

**LINN COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2017, BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Linn County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on **Monday, February 27, 2017**, at the Wickiup Hill Learning Center, 10260 Morris Hills Road, Toddville, Iowa.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Hillary Hughes, Cindy Burke, Steve Emerson, and John Hanson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

George Kanz

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Biechler, Director; Dennis Goemaat, Deputy Director; Randy Burke, Planner; and Ryan Schlader, Community Outreach

OTHERS PRESENT

Supervisor John Harris; Mitchell Schmidt, Cedar Rapids Gazette

CALL TO ORDER

President Hughes called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were received.

ITEM R1. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Hanson, second by Emerson.

To remove item C4 from the agenda and place it on the regular agenda for discussion..

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent; Kanz

MOTION by Hanson, second by Emerson.

To approve the consent agenda.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent; Kanz

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

ITEM C1. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 23, 2017 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

**ITEM C2. APPROVE CLAIMS AND EXPENDITURES – CLAIMS LIST #2017-8
Claims and Transfer list #2017-8 involving claim #8-382 through claim #8-457.**

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ITEM C3. RECEIVE AND PLACE ON FILE THE JANUARY 2017 FINANCIAL/BUDGET REPORT

ITEM C5. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

1. Gift #29-2017, Hawkeye Bicycle Association – monetary donation (\$2,000) to purchase two (2) benches to be placed along the Cedar Valley Nature Trail.
2. Gift #30-2017, Pheasants Forever, Linn County Chapter #45 – donation of prairie seed purchase vouchers in the amount of \$3,000.
3. Gift #31-2017, Whitetails Unlimited – monetary donation (\$10,073.15) for wildlife habitat development on the new property acquisition along the Squaw Creek corridor south of Squaw Creek County Park.
4. Gift #32-2017, ITC Midwest – monetary donation (\$5,000 involving 4th of 5 payments) toward the nature playscape project at the Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Area.

REGULAR AGENDA:

ITEM C4. JANUARY 2017 ACTIVITY REPORT

Discussed activity report as it relates to citations issued. Questions involved dogs off leash and enforcement posture for this violation. Most enforcement regarding dogs off leash is accomplished with verbal warnings. Law enforcement staff has the authority to write either citations or written warnings when the situation warrants.

ITEM R2. DISCUSS MATTERS RELATED TO LINN COUNTY LAND AND WATER LEGACY BOND INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEM:

1. Initial bond funded projects – preliminary draft of the 5-year strategic implementation plan.

Biechler distributed a copy of the preliminary draft plan for review and discussion.

A question was asked regarding the spreadsheet subtotal, which seems to indicate a larger Linn County Water and Land Legacy ask than the total project cost. The intent is to identify the total dollars available through bond funds. The spreadsheet will be revised to address this issue.

Member Hanson indicated an interest in establishing young forests.

President Hughes urged members to evaluate the list and determine which items should be included, which should be removed from the list, and any that should be added. The purpose is to refine the list to prioritize bond activity. The same process should be completed for park improvements and trails.

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Biechler reminded the Board that engineering and design work is still needed for all projects and this will require a lot of time to be devoted getting projects ready.

Member Emerson indicated that he thought that the bond funds should primarily be targeted for water quality components of projects.

A document regarding the projected bond expenditures was distributed. It shows that bond expenditures are likely to ramp up slowly, increase over time, and then drop off at the end of the 20-year period.

Biechler reported that funding, as part of the FY18 budget request to the Board of Supervisors, for the project coordinator and conservation ecologist positions has been approved. These positions will assist with getting bond-funded projects ready for bidding. Job descriptions will be developed. Plans are to fill the positions relatively early in the upcoming fiscal year.

The draft plan will continue to be refined and updated.

No action was taken on this item.

ITEM R3. DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON THE PROJECT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LINN COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD AND THE LINN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REGARDING IMPROVEMENTS AT THE INTERSECTION OF ALICE ROAD AND THE CEDAR VALLEY NATURE TRAIL.

Biechler reviewed the project agreement between the Linn County Board of Supervisors and the Linn County Conservation Board regarding improvements at the intersection of Alice Road and the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. A question was asked regarding the truncated dome warning pads. The concern is that, as the rubber mats deteriorate, they can release small pieces of rubber.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Burke.

