

MINUTES
Ashland County Forestry & Recreation Committee
Ashland County Forestry Dept. Office
304 West Michigan St, Butternut, WI 54514
September 2, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jerry Teague at 9:00 AM.

Members present: Jerry Teague, Carl Kubley, Gary Mertig, Kathy Schutte and Frank Kempf.

Others present: ACSA, Bill Chandler; County Board Chair, Pete Russo; DNR Liaison, Tom Piikkila; Forest Adm., Chris Hoffman; Assist. Forest Adm., Matt Schultz; Secretary, Marion Pohl; and Town of Jacobs Supervisor, Dennis Walczyk.

The minutes of the August 5, 2015 meeting were approved with a motion by Pete Russo, second by Kathy Schutte. Motion carried.

Snowmobile trail business - Bill C. reported that the AWSC recognized Don Santama from Ashland County as groomer operator of the year (2014). Jack Dudley was recognized in 2006.

Bill said the Bad River trail project with two bridges was approved. The project cost is \$450,000. Also Bill said the Silver Creek replacement bridge project was approved at \$44,000.

Bill discussed the problem a landowner has with people smashing down a gate placed there by the ACSA and going on his property. The landowner posted a picture of the smashed gate and wrote on Facebook about the continuing problem. Kathy S. read the post to the Committee and showed the picture of the smashed gate. The Committee asked where this happened. Bill said this is on Erickson property behind the Marengo fair grounds. Bill said a suggestion was made to put up a camera to catch the person(s). Bill said this is not the first time people have damaged a gate on this property. And the DNR got involved several years back because there was river damage. The DNR came and checked out what the ACSA had done and the DNR determined ACSA was compliant, as was the landowner. The damage was done by ATVers.

Jerry T. told Bill C. that he should talk to Recreation Officer Jim Clapero about this problem.

DNR Liaison's report - Tom P. reported he has been working on a timber sale, cruising and doing sale administration. The DNR Tech Andy Oberto is in Montana on fire duty for two weeks.

Bunte Shack road repair was discussed. Frank K. said Bunte Shack Road is the next project the Town of Jacobs will be working on. Town of Jacobs Supervisor Dennis Walczyk asked if a timber sale could be set up along the right-of-way and get gravel for the road. Chris explained that the ROW was cleared a few years ago. What is left is small and not worth picking up by a logger. Chris said getting gravel from a borrow pit without a permit, Dennis would have to talk to Emmer Schields, County Highway Dept. about the legality.

Frank K. said we need to work with the towns to help them. For example, if crushed gravel was made, could we cost share with the town(s)? The towns need financial help trying to keep the road maintenance up. Frank would like to have a line item added to the budget for town road maintenance of \$10,000. Chris said there is a 10 acre gravel pit that is permitted. There are 2 acres of that 10 acres opened now that could be crushed. This pit is at the end of Mercer Rd. Gary M. suggested getting an estimate for crushing, then we would know if we would cost share.

Tom P. commented that the towns get 10% of the timber sale revenue every year that should go towards road maintenance. Jerry T. commented that the town needs to have a solid plan. Gary M. we would have to work with other towns too. Chris asked, what if the town waits for many years and then wants help? Frank K. replied that the Town of Jacobs is unique because they handle other town maintenance issues too. Frank K. said to add a line item; this would go to the Finance Committee.

Chris reviewed the proposed 2016 Forestry Dept. budget. Chris said the budget did not change much.

Chris recommended that language be developed for the application the towns would fill out to request financial help for road maintenance projects. Once that application was developed, then go to the towns. January/February would be the application time. Then the Committee would look at the applications and would prioritize which one(s) would be best for the Forestry program.

A motion was made by Carl Kubley, second by Pete Russo to add a line item to the Forestry Dept. budget for town road maintenance in the amount of \$10,000. Frank K. said there is a Road Maintenance account already, and asked if the

\$10,000 could be added to that account rather than add another line item? Chris said yes, but to leave the \$2,500 that the Forestry Dept. needs to buy culverts and for other road maintenance expenses. The total for the Road Maintenance account would be \$12,500. Roll call vote, all Committee members voted yes. Motion carried. Kathy S. felt the 10% from the county timber sales the towns receive should be used directly for road maintenance. Gary M. commented that if the Forest Service does increase the cutting of their timber, the county will probably see the effect on the county timber sale revenue.

Frank K. asked why there was so much money in the Other Operational Supply account in the Variable Acreage Share Loan budget. Chris explained we get money from the State and we divide the money up between 5 accounts. The Other Operational Supply account has more because of buying more from that account.

The Committee went into closed session to discuss land available to purchase with a motion by Pete Russo, second by Kathy Schutte. Roll call vote, all Committee members voted yes. Motion carried.

Carl Kubley was excused to leave closed session at 10:20 AM for a doctor's appointment.

Open session was re-convened with a motion by Pete Russo, second by Kathy Schutte. Roll call vote, all Committee members voted yes. Motion carried.

From the closed session discussion, a motion was made by Kathy Schutte, second by Pete Russo to proceed with Stewardship Fund application to determine to take action or not, and this is not approval to buy the land. Roll call vote - Jerry Teague - yes, Pete Russo - yes, Kathy Schutte - yes, Frank Kempf - no, Gary Mertig - no. Motion carried.

Discussion about land in or out of private ownership if tax revenue is lost or not. Pete commented that the Committee must look into buying land as we won't know if this is what we want.

Chris will put the land discussed in closed session on a future agenda when he gets more information.

Other business - Gary M commented that we need to control the Recreation account. If people come in now asking for financial assistance for a project, tell them to come back in January. The Committee agreed that we tell people to come back in January.

The vouchers were signed and approved with a motion by Gary Mertig, second by Frank Kempf. Motion carried.

The next Forestry and Recreation Committee meeting will be Wednesday, October 7, 2015, 9:00 AM, Butternut, WI.

The meeting was adjourned with a motion by Kathy Schutte, second by Jerry Teague. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM.

Submitted by
Marion Pohl