

The Mahaska County Conservation Board (MCCB) held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, January 22, 2024, at the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) at Caldwell Park. Board Chair Steve Dixon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Also present at the meeting were Board Members Curt Jager, Linda Fox, and Jennifer Peterson. Board Member Chuck Webb was absent. The members of the staff present were Director Chris Clingan, Administrative Assistant Dorothy Wedgewood, and Naturalist Laura DeCook. Present from the public was Mahaska County Attorney Andrew Ritland.

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

Closed Session Pursuant to Iowa Code 21.5(1)(a) to discuss police officer law enforcement activities.

- I. Jager made a motion to move into closed session. Roll call was taken; Curt Jager – aye, Steve Dixon – aye, Linda Fox – aye, and Jennifer Peterson – aye. The motion to move into closed session was approved unanimously at 6:10 p.m.
- II. Jager made a motion to move out of closed session. Roll call was taken; Curt Jager – aye, Steve Dixon – aye, Linda Fox – aye, and Jennifer Peterson – aye. The motion to move out of closed session was carried unanimously at 7:15 p.m.

The Board called a short recess at 7:15 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 7:26 p.m.

Discussion continued regarding action on the information received in closed session.

- I. Jager made a motion to withdraw from the 28E Agreement with the Mahaska County Sheriff's Office. Fox seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
- II. Jager made a motion as follows, "It shall not be the policy of the Mahaska County Conservation Board to allow conservation board personnel to use weapons, write tickets, or make arrests outside of county conservation areas while on duty and in uniform. This is in accordance with:

COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARDS, §350.5, 350.5 Regulations — penalty — officers.

4. The board may designate the director and those employees as the director may designate as police officers who shall have all the powers conferred by law on police officers, peace officers, or sheriffs in the enforcement of the laws of this state and the apprehension of violators upon all property under its control within and without the county. The board may grant the director and those employees of the board designated as police officers the authority to enforce the provisions of chapters 321G, 321I, 461A, 462A, 481A, and 483A on land not under the control of the board within the county.

Peterson seconded this motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

- III. Jager made a motion to permit the Mahaska County Conservation Director to have the authority to allow the Mahaska County Conservation Rangers to be deputized as Reserve Deputies for the Mahaska County Sheriff's office and also grant the Rangers the ability to "clock out", change out of the conservation uniform, and be used as Reserve Deputies for the Mahaska County Sheriff's office as needed in accordance the policy of Heartland Insurance. Fox seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

The Minutes were discussed.

- I. Fox made a motion to approve the Minutes of the December 18, 2023, regular board meeting as presented. Peterson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
- II. Jager made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting December 28, 2023. Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Expenditures were reviewed.

- I. Clingan discussed several items on the expenditures listing.
- II. Jager made a motion to approve the expenditures as presented. Fox seconded this motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Annual Report was discussed.

- I. Clingan discussed the Annual Report. The Board complimented Clingan on the new format and content.

Park Planning was addressed.

- I. Clingan informed the Board that there will be a public meeting for the park planning. The meeting will be held Thursday, January 25, 2024, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Discussion ensued.
- II. Clingan also said that he will have a zoom meeting with the University of Iowa regarding the water trails on January 23, 2024, and again on January 25, 2024, to talk about White Oak.

The Cabin Sidewalk Quotes were discussed.

- I. Clingan presented the two quotes for sidewalk repair at the Apple cabin.
 - A. Mahaska Insulation LLC submitted a bid in the amount of \$4,300.00.
 - B. Aviles Construction LLC submitted a bid in the amount of \$2,300.00.
 - C. Clingan recommended the Board accept the bid from Aviles Construction LLC in the amount of \$2,300.00.
 - D. Fox made a motion to approve Clingan's recommendation to accept the bid from Aviles Construction LLC in the amount of \$2,300.00. Peterson seconded this motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

The Cabin Donation Request was addressed.

- I. Clingan advised that MCCB received a cabin donation request from the Mahaska Hospice Auxiliary.
 - A. Fox made a motion to approve the cabin donation request from the Mahaska Hospice Auxiliary. Peterson seconded this motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Board Member Appointment of Officers was addressed.

- I. The Board recommended the officer positions rotate as in previous years; rotation would be as follows: Chairman – Dixon; Vice Chairman – Jager; and Secretary – Fox. Peterson made a motion to accept the appointment/election of officers as stated and continue the rotation per previous years. Fox seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

The Director Evaluation was discussed.

- I. The Board reviewed two evaluation forms.
 - A. The first was the MCCB Performance Appraisal/Evaluation used previously by the Board.
 - B. The second was CompassPoint's Evaluating the Executive Director.
 - C. Discussion ensued.
 - D. Jager made a motion to use the evaluation form from CompassPoint. Fox seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
 - E. Dixon asked the Board to have their evaluations completed and to him by January 19, 2024.

Setting the February Board Meeting was addressed.

- I. Wedgewood advised the Board that the current meeting date of February 19, 2024, is one of Mahaska County's set holidays.
- II. Discussion on dates ensued.
- III. The Board changed the board meeting date to February 26, 2024.

In Other Business:

- I. Peterson addressed an issue.
 - A. Peterson advised the Board that there was an issue with parking for the MODES meeting held at the ELC. Peterson said that the public used the Mahaska Veterinary Clinic as overflow parking, which generally would have been okay. However, she stated that people were parking there before the clinic was closed for the day. Peterson asked that the Board come up with a plan for overflow that does not

interfere with the clinic's business hours and that Clingan discuss ideas with Nate Peterson before there is another big event at the ELC.

- B. Jager advised that MCCB should never inconvenience the vet clinic and that there needs to be a plan put in place regarding, but not limited to, where to park, how many can park, and how to keep the clinic space open in case of veterinary emergencies. Jager stressed that, as the vet clinic has kindly allowed MCCB to use their parking lot for overflow, MCCB needs to be respectful of not abusing that kindness.
- C. Discussion ensued regarding alternatives and strategies for parking.
- II. Jager said that he has a silage pile that had attracted hundreds of birds. He said he went out the next day and they were all gone, and he wondered why. He saw a bird sitting on the pile and a hawk swooped down and snatched it off the silage pile. Mystery solved.
- III. DeCook stated she held a volunteer training at 6:00 p.m. tonight. She said that three (3) people attended, bringing the total number of volunteers to one hundred fifteen (115).
- IV. Clingan discussed a couple items.
 - A. Clingan advised the Board that MCCB received a \$15,000.00 donation from the Optimist Clubb. This money was donated to go towards the playscape.
 - B. Clingan stated that he and DeCook have been working on a grant application through United Way. The grant application is almost completed.

Jager made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Peterson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Chairman _____

Secretary _____

Date _____

Date _____