To approve the agreement and authorize the Board President to sign on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none absent; Kanz

ITEM R4. DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON AUTHORIZING STAFF TO DISPOSE OF, BY THE MOST APPROPRIATE MEANS, THE FORMER SERVICE AREA BUILDINGS (EXCEPT THE OLD CORNCRIB AT MORGAN CREEK PARK) IN PINICON RIDGE AND MORGAN CREEK COUNTY PARKS, THIS INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO THE FORMER ASSISTANCE PARK RANGER RESIDENCE AT E AVENUE IN MORGAN CREEK PARK.

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Biechler reviewed the service area buildings at E Avenue at Morgan Creek Park and at Pinicon Ridge Park. Staff is requesting Board approval to dispose of the buildings.

MOTION by Burke, second by Emerson.

To authorize staff to dispose of all buildings except the corncrib at Morgan Creek Park by the most appropriate means.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none absent; Kanz

ITEM R5. DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON THE UPDATED CORPORATE AUTHORIZATION RESOLUTION WITH NXT BANK REGARDING THE CONSERVATION BOARD'S FACILITY RESERVATIONS ACCOUNT AND TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY TO SIGN THE RESOLUTION.

Goemaat reviewed the resolution from NXT Bank for authorized signatories on the reservation account. This resolution is updated annually.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Burke.

To approve the resolution from NXT Bank and authorize the Board President and Secretary to sign on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none absent; Kanz

ITEM R6. DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON APPROVAL OF AND TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD PRESIDENT OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SIGN THE PROPOSED FUNDING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CONSERVATION BOARD AND IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REGARDING THE STATE RECREATIONAL TRAILS (SRT) GRANT AND THE TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES GRANT (TAP) GRANT FOR THE EAST BLUE CREEK BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT ALONG THE CEDAR VALLEY NATURE TRAIL, LCCB PROJECT #10-12.

Randy Burke reviewed the funding agreement between the Linn County Conservation Board and the Iowa Department of Transportation.

MOTION by Burke, second by Emerson.

To approve the funding agreement and authorize the Board President or Executive Director to sign the agreement.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none absent; Kanz

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ITEM R7. DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON RESCINDING AND REPLACING RESOLUTION #2017-5 WITH RESOLUTION #2017-8 AND RESOLUTION #2017-9 AUTHORIZING APPLICATION TO THE CORRIDOR METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CMPO) FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) FUNDS REGARDING THE HIGHWAY 100 TRAIL PROJECT.

Randy Burke reviewed existing Resolution #2017-5. Staff recommends rescinding this resolution and approving Resolutions #2017-8 and #2017-9. This change separates the Cedar River Bridge crossing design and engineering from the construction part of the project for grant funding purposes.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Hanson.

To rescind Resolution #2017-5 and approve and adopt Resolutions #2017-8 and #2017-9.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none absent; Kanz

ITEM R8. DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON APPROVAL OF AND AUTHORIZING THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR TO SIGN THE FUNDING AGREEMENT LDHP PROJECT #17-02 BETWEEN THE CONSERVATION BOARD AND THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES REGARDING THE STATE LOW-HEAD DAM SAFETY COST SHARE GRANT FOR THE BUFFALO CREEK PARK DAM MODIFICATION AND ROCK ARCH RAPIDS, LCCB PROJECT #8-14.

Goemaat reviewed the funding agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for the \$56,860 Low Head Dam Mitigation grant for the Buffalo Creek dam project.

MOTION by Hanson, second by Emerson.

To approve the funding agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources regarding the State Low-Head Dam Safety program and authorize the Deputy Director to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none absent; Kanz

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ITEM R9. DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON APPROVAL OF AND AUTHORIZING THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR TO SIGN THE FUNDING AGREEMENT LDHP PROJECT #17-02 BETWEEN THE CONSERVATION BOARD AND THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES REGARDING THE STATE FISH HABITAT GRANT FOR THE BUFFALO CREEK PARK DAM MODIFICATION AND ROCK ARCH RAPIDS/FISH HABITAT IMPROVEMENT, LCCB PROJECT #8-14.

Goemaat reviewed the funding agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for the \$50,000 Fish Habitat grant agreement for fish habitat improvements as part of the Buffalo Creek dam mitigation project.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Burke.

To approve the funding agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources regarding the State Fish Habitat program and authorize the Deputy Director to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none absent; Kanz

ITEM R10. REVIEW, DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON THE CONSERVATION BOARD'S FEES AND CHARGES FOR PARK FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES.

