

**Monday, February 12, 2024**

**Minutes of the Hardin County Conservation Board Meeting**

The Monday, February 12, 2024, meeting of the Hardin County Conservation Board was called to order by Chair, Trent Lambert, at 6:00 p.m. at Headquarters Office.

**Board Members Attending:** Trent Lambert (Chair), Julie Jeske (Vice-Chair), Bryan Meints, Kirk Rice, and Jo Baumann.

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Members Attending:** Wes Wiese (Director), Laura Carr (Office Assistant), Chris Barber (Interpretive Park Manager)

**Guests:** Don Reed, Russell Clouse, Tyler Prochaska, Randall Copeman, and Steve Piske.

**Approval of Agenda:** Jo Baumann made a motion to approve the February 12, 2024 agenda. The motion was seconded by Bryan Meints. All members voted aye, and the motion carried.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Approval of Minutes:** Kirk Rice made a motion to approve the January 8, 2024, and January 29, 2024 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Julie Jeske. All members voted aye, and the motion carried.

**Approval of Claims:** Bryan Meints made a motion to approve the February 12, 2024, monthly claims as presented. The motion was seconded by Kirk Rice. All members voted aye, and the motion carried.

**Monthly Special Reports:**

**Chair Report:** None.

**Board Member's Report:** Jo Baumann stated that she attended the budget meeting with the Board of Supervisors and Director, Wes Wiese.

**Special Committee's Report:**

**The Lodge Committee:** The Director informed the Board that the Destination Iowa Grant has passed through the preliminary review and is now in final review. A decision will be made on the funds within a month.

**Fundraising Committee:** None.

**Salary Committee:** No updates, further discussion will be had pending a Department Head Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 13, 2024.

All reports were given and discussed. Jo Baumann made a motion to approve all monthly reports as presented. The motion was seconded by Julie Jeske. All members voted aye, and the motion carried.

**Old Business:**

- A. **Headquarters Office Roof Repair:** The Board reviewed bids submitted by Ken Pearce and Jacob Ackerman for the replacement of the Headquarters Office Roof Replacement. The Board discussed bids, alternatives, and current budget availability. Jo Baumann made a motion to table the decision pending information from the Department Head Meeting regarding the upcoming fiscal year's budget. The motion was seconded by Bryan Meints. All members voted aye, and the motion carried.

## **New Business:**

- A. Gold Panning at County Parks:** The Director informed the Board that he was approached regarding a policy for gold panning in County Parks. Members of the public, Don Reed and Russell Clouse, discussed with the Board different state policies on gold panning and various equipment and methods used to gold pan. The Board developed the following gold panning policy for county parks and the Office Assistant, Laura Carr, read it aloud in the meeting.

***Recreational gold panning and sluicing on county-owned lands (county-owned mineral and surface lands); prohibited conduct.***

*Recreational gold panning and sluicing activities are allowed adjacent to and within rivers and streams on county-owned mineral and surface lands except for the following:*

- (a) Excavating, digging, or otherwise disturbing banks of a stream or river.*
- (b) Gold panning or sluicing in any stream or river segment if stream mussel beds are known to occur or are encountered while panning or sluicing.*
- (c) Gold panning or sluicing in designated trout streams, natural rivers, or natural areas.*
- (d) Use of a hand-operated sluice box larger than 52 inches long, 12 inches wide, and 6.5 inches deep, or any type of power sluice box or dredge other than battery-powered.*
- (e) Removing gold in excess of one-half (1/2) troy ounce, or 15.55 grams, per year, per person, from county-owned mineral and surface lands and streams and rivers*

Jo Baumann made a motion to accept the policy as read by the Office Assistant. The motion was seconded by Kirk Rice. All members voted aye, and the motion carried.

- B. Bessman-Kemp Cabin Rate Increase:** The Board discussed added expenses associated with the Bessman-Kemp Cabins including an added port-a-potty to the area, water dispenser, and credit card processing fees. Kirk Rice made a motion to raise the prices to \$45/night. Jo Baumann seconded the motion. All members voted aye, and the motion carried.
- C. Annual Report:** The Board reviewed the annual report. Kirk Rice made a motion to approve the annual report as submitted. The motion was seconded by Julie Jeske. All members voted aye, and the motion carried.
- D. Goat Fence:** The Director informed the Board that Webster County Conservation is inquiring about purchasing goat fencing from Hardin County Conservation. The fencing has not been used in years nor does the Conservation Department have any intention of using it in the future. The Director stated that he compared prices and suggested a price range of \$1,500-\$2,000. Kirk Rice made a motion to offer the goat fencing to Webster County Conservation for \$2,000, with a reserve bid of \$1,500. The motion was seconded by Bryan Meints. All members voted aye, and the motion carried.
- E. Discussion on Shooting Range:** A Board member began the discussion by expressing their concerns about the economic impact that the gun range has on the area, especially with the upcoming projects and developments. The Board member also discussed complaints from locals regarding the noise, presented a list of Central Iowa gun ranges, and mentioned a potential month-to-month lease. A representative from the Steamboat Rifle Range, Steve Priske, noted his concern with a month-to-month contract complicating the charging of annual memberships. Steve also noted that providing a range prevents the public from shooting in undesirable areas. He stated the range currently has around 200 members and has a reputation of being safe and well-managed. The President of the Steamboat Rifle Range, Randall Copeman did note his concerns

with the location of the range and the increasing presence of people and children in the campground. Randall requested that if the Conservation Board has intentions of closing the rifle range, they would help find a new secluded location for the range and that a decision would be made before the new year so that they can inform their members. It was suggested that the discussion continues, and a decision be made at March's Conservation Board meeting.

**Informational Items:**

- A. ICCS Fall Conference – September 17-19, 2024 at Calmar, IA:** The Director informed the Board of the Fall Conference scheduled for September 17-19.

**Adjournment:** Next Hardin County Conservation Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday, March 11, 2024, at 6:00 pm. The Monday, February 12, 2024, meeting of the Hardin County Conservation Board was adjourned by Chair, Trent Lambert, at 7:39 p.m.