

The Mahaska County Conservation Board (MCCB) held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, August 3, 2023, at the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) at Caldwell Park. Board Vice-Chair Steve Dixon called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Also present at the meeting were Board Members Linda Fox and Jennifer Peterson. Board Member Curt Jager was absent. The members of the staff present were Director Chris Clingan, Naturalist Laura DeCook and Administrative Assistant Dorothy Wedgewood. Present from the public was Brooke Sells, Eveland Access Campground Host.

Board Vice-Chair Dixon asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Clingan stated that there were no changes. Fox made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Peterson seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Minutes were discussed.

- I. Fox made a motion to approve the Minutes of the July 7, 2023, regular board meeting as presented. Peterson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Expenditures were reviewed.

- I. Clingan discussed several items on the expenditures listing.
 - A. Clingan addressed the invoice from Bill and Rays Truck Repair. This invoice was for towing the John Deere tractor out of a hole at Cedar Bluffs. Clingan stated it appears the ground gave way and the tractor fell into the hole.
 - B. Clingan also talked about the invoice for Cunningham, Inc. The compressor broke in the HVAC unit on the west side of the building and needed to be replaced.
- II. Fox made a motion to approve the expenditures as presented. Peterson seconded this motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Caldwell Park was addressed.

I. ELC

- A. Clingan notified the Board that KayLynn Sieber will commence her shooting schedule with William Penn University and will not be able continue as the ELC Attendant. Clingan said that Sieber may be able to fill in December and January.
 1. Clingan then recommended employing Ryan Swarts and RoseMary Miller to fill the empty ELC Attendant position. Clingan stated that Miller and Swarts will rotate working every other weekend (Friday 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.). Clingan advised that every other weekend (Friday night and Saturday) will be mandatory.
 2. Clingan stated he would like to fill in with volunteer hosts; however, most of the volunteer hosts want hours during the week and not on the weekends.
- B. Peterson made a motion to hire both Swarts and Miller as recommended. Fox seconded this motion.
- C. Dixon asked if there was further discussion.
 1. Peterson asked if this was a temporary position and if so, what would be the length of time for this position. Clingan answered that this is a permanent part-time position.
- D. Discussion continued regarding Swarts' working as part of his internship. Clingan indicated that Swarts is a fire fighter and will be able to help with prescribed burns.
- E. Dixon called for the vote on the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

The Henry W. VanWeelden Commemorative Night was addressed.

- I. Clingan presented the plaque to be given to VanWeelden's family.

- II. Clingan said that the commemorative night is planned for the September regular board meeting.
- III. Dixon asked if MCCB would be providing refreshments.

The District Forestry Shared Room/Space was discussed.

- I. Clingan informed the Board that he was approached by Bryan Hellner, District Forestry Supervisor, to discuss the potential to house the new district forester at the machine shop at the Russell Wildlife Area (RWA). Clingan will be meeting with Hellner at RWA so Hellner can check out the facilities.
- II. Clingan presented a listing of the pros and cons of housing a district forester.
- III. Dixon asked if this was just a base camp for the district forester. Clingan said that it was. The district forester would be out and about meeting with clients and the office space would be a place he could have for office duties.
- IV. Fox requested an itemized listing from Hellner regarding how they will be using the building and a mutual agreement signed by both parties.
- V. Peterson asked that Clingan prepare this information for the next regular board meeting.

The Request from KC Firewood was addressed.

- I. Clingan explained that Brooke Sells, Eveland Access Campground Host, removed a sign advertising KC Firewood from within the campground boundaries.
- II. Clingan said he received a phone call from Zach Randau, KC Firewood, requesting permission to deliver firewood that has been purchased to the campgrounds. Clingan advised that Randau charges \$20.00 to deliver wood on top of the cost of the wood.
- III. Clingan told the Board that there is no soliciting within an area as cited in Section 4 Conduct under the Mahaska County Conservation Board's Rules and Regulations and he cannot give him permission without Board permission.
- IV. Clingan presented a letter he drafted for the Board.
- V. Discussion ensued regarding but not limited to precedents set forth by a decision by the Board, contracts for selling firewood, and if MCCB should get a percentage of sales, etc.
- VI. Dixon asked that this item be brought to the county attorney for an opinion.
- VII. The Board decided to table this item until the September regular board meeting.

Setting the September Board Meeting – Date/Time Discussion.

- I. The Board revisited the meeting date and time for future board meetings.
 - A. Peterson advised that Thursday meetings do not work with her schedule; however, Monday meetings work.
 - B. Discussion ensued.
- II. The Board set the September board meeting for the third Monday, September 18, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. The Board asked Clingan to verify with Jager that this date and time would be acceptable.

The Board Chair Recommendation was addressed.

- I. Clingan told the Board that in discussion with Adam Shirley, ICCS, regarding the vacant Board Chair position, ICCS recommends appointing the current Vice Chair to fulfill the vacant Board Chair position for the remainder of the current term. ICCS also recommends that the replacement Board Chair then complete his/her regular Board Chair term as normally scheduled.

- II. Peterson made a motion to adopt ICCS' recommendation and nominated Steve Dixon as current Board Chair with the understanding that Dixon would also fulfill his term in 2025. Fox seconded this nomination, and the nomination was passed unanimously.

In Other Business:

- I. Clingan addressed a couple items.
 - A. Clingan stated he thought Brooke Sells was doing an amazing job as campground host at the Eveland Access Campgrounds.
 - B. Clingan presented the Cost Share Agreement and Program Fee Agreement with Iowa State University Outreach regarding the agreement between MCCB and the City of Oskaloosa. Clingan informed the Board that the Cost Share Agreement will need to be signed by the Board Chair. Peterson made a motion to approve the proposal and sign the Cost Share Agreement. Fox seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
- II. Peterson talked about a couple items.
 - A. Peterson said that she was able to meet the Superintendent of Yellowstone Park and she shared with him things about MCCB.
 - B. Peterson urged Naturalist DeCook to contact Yellowstone Park and create a zoom program for the public.
- III. Dixon mentioned a couple things.
 - A. Dixon asked Sells if she had purchased a freezer for the campgrounds. Sells advised she had not.
 - B. Dixon mentioned placing a pop and/or candy machine from Mahaska FKA Mahaska Bottling Co.
 - C. Dixon said that he is working on the brackets for the eagle nest display.
 - D. Clingan asked Dixon if he had been contacted by either park ranger about welding a mower. Dixon stated he had not been contacted to date.

The Public Safety Update was addressed.

- I. Clingan notified the Board that camping revenues were down last month. Clingan speculated that the weather and/or vacations could have affected the numbers.
- II. Closed Session was addressed.
 - A. Fox made a motion to go into closed session according to Chapter 21.5 Section-K of the Iowa Code for Issues and Concerns portion of the Public Safety Item XII. Peterson seconded the motion. A roll call was taken. Fox-Yes, and Peterson-Yes. The Board went into closed session at 8:34 p.m.
- III. Fox made a motion to come out of session. Peterson seconded the motion. A roll call was taken. Fox-Yes, and Peterson-Yes. The Board came out of closed session at 9:03 p.m.

Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Fox seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Chairman _____ Secretary _____

Date _____ Date _____