Goemaat discussed the proposed addition of the open shelter in the Flying Squirrel Campground to the reservation schedule. Staff recommends adding the shelter as an additional facility that may be reserved with a cost of \$35 weekday and \$50 weekend.

MOTION by Hanson, second by Emerson.

To approve adding the Flying Squirrel Campground Shelter to the reservation facility list at a daily cost of \$35 weekday and \$50 weekend.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none absent; Kanz

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ITEM R11. REVIEW, DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON CHANGES TO THE CONSERVATION BOARD'S RULES AND REGULATIONS.

Goemaat updated the Board concerning staff's annual review of the rules and regulations. Staff does not recommend changes to the rules and regulations at this time.

The Board asked about drones and a suggestion was made by Board member Hanson to consider a possible moratorium on the use of drones. The Board decided that a moratorium was not warranted at this time, but asked Staff to continue to monitor drone use and determine if a rule is needed.

No action was taken on this item.

ITEM R12. BOARD MEMBER/STAFF REPORTS

1. FY18 Conservation Board Budget – status of proposed budget offers and request for passenger vehicle replacements – Biechler updated the Board concerning the budget process and the budget offers submitted by the Conservation Board. The Board of Supervisors has approved the FY18 budget together with two budget offers – one for a Conservation Ecologist and Land Protection Specialist and one for a Project Coordinator. The third request for a Resource Technician was not approved. The Board of Supervisors also approved the Conservation Board's request for funding to replace four passenger vehicles.
2. Farm Bureau Meeting held on February 7, 2017 – Hughes and Goemaat updated the Board concerning the meeting with the Farm Bureau on February 7. Discussion centered on the Linn County Water and Land Legacy bond and the cost to landowners. The Farm Bureau expressed concern that they were not contacted early in the bond discussion.
3. Ryan Schlader – Community Outreach and Marketing – Schlader reported that he is working on some promotional items as it pertains to the opening of the new Red Cedar Lodge. Also, he has been reaching out to Go Cedar Rapids, Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, and other groups for additional opportunities to promote the lodge and our other reservation facilities.

We have started reprinting some brochures for the season, and slowly working on updating our Linn County Conservation Parks and Natural Areas brochure. This brochure has not been updated for several years, so we will be starting over with a new design.

Work continues to assist the conservation education staff on some promotional needs, including items for the Nature Playscape at the Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Area.

GPS Impact has submitted a proposal regarding an awareness campaign we can run this spring.

The LinnParksChallenge.org website is being updated. We will freshen it up and will have some moderate new promotion activity as part of the website update. Geocaching continues to be very popular, based on recent logins we received. The website upgrade should be completed soon.

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Schlader will be assisting conservation staff at a Workplace Connections career night at Marion High School. Linn County Conservation will have a table.

Recent warm weather has provided opportunities for people to get outside. This has led to questions from the public concerning when various facilities will open.

The Spring newsletter should be mailed during the first week of April.

- 4. Cindy Burke reported on an upcoming Landowner’s Forum program scheduled for April 29th at Clearwater Farms, 4970 Lakeside Road, Marion, Iowa. This is a cooperative effort between the Monarch Research Project, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Trees Forever, and Linn County Conservation.

ITEM R13. DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON STAFF RECOMMENDATION INVOLVING THE DIGITAL MARKETING AND INFLUENCE PROPOSAL FROM GPS IMPACT REGARDING THE 2017 COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND MARKETING PROGRAM.

Schlader reviewed the marketing proposal from GPS Impact with the Board.

MOTION by Burke, second by Hanson.

To approve the marketing proposal from GPS Impact and authorize the Executive Director to sign a contract for services.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent; Kanz

ITEM R14. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were received.

ITEM R15. CLOSED SESSION REGARDING THE PURCHASE OF 51 ACRES (MORE OR LESS) AS AN ADDITION TO THE CHAIN LAKES NATURAL AREA.

The Conservation Board went into closed session in accordance with Iowa Code Section 21.5(1j) to discuss the purchase of real estate.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Hanson.

To go into closed session at 1:45 PM

VOTE: aye: Hughes
 aye: Burke
 aye: Emerson
 aye: Hanson
 nay: none
 absent: Kanz

President Hughes reported that the Board is out of closed session at 1:58 PM.

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The closed session was taped according to Iowa law.

ITEM R16. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 1:58 PM.

Amanda Bieber typed the above minutes.

SEAL

Recording Secretary

Board Secretary