

## **FORESTRY, LAND, & RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES**

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 3, 2013 TIME: 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: COMMITTEE ROOM #1, 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, COURT HOUSE, RHINELANDER, WI

PRESENT: Chair Baier; Committee Members: Martinson, Rudolph, Shidell, Sorensen  
Forestry Staff: Bilogan, Bradley, Fiene.

OTHERS: Thomas Wiensch, Corp Counsel, Lester Felbab, Bill Welsh, OCATVA. Brian Hegge, Guy Hansen, Joel Flory, RASTA. John Leith, DNR. Marcus Neseemann, River News

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**— At 9:00 a.m. Chair Baier called the meeting to order, noting that it had been properly posted in accordance with the procedures set forth by the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.

**APPROVE CURRENT AGENDA WITH THE ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS AT CHAIR'S DISCRETION**— It was moved by Sorensen, seconded by Rudolph, to approve the current agenda with the order of agenda items at Chair's discretion. Motion carried.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 5, 2013 FORESTRY COMMITTEE MEETING**— It was moved by Rudolph, seconded by Martinson, to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2013 Forestry Committee meeting. All aye. Motion carried.

### **FOREST MANAGEMENT:**

- a) Fiene reported Year-to-Date Timber Stumpage Revenue is \$442,823.98. Shidell asked whether it is possible the department will meet the stumpage goal projected for 2013. Bilogan responded that the stumpage goal has been increased by the County Board more than he has been comfortable with for the past two years. He is doubtful that ambitious goal will be met this year.
- b) **TIMBER SALES FOR DISPOSITION**—It was moved by Shidell, seconded by Sorensen, to act on the following timber contract as follows:

**Contract # 1543** held by **Kafka Forestry LLC** was **closed** as satisfactorily completed, and return Letter of Credit in the amount of \$6552.23. All aye, motion carried.

**ATV LAND USE AGREEMENT**— Bilogan sent a letter to the corporate office, as directed by the committee. Thus far, there has been no response. The ATV Club and Forestry staff feel that there are no further options to follow. Baier stated that if organizations are restricting recreation, they should increase their PILT payments to the County, since tourism revenue is being lost. Bilogan replied that any change in those contracts would need a change in the law and subsequent benefits would not be seen for years down the road.

Wiensch agreed that garbage dumping is a growing problem, but feels that this trend could be curbed if garbage can be disposed of properly at no cost to the public. There is a population that will dump trash just because they would have to pay \$12 at the landfill. Baier suggested that the Solid Waste Committee can address this issue and work with towns to set up some sort of program. He will get it on that agenda. Martinson asked that Forestry send a letter to towns to let them know what options they have to get rid of garbage at no cost to the towns. Bilogan responded that such a letter would be better from the Solid Waste Committee, since it is not a Forestry domain. Rudolph moved that the Forestry Committee send a recommendation to the Solid Waste Committee address the topic. Sorensen seconded. All aye, motion carried.

## RASTA

2013 Budget - Bilogan began by stating that there was money left over in the 2013 budget, which the Committee has allowed to roll over to 2014. There are some line items that should be combined in the next budget.

Brian Hegge, RASTA president, stated that the budget was in good shape due to the use of volunteers along with paid groomers. The one line item overage was due to purchase of a roller to compact the trails. Looking forward, there will be overages on gasoline and insurance line items.

2014 Budget - On the 2014 agreement, RASTA wants to combine three equipment lines into one line item. They also want to combine professional services and personnel training. They feel there should be five line items: Insurance, Labor, Fuel, Equipment and Personnel/Professional. Bilogan agreed with the changes, but cautioned that they make sure they don't overspend on large-ticket items to have enough for the day-to-day maintenance expenses.

Martinson asked how the RASTA budget compares with the grooming expenses Forestry had prior to the contract. Bilogan replied that there is a definite savings to the County.

Shidell moved that the 2014 contract amount remain the same as 2013, with some line items combined, Sorenson seconded. All aye, motion carried.

At Bilogan's request, Sorensen moved to note for the minutes that Committee is aware of deviations from the 2013 Ski Trail Maintenance contract, per the letter of June 27, 2013, and those are approved as long as the budget amount is not increased. Shidell seconded. All aye, motion carried.

Long Range Ski Trail Plan. RASTA requested to moved \$5000 from the unspent 2013 budget to cover the modifications for the ski trails. According to the contract, they are required to set aside \$3200/year into a non-lapsing account for equipment replacement. That has been done and there is \$8260 left. Bilogan is fine with the change. RASTA estimates \$2000 for moving a structure from Townline Lake Park. They will identify which building they will move, so Forestry can continue with the demolition of the others. Sorensen remarked that since RASTA is operating with within their budget, moving funds around should not be an issue. Sorensen moved that RASTA be allowed to move the \$5000 as requested. Shidell seconded. All aye, motion carried.

RASTA will develop the currently plowed out landing on Hwy K used for parking. The plan is to create a full-fledged parking lot to accommodate 3 or 4 cars nearer the trail. Sorensen complimented RASTA on their development plans. The plan is informational at this time, noted but not approved.

Long Range Single Track Plan. The bike/snowshoe trail is approximately 7 miles long. RASTA proposed reroutes and developing new trails the system will expand to total about 20 miles of trail. The "Cathy's Loop" trail has been approved for 2013, but any other changes need to be approved by the Committee. The DNR issued a preliminary notice that the RTA grant has tentatively been approved for \$10,000. That will give them the funds to proceed, but they need approval to begin work. Bilogan noted that the grant is actually in Oneida County's name, so if hypothetically, "and I don't think this is the case", RASTA spent the \$10,000 and did not have the required matching funds, the DNR would look to Oneida County, not RASTA, to provide the match. Hegge said RASTA plans on fundraising efforts to raise their match because they do not want to spend general funds on it.

Joel Flory will coordinate the trail development for RASTA. RASTA is focusing on "Cathy's Loop" because there have been so many requests for beginner level trails. The RTA grant application money will be used in part to hire a professional trail developer who knows how to create features to add enjoyment to trail systems which will draw more users. RASTA will build the features on the extended trail system. The goal is to extend the trail system to allow a two hour ride.

RASTA is not concerned about the logging activities scheduled. They understand logging is going to happen and they feel the loggers do a good job of keeping the trails intact. Bilogan distributed a map showing timber compartments with projected harvest dates in the Silent Sports area. In order to minimize the impact, Forestry is considering the possibility of altering the dates and adjust harvest areas as well as adjustments to future sales. Although this will improve the experience for bikers, these changes may be reflected in a lower income from timber production. Shidell stated that we have to balance the accommodations to achieve the maximum value for timber and mitigate any problems with trails later. Sorensen responded that RASTA's efforts will generate different kinds of revenue. We have to weigh that as part of the balancing act. Bilogan: Will the potential increase in silent sports tourism revenue be sufficient to offset additional administrative costs and potential loss in stumpage revenue? Bilogan added that this 1000 acres under discussion, you would be looking at about losing \$1 million in stumpage revenue using today's methods and economics; say \$100,000/year for ten years. I believe with admin time, we are looking at a potential \$50,000/year less revenue. I fully acknowledge probably tourism will increase and could offset the loss in revenue, but I want to point this out in due diligence. Shidell commented that it would require \$10 million in tourism revenue each year to make up that \$50,000 loss. That's a stretch. Hanson responded that RASTA is aware that cutting must proceed. If it can be done in increments so skiers aren't going through a hundred acre clearcut. We like to work together, to let people know when and where the sales will be, we can have credible timber sales, and still preserve the trails. Sorensen noted that ultimately that land is to generate revenue for the County which is sorely needed.

Rudolph stated that users of the trail may object to cutting, but it's up to RASTA to educate your folks that this is a renewable resource and that proper management requires periodic harvest. Signage put out there might go a long way towards educating trail users.

Shidell questioned whether RASTA has the matching funds already for the RTA grant. He is not comfortable that the County is on the hook for the matching dollars if RASTA does not come up with it. Bilogan replied that the County can accept the grant with a contingency that RASTA has to have a match for every dollar they spend. If they don't spend the entire grant, the balance can be returned to the state, so the County is not obligated for the money. Hegge noted that some of the match will be in-kind, including labor.

Hegge asked whether the single track plan is acceptable. RASTA will do the RTA stuff next summer and needs formal approval to proceed with tracks. There are six projects on the plan. This is not the RTA-funded activity; RTA is for the reroutes. Sorensen moved to approve projects 1 and 2. Martinson seconded. All aye, motion carried.

Joel Flory of RASTA will address any questions or concerns about the trails that the committee may have as the projects go forward. Chair Baier thanked RASTA for their work on the trail systems.

Contractors' Equipment Physical Damage Insurance. Bilogan reported that the Administration Committee reviewed it. The County pays \$1.80 for every \$1000 of equipment. Right now there is \$1,879,000 of snowmobile equipment, so the County paid \$3382 in 2012. With an estimated value of \$30,000 for RASTA grooming equipment, that would be an additional \$54. Sorensen moved to approve, Martinson seconded. Bilogan asked whether RASTA wants to accept it, as they had been discussing options. The Admin Committee would have to pass a resolution and the clerk would handle it. Shidell noted that the Admin Committee meets on Monday, and this could be put on the agenda. RASTA has not decided to accept the insurance. It was determined that if RASTA decides they want the County to pay insurance on the grooming equipment, they will make a formal request. No vote taken, motion did not pass.

**GRAVEL CRUSHING BIDS**— Bids were opened for the advertised gravel crushing project in Enterprise. The lowest bid was from Meverden Materials, of \$3.73/ton. Rudolph moved that the contract be awarded to Meverden Materials. Martinson seconded. All aye, motion carried.

**2013 PARKS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET**—Bilogan stated that the budget is essentially the Almon Park Pavilion. After current expenses, there is \$14,841 left. After subtracting estimates for paving, landscaping, some tree work, the balance is approximately \$7000. Electrical work is a guess at this point, and we would be short. He proposed that the money in the non-lapsing parks capital improvement account be used. \$8515.00 is available and is not levied, it has just been carried forward. This will complete the project in 2013 and leave a small amount for contingencies. Shidell moved to approve Bilogan's suggestion. Rudolph seconded. All aye, motion carried.

**SALE OF FORESTRY DEPT LAWN MOWER**—Bilogan reported that this lawn mower is no longer needed because Highway Dept staff is mowing our parks. He recommended the lawn mower be sold. This is an elimination of equipment, as it is not being replaced. He suggested either parking it in front of the Highway Department and putting an ad in the paper or use Craigslist.org. Martinson asked whether another department would be interested, but Bilogan said no. Sorensen moved that the committee chair be authorized to approve the sale. Rudolph seconded. Baier suggested sending a picture to all the towns. All aye, motion carried.

**VOUCHERS & LINE ITEM TRANSFERS**—Moved by Sorensen, seconded by Rudolph to approve payment for the listed vouchers. All aye. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**— Les Felbab asked whether a municipal vehicle would go on private land to pick up garbage. There was discussion about trespassing and how the garbage would be picked up.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**—No items noted

**ADJOURNMENT**—With business completed, it was moved by Rudolph, seconded by Sorensen, to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 a.m. All aye. Motion carried.

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GARY BAIER  
CHAIR

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JILL BRADLEY  
RECORDING SECRETARY