

**Dickinson County Conservation Board meeting**  
**5 p.m. March 10, 2021**  
**Dickinson County Nature Center, Okoboji**

**Chair: Willia Mueske**

**Vice chair: Kathy Kleen**

**Board members: Eric Stoll via zoom, Joan Gronstal via zoom, Steve Anderson arrived at 5:10**

**Employees: Lee Sorenson, Daria Mather**

**Board liaisons: Steve Clark**

Call to order by **Mueske** at 5:01 p.m.

Agenda approval: **Kleen** motioned to approve, **Gronstal** second. Approved.

Public comment: No public present

Consent agenda/items

- a. Approval of past month's minutes
- b. Recycle report
- c. Environmental education report
- d. Conservation Foundation Minutes

**Gronstal** motion to approve the consent agenda, **Stoll** second. Approved.

Dickinson County Conservation Board areas:

- a. HSB bridge plan approval

**Kleen** made a motion to approve the final plans for the horseshoe bend pedestrian bridge repair provided by Calhoun & Burns Engineering and to allow the Dickinson County Engineers office to conduct the bidding process and help oversee the construction work during the bridge repair.

**Gronstal** second. Approved unanimously.

- b. Sherwood Forest Agreement

Board discussed the Sherwood Foundation agreement for the Sherwood Forest land donation, construction funding and 25 year trust. Still talking with legal counsel on who's name should be listed on the agreement: Conservation Board vs Conservation Foundation. At this time we feel the land donation goes to the conservation Board, construction through the foundation and the trust be held by conservation board. Having the trust under the conservation board might affect REAP annual payments because it would alter the .22 cent level per thousand levy required by REAP to get funding.

Lodge pricing (hourly weekdays/meetings)

Have received many requests from Rotary, Kiwanis and other non-profits for luncheons. Board discuss fee schedule for non profits and felt like free will donation would be acceptable from non profit. Other groups, individual that want to rent the lodge may rent the Monday – Thursdays at an hourly rate of \$50 per hour.

Having an issue with credit card online payment due to the stripe charge of 2.9 % transaction fee per reservation. State auditor feel that we need to raise our fees to account for that surcharge so it isn't being paid by county funds. **Anderson** made a motion to keep the prices are we approved at a previous meeting but say that the 2.9 % + .30 is included in each of the fees and that the accurate charge. **Gronstal** second. Approved unanimously.

#### Operations and facility update:

a. Part-time benefits

Board discussed providing part time benefits to the 3 part time position we currently have under the Conservation Board. This would hopefully help employee retention for these positions, 1 of our part time employees under the IRVM program just resigned. Sorenson requested that we provide 24 hours of vacation time along with 40 hours of sick time on the employee's anniversary dates. Basically giving them 3 days of vacation and 40 hours of sick time.

**Kleen** motion to provide the 24 hours of vacation time along with the 40 hours of sick time to go into effect immediately for all permanent part time employees. **Stoll** second. Approved unanimously.

b.

c. ICCS Fall Conference

Scheduled for a Wed-Friday, Sept. 15-17, in Ames (Story County). Sorenson requested permission from the Board to sign up for the ICCS Fall Conference in 2025 and cohost with Clay County Conservation. Board agreed it would be nice to showcase all that we have completed, we last held the ICCS Fall Conference in 2013.

#### Approval of Expense:

a. INHF Donation

INHF has requested a \$500 donation from the conservation board for this year's donation. The INHF has contributed many funds towards our land acquisition projects for many past years. **Anderson** motioned to approve \$500 annual donation the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, **Gronstal** seconded, Motion carried unanimously.

**Kleen** motioned to approved expenses, **Gronstal** second. Approved.

General Discussion:

- a. Steve Clark is getting calls about the proposed seeding of A34. Doug Todey (IRVM) sent out a letter for all landowners adjacent to A34 informing them of our plans to plant the ROW in the coming seasons. Landowners are voices their concerns on what they want not to happen on the county ROW.

Anderson, Stoll or Kleen will meet with 2 of the Board of supervisors (Steve Clark) to see moving forward about a policy how to handle these situation.

- b. Sorenson met with the Jeremy Rierson (Renewable Energy Consultant) solar panel consultant to discuss for a county wide solar panel deal. Rierson will run some numbers to see if solar panels would be beneficial to our properties. The Board shared concern the we might lose a substantial section of prairie for the solar field

We would probably lose prairie due to the acreage needed for solar panels.

Gronstal motion to adjourn at 5:52 p.m., Stoll seconded. Approved.