

March 6, 2024

Call to Order

The Tama County Conservation Board met in regular session on Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at the Tama County Nature Center. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm by Chair, Keenan.

Board Members present: Adolphs, Allen, Wacha, and Keenan.

Staff Members present: Conrad, Genaw, Behrens, Horne.

Public present: Soren Peterson with the Tama-Toledo Chronicle, Delania Halter, Olive (hedgehog)

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the February 2024 meeting were reviewed. It was moved by Adolphs, seconded by Wacha, to approve the minutes as recorded, carried, all voting aye.

Approval of Bills

Bills were presented for March 2024 totaling \$6,765.29. Deposits were made totaling \$0.00.

It was moved by Adolphs, seconded by Wacha, to approve payment of the bills, all voting aye.

Public Comment

N/A

Reports & Updates

Environmental Education Report:

Maintenance report: Placed fish structures made by volunteer group, met with Austin and Curtis about culvert, set date with Scharnwebbers to complete structure, serviced chainsaws and weed-eaters, opened west side of park to public, spread rock through park road at OCLAP, placed buoys and acres around beach at OCLAP, and fixed parking lot cable at OCLAP shelter.

Park Officer's Report: Worked on BMP 5 culvert repair, did Bentonite purchase, laid large rock, met with DenCo, checked outparks and collect trash, changed oil on ranger truck, and did brush removal at picnic point--burned brush pile, cut up logs, and moved cut logs to shop. Checked forestry reserve contracts, looked at new ranger vehicle, answered state auditor questions, got deck railing quotes, washed vehicles, and got Dooley ready to be taken to auction. Bladed roads and parking lots. Opened west side and moved road closed signs. Finished S-130 certification. Started studying for pesticide applicators license. Frosted seed grass on jettys. Got service kits for small motors and replace weedeater shaft. Met

with Curtis to discuss all ongoing and future projects for each of our properties. Soil sampled the spoils sites. Moved rock to campers hill and spread it. Spread fines in campsites. Hung flyers for fun night. Turned in application for peace officer permit to carry weapons. Looked at ATV and camping rules for possible changes

Director's Report: Did seasonal interviews with other staff, went to department head meeting, checked out trucks and SUVs available for purchase, attended safety training, went to BOS meeting, met with Austin at DenCo to fix culvert and got a bid, had planning meeting with Riley and Dustin, met with Raina for Fun Night, coordinated with DNR for Fun Night, looked at seed planters with Riley and Dustin, reviewed deck railing quotes, research TF Clark's park for potential hunting, got new uniform pieces for staff, did some shopping for native seed and cover crop seeds and measured seeding areas, registered for CCDA, culvert repair meetings with Austin and DNR, talked with troubled youth outreach coordinator to possibly do a career talk with the partnership center, chatted