

Dickinson County Conservation Board

2279 170th St., Okoboji

7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2017

Chair: Joan Gronstal

Board members: Kathy Kleen, Willia Mueske, Eric Stoll

Employees: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth

Board liaison: Pam Jordan, arrive at 7:07 p.m.

Call to order 7 p.m.

Agenda approval: Mueske motion, Kleen second. Approved.

Approval of last month's minutes: Kleen motion, Stoll second. Approved.

Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County: An investment report was given. The board would like to recruit new board members. Poppema-Sikma Construction of Sheldon has not billed the foundation for the construction of the addition so far and will begin billing as of 2018. One change order has been submitted to add a transom window above the indoor bee hive to be installed in Pollinator Paradise.

Environmental education update: The 2018 program calendar is complete and is on the website. It will be published in online calendars, Vacation Okoboji and brochures at the beginning of the year.

Dickinson County Conservation Board areas

-Spirit Lake Middle School Audubon site naming: The Audubon sanctuary's original name was the Tom Grein Memorial Audubon Sanctuary, and the board decided to keep the name as is. The middle school had an Audubon Academy in which different groups worked on different projects for the sanctuary --- building tables, seed collecting, creating a video, working on mapping and creating posters. Roth will take the ideas from the top two poster groups and will complete prints to be displayed on the land.

-Reeds Run grant agreement: The REAP grant application was approved. The Department of Natural Resources sent the agreement for the conservation board to accept the grant. Stoll motion to authorize Sorenson to sign the grant forms, Kleen second. Approved.

-Jahn property: The Dickinson County engineer would like the Jahn property --- which is set aside as a future gravel pit --- to be converted back to ag land instead of the preserve it is right now. It is up to the engineer's office and the board of supervisors to revert the land back to ag land instead of it being managed by the conservation board.

Kleen asked "What do we need to do?" She asked if the conservation board members need to come to the board of supervisors with reasons to keep the land as is, with a list of species of concern there. Jordan said the conservation board would need to quantify what the conservation value of the land is for butterflies, bees, wildlife and prairie species. It is also a popular hunting spot.

Kleen said Sorenson needs to go to the board of supervisors to talk about the issue and bring vegetation specialist Aric Ping to talk about the values of the land. Gronstal said board members that are available should also come to show support at the board of supervisors meeting.

-Boy Scout Spring Camporee: A district representative asked if the spring event could be held at the nature center. Scout camping is allowed at Kenue Park, with permission. The Camporee would include two nights of camping, cooking on Dutch ovens and programs to help the boys earn merit badges. It would be approximately six troops and would be held at the end of April or early May. Kleen and Mueske said it would be a good idea to host the Camporee and a way to support Boy Scouts.

Operations and facility update

-Bids for maintenance shop: Bids for the maintenance shop were opened on Monday, Nov. 13. The low bid was \$494,995 from Quail Construction of Spencer. From the summer bids, some items were taken away and a sewer system was added but the bids came in approximately \$50,000 more this November. Jordan mentioned that wood is at a premium because of wild fires and severe weather limiting supply.

Sorenson put together a possible plan for paying for the project, but it would mean a \$90,000 shortfall that would have to be requested from the Rural Basic Fund. Because it isn't certain, that amount would have to be value engineered to make a contract with Quail Construction.

Mueske said perhaps costs would go down, but Sorenson said the architect fees will not, because each rebid means more architectural fees. "I think it's important we get a new shop because our equipment needs protected. You don't invest in new equipment and let it sit outside in the winter," Mueske said. "It's a sub-standard facility," Stoll said of the current maintenance building.

Gronstal said the plan looks good and would entertain a motion to move forward. Mueske motion to accept the bid from Quail Construction with \$90,000 value engineered and ask for \$90,000 from the Rural Basic Fund upon reference checks of the contractors. Kleen second. Approved.

-Recycle center: The recycling center is now on winter hours, open 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. People have been coming in and using the compost. With the staff/board changeover in the Dickinson County Landfill Commission, it was forgotten to do the assessment to fund the landfill commission budget. Jordan said it should be written that this is a concurrent renewal unless a change is made. The DCLC will meet Thursday, Nov. 16, to discuss what to do about the assessment.

-County Home project: Seventy-five samples were taken at the former Pride Group and about 25 came back positive for asbestos. A contractor estimated less than \$100,000 for asbestos abatement, and formal estimates for the demolition and shelter construction project are being requested. Sorenson said the project and costs will most likely be presented to the anonymous donor and see from there what the donor is agreeable to funding.

Jordan said there is a consensus in the board of supervisors for keeping the building and its location under county ownership. One of the boilers is malfunctioning and needs a \$300-\$400 fix, and the board of supervisors will have to deal with how long to keep the building functioning while its future is determined.

-Director's IPERS: The auditor's office had an IPERS audit, and Sorenson's IPERS category was listed incorrectly. Lori Pederson will look into how to fix that within the state system.

Approval of expenses: Kleen motion, Stoll second. Approved.

General discussion

-The part-time IRVM technician has resigned, and his last day is Nov. 21. The advertisement for a new technician is out.

-A winter seasonal has been hired for the first time. The position is for six months. The unused budget from a spring seasonal and Americorps --- which was not able to come --- is being used for this position.

-This year a bill was received for the dock removal at Ainsworth-Orleans Beach for the first time. Sorenson said since it's a roll dock, the conservation board can take the dock out itself.

-A privacy fence is supposed to be erected along the Ainsworth-Orleans Beach boat ramp parking lot to separate the neighbor's yard.

Adjournment motion by Kleen, second by Mueske. Approved. Adjourn at 8:35 p.m.