

The Mahaska County Conservation Board (MCCB) held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, May 20, 2024, at the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) at Caldwell Park. Board Chair Steve Dixon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. 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, Naturalist Laura DeCook. Present from the public were Rodney Anderson, Friends of Mahaska County Conservation, Marlis DeBoef and BrookeAnn Sells, Eveland Access Campground Host.

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. Peterson seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Minutes were discussed.

- I. Fox made a motion to approve the Minutes of the April 15, 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. Fox seconded this motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The ELC Hours were discussed.

- I. Clingan stated that Ashley Hunter, one of the part-time employees that covered Friday nights and Saturdays has left. Clingan said that, even though he has looked, he has found no replacement.
  - A. Clingan advised the Board that with no increase in the budget and an increase in MCCB's insurance of approximately thirty-two percent (32%) there is no money in the budget for part-time employees.
  - B. Clingan added that this position is fourteen (14) hours a month and rotates weekends with another part-time employee at a payrate of around \$13.00 per hour.
  - C. Clingan asked the Board if they would like to keep the Friday-Saturday hours status quo or change the hours. Clingan stated that DeCook had advised that approximately twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) people visit on Saturdays.
  - D. Discussion ensued regarding but not limited to Makenzie Burke scheduling time for MCRF tram stops, high school student or college student to fill in this position, and contacting Pete Ehalde, William Penn University.
  - E. Jager made a motion to close on Friday and stay open on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This will be at Clingan's discretion. Fox seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

The Item Park Planning was discussed.

- I. Clingan updated the Board regarding the park planning and grants.
  - A. Clingan informed the Board that MCCB may receive a \$100,000.00 grant from a local source. He added that this local source is also willing to match any other funds collected up to \$40,000.00.
  - B. Clingan stated that the Mahaska Community Foundation Grant was awarded in the amount of \$25,000.00.
  - C. Clingan said that MCCB received \$1,000.00 for the Iowa Ornithology Union grant. This will be used to paint the bird blind at Maskunky Marsh.
  - D. Clingan advised that with the addition of the Mahaska Community Foundation grant of \$25,000.00 MCCB is over the threshold for Phase I. He contacted Shive Hattery, and they will start on construction documents. These should be ready for the next monthly board meeting.
  - E. Clingan said that hopefully that Prairie Meadows comes through. That would put MCCB at almost one hundred percent (100%) in funds for this project.

F. Clingan also added that Chad Hunter with Iowa State University has a seventy-five (75) page comprehensive plan for the playscape. The Board asked that Clingan print one copy and email the plans to all the board members.

G. Discussion ensued.

Fall Conference was addressed.

I. Clingan stated that he included the conference packet for the Board. Look through the packet and let him know who would like to attend.

The Vos Culvert was discussed.

I. Clingan said that there is a drainage ditch with a wooden footbridge to get across, however, equipment cannot cross over on this bridge.

A. Clingan stated that in a conversation with George Toubekis, Toubekis said that VerMeer is looking for a testing place for their new mini skid steer.

B. Clingan said that VerMeer would install culverts for free so they could test the mini skid steer on this project. Clingan said that MCCB has access to dirt from Mahaska County Secondary Roads when they were cleaning out ditches.

C. Clingan told the Board that the only cost for this project would be the cost of the culvert.

1. Clingan said that VanRenterghem has talked with the County Engineer and it was indicated that MCCB would need either one eight foot (8 ft.) culvert or two four foot (4 ft.) culverts., with both being approximately twelve feet (12 ft.) long.

2. The approximate cost of the culvert/culverts would be \$2,644.80.

3. Jager asked about the footage of the culvert, "Is it adequate with the tapered ends?". Jager added that extra length would work to stop overflow. Clingan answered that the culverts cost \$110.00 per foot and footage could be added. Clingan asked about purchasing a sixteen-foot (16 ft.) culvert. Jager said that would be a more appropriate a length.

4. Discussion ensued regarding, but not limited to length of culvert, fixing run over, cost of additional length, and placing rock upstream to help with washouts.

5. Jager made a motion to proceed with purchasing the culvert for the Vos property capping the cost at \$3,800.00. Fox seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Flood Monitoring Station was discussed.

I. Clingan advised the Board that the Iowa Flood Center received \$1M to place hydrostations in every county in Iowa.

A. Clingan said that the hydro-stations measure rainfall, soil moisture, temperature conditions, and groundwater levels. Clingan added that the data collected from the network is publicly available on the Iowa Flood Information System.

1. Clingan assured the Board that this system will not cost MCCB anything other than mowing around the system.

2. Clingan told the Board that they will also provide educational curriculum MCCB can use as well as signage for the structure that explains the system.

B. Discussion ensued.

C. Peterson made a motion to approve placement of the hydrostation. Fox seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Setting the May Board Meeting was addressed.

I. The regularly scheduled monthly board meeting is June 17, 2024, and will remain so.

In Other Business:

I. Clingan discussed a couple items.

A. Clingan addressed the upcoming Summerfest. Clingan said that campgrounds are already full.

- B. Clingan advised the Board the Brooke Sells, Campground Host and the Boy Scouts power-washed the picnic tables at the campgrounds.
- C. Clingan talked about woodland management.
  - 1. Clingan stated there is a program that has “equip money”. MCCB could receive money from the FSA office to clear invasive species from an area.
- D. Clingan informed the Board that he has a meeting with the University of Iowa April 29 at 10:00 a.m. They will present plans for future development at MCCB areas.
- E. Clingan notified the Board that Heartland Insurance has stopped to the CRP project.
- II. DeCook discussed a couple items.
  - A. DeCook talked about the festivities that will happen at Summerfest.
  - B. DeCook informed the Board that she will be shifting her hours so she can include evening programs i.e. bowfishing, disc golf, and Dutch oven cooking to mention just a few programs.
  - C. DeCook stated she will start “lunch in the parks” in July.
  - D. DeCook said Valin McReynolds told them about a “Bark Ranger” program and she will be helping MCCB implement this program. The public will can receive “Paws Ports and Dog Tags”
- III. Rodney Anderson, FMCC, notified the Board they received the \$2,000.00 Build-A-Bags grant. This money will go toward trash receptacles and benches.
- IV. BrookeAnn Sells informed the Board that she has several projects she has i.e. finish pressure washing picnic tables, painting the gates to the entrances to each side of the campgrounds, and selling honey and firewood.

Jager made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Peterson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_