,625.00.
- 16) Monthly Budget Summary: No problems noted.
- 17) Monthly Bills: Motion by Egan, seconded by Sitzberger, to approve the bills and forward them to Finance. Motion carried unanimously.
- 18) Next Meeting Date: Next regular meeting will be 2 May 2012, 8:30 a.m., Courthouse.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Minutes reflect the recorders' (Valkenaar & Stevens) notations and are subject to approval by the appropriate board or committee.