

The Mahaska County Conservation Board (MCCB) held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 19, 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, Jennifer Peterson, and Chuck Webb. The members of the staff present were Director Chris Clingan and Administrative Assistant Dorothy Wedgewood. Present from the public was Mary Jane Sullivan, Friends of Mahaska County Conservation, Marlis DeBoef and BrookeAnne Sells.

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

The Minutes were discussed.

- I. Fox made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 26, 2024, 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.
- II. Jager made a motion to approve the expenditures as presented. Webb seconded this motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Breckenridge Estate was discussed.

- I. Clingan updated the Board regarding the legal documents received from the Estate of Jennifer Jo Breckenridge.
  - A. Clingan stated that he talked with Andrew Ritland, Mahaska County Attorney, regarding filing an objection.
  - B. Clingan advised the Board that there was paperwork found in one of MCCB's areas where attorney Gerald Heslinga referred to the Mahaska County Conservation Board as the Mahaska County Conservation Commission.

The item Establish Friends of Mahaska County Conservation as Tenants on Property Owned by MCCB was addressed.

- I. Clingan stated that he has been working with Andrew Ritland, Mahaska County Attorney, FMCC, the NRCS office and the FSA office regarding FMCC becoming tenants of certain MCCB areas and allowing these areas to be placed into CRP and other programs.
  - A. Clingan advised the Board that Ritland did not foresee a problem allowing FMCC tenancy of the areas to be placed in CRP and/or other programs.
  - B. The Board asked that Clingan reach out to other counties that have done this and review their contracts/agreements used.
  - C. Clingan stated that any area purchased through a REAP or Habitat Stamp grant, those monies received through CRP and other programs would have to be reserved for those specific areas. MCCB has two areas that this would affect, Cedar Bluffs and the Vos addition to the Russell Wildlife Area.
  - D. Clingan went on to explain that the amount received from CRP would be determined by the soil type for the area and the soil type for the MCCB areas have not been established yet.
  - E. Clingan also said that the areas that are already planted could be inter-seeded and would not need to be tilled. The NRCS would pay for 50% of the seed and the remaining 50% could be paid with the contract payments.
  - F. Clingan stated that the prospective MCCB areas to be enrolled would be the Vos addition to the Russell Wildlife Area, Evertru, Cedar Bluffs, Caldwell Park, and the Swanson-Lomax area.
  - G. Discussion ensued regarding, but not limited to, woody cover after planting, cost share, range of payment (\$100.00 to \$300.00 per acre) and contacting Mahaska County Pheasants Forever for help.
  - H. Jager asked if Clingan had talked with both the FSA and NRCS offices. Clingan advised that he had.
  - I. Dixon asked that Clingan check on any liability for the tenants.

- J. Clingan recommended allowing FMCC to be MCCB's tenants and proceed with getting the areas enrolled into CRP.
- K. Webb made a motion to approve the recommendation as presented by Clingan. Fox seconded this motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Park Planning was addressed.

- I. Clingan told the Board that he has been researching the Iowa Ornithologist Union grants.
  - A. Clingan stated that there is a \$1,000.00 grant due March 31, 2024, that the Iowa Ornithologist Union advised could be used towards planning costs for the future \$100,000.00 grant. Clingan stated that design plans would cost more than \$1,000.00.
    - 1. Dixon asked if either the University of Iowa or Iowa State University could help with the design plans or the Mahaska County Engineer. Clingan said he would talk with Mahaska County Attorney Ritland.
    - 2. The Board encouraged Clingan to apply for the grant and possibly use it to update the bird blinds MCCB currently has.
  - B. Webb discussed design plans from Shive Hattery.

Setting the April Board Meeting was addressed.

- I. The regularly scheduled monthly board meeting is April 15, 2024, and will remain so.

In Other Business:

- I. Clingan discussed a couple items.
  - A. Clingan informed the Board that MCCB has been completing spring prescribed burns.
  - B. Clingan said that while doing a prescribed burn on the Vos bottom, he spotted a long-eared owl.
  - C. Clingan talked about fundraising ideas BrookeAnne Sells has for the campgrounds. Clingan then asked Sells to discuss her plans.
    - 1. Sells advised the Board that she has been planning a vendor fair.
    - 2. Sells recommended charging \$10.00 to \$15.00 per vendor.
    - 3. Sells informed the Board she would like to hold the vendor fair July, August, or September.
    - 4. Dixon asked about hours of operation. Sells stated the vendor show would run from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
    - 5. Jager asked about placement of vendor tables. Sells answered that they vendor tables would be placed outside around the shelter-house.
    - 6. Discussion ensued regarding, but not limited to, type of vendors, capping number of vendors, etc.
    - 7. Fox asked Sells to come back to the next monthly board meeting with a detailed plan.
  - D. Sells then told the Board that she has been working on a holding a silent auction at the Eveland Access campgrounds.
    - 1. Sells said she is in contact with an auctioneer. Silent auctions fall under the licensing of an auctioneer.
    - 2. Proceeds would be donated to MCCB.
    - 3. Fox asked about advertising. Dixon mentioned radio station KIIC out of Albia. He said they do a lot of advertising for different functions.
    - 4. Fox asked Sells to come back to the next monthly board meeting to give an update on her progress.
- II. Mary Jane Sullivan, FMCC, informed MCCB that Rodney Anderson, President FMCC, is healing after surgery.
- III. Marlis DeBoef addressed a couple items.
  - A. DeBoef asked if MCCB had contacted both the FSA and NRCS offices regarding tenancy and CRP acres. Clingan said that he had spoken with both entities.
  - B. DeBoef asked about the income from the CRP acres. Clingan stated that income is capped at \$50,000.00. However, MCCB will not know income until soil is tested. Income is based on soil type.

- C. DeBoef then asked if MCCB's budget will be cut because of this income. Jager advised DeBoef that most of the acres in question were purchased through REAP or Habitat Stamp grants and therefore, this income cannot be used for anything other than improvements for those areas. Clingan added that this would include approximately 115 acres at Cedar Bluffs and 55 acres at the Vos addition to the Russell Wildlife Area. Discussion ensued regarding, but not limited to, uses under REAP and Habitat Stamp grants, length of contracts (5, 10, or 15 years), invasive species removal, and timber stand improvements.

Jager made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Webb seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_