

# Rusk County Land and Forestry Committee

## Meeting Minutes

### July 21, 2021

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The monthly meeting of the Rusk County Land and Forestry Committee was called to order at 8:00 am, Wednesday, July 21, 2021

**Present from the Rusk County Land and Forestry Committee:** Lyle Lieffring, Alan Rathsack, Jerry Biller; Excused: Phil Schneider, Absent: Terry Dusell

**Also present:** Jeremy Koslowski – Forest Administrator, Heidi Woldhuis – Office Manager, Mike Zimmer – Parks Manager, Jerrad Macholl – Assistant Forest Administrator, Derek Jochimsen – DNR Rusk County Forest Liaison, Andy Albarado – Administrative Coordinator

**Present from the Public:**

George Sihsmann, Bob Grunseth, Don Mansky, Rick Nash – City Parks Department, Joe Neisinger – President of Ladysmith Pickleball Club; members: Randy, Jackie, Sue, Kim.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Motion by Biller/Rathsack to approve June 16, 2021 meeting minutes. No Opposed, Motion carried

**Public Comment:**

- Commentary regarding ATV trail maintenance
- Updates regarding County Forest roads
- Presentation regarding Pickle Ball

**Parks and Recreation Report:**

Mike reported on the following:

- Updates on Felix snowmobile reroute
- Weyerhaeuser trail-113 extension, approved
- Weirgor – waiting on permits, some culvert permits are approved (North section)
- Ladysmith Snowmobile – request for a bridge over Little Thornapple River
- Mowing – Hunter walking trails
- Interns – mowing is slowing down, increased maintenance projects

**Timber Sale Report:**

Jerrad reported on the following:

- Oak wilt restriction was lifted July 15<sup>th</sup>
- 3 active timber sales
- Additional timber sales to open this month
- Meetings with crews regarding performance expectations
- Continuous work with USDA regarding beaver activity

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**Administrator Report:**

- Hatch Property stewardship funding awarded
  - Additional land donation through living trusts; overall approximately 600 acres
- Updates on Mills – WI Rapids, Park Falls
- Continuous discussion regarding land trade opportunity
- Mammoth Tales magazine – write up regarding Ice Age Trail reroute through Blue Hills
- Township PILT (payment in lieu of taxes) – Governor’s budget increased from \$.30 to \$.63 per acre;
- Discussion of forest health in Blue Hills; linden looper on basswoods, forest tent caterpillar, emerald ash borer (Barron Co confirmed) currently monitoring traps
- Meetings restarting due to lifting of COVID restrictions
- Attended Vilas County Summer Tour
- Full County Board approved Carbon Credit sale/contract

**Summer Tour Planning 2022:**

- Week of June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (3<sup>rd</sup> week of June)

**Forestry Tractor:**

- WRA asked for the tractor

Motion by Biller/Rathsack to give Forestry tractor to WRA. Mower and plow to be sold at auction. No opposed, Motion carried.

**Gravel Bids:**

- Bid for crushing for 2022 Phase 2 of Weirgor project (Murphy Pit)

Motion by Rathsack/Biller to publish bids for gravel crushing for phase 1 and phase 2. No opposed, motion carried

**Phase 1 Bids:**

- Weirgor project – Weirgor road to Weirgor creek
- Request for bids to supply, haul, and spread gravel for phase 1

**Recreation Maintenance Agreements:**

- Dispersed updated contracts for review

Motion by Rathsack/Lieffring to approve 2021-2022 contracts. No opposed, Motion carried

**2022 Budget Development:**

- Finance dispersed 2022 proposed budgets to departments
- Truck replacements – will go through capital purchases
  - Parks truck is unreliable, the truck has been welded back together multiple times
- Considerations regarding carbon credit funds, stumpage revenues,
  - Stumpage revenue is currently just above \$800,000
- Funding was moved around for MS19-01 grant; 80/20 split funding; put forth in-kind donation of staff labor on the project
- Wildlife habitat - \$.05 per acre – used for mowing the hunter walking trails
- Damn maintenance line will be eliminated

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- Internship (3) funding needs review moving forward
- Forest Road Aid – gas tax; will receive for 2022 – grading and brushing of county forest roads.
- Land acquisition line item is 1% of all timber sales stumpage revenues

**Legal Review for Carbon Credit Contract:**

Andy Albarado presented

- Board requested outside legal assistance
- Reached out to multiple outside sources
  - Recommendation of knowledgeable legal representation – Michael Best & Friedrich LLP; Jordan Hemaïdan

Motion by Biller/Rathsack to approve recommended legal representation – Michael Best & Friedrich LLP, Jordan Hemaïdan. No opposed, Motion carried

**Closed Session** – County Forest Land Donation

- Motion by Biller/Rathsack to go into closed session at 9:31 AM; No opposed, Motion carried
- Roll Call: Rathsack, Lieffring, Biller
- Present: Derek Jochimsen and Jarred Macholl

Chair announces closed session for deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session, WI Stats 19.85(1)(e).

- Motion by Biller/Rathsack to move forward with exploring Land Donation acquisition.
- Motion by Rathsack/Biller to return to open session at 9:39 AM; No opposed, Motion carried
- Roll Call: Rathsack, Lieffring, Biller

**Out of County Travel:**

- NoRTAC meeting- Hayward

Motion by Biller/Lieffring to approve out of county travel. No opposed, Motion carried.

**Budget Review:**

**Review and Approve Bills:**

Motion by Biller/Lieffring to approve June AP report. No Opposed, Motion carried.

**Adjourn:**

Motion by Biller to adjourn at 9:41 am. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 8:00 a.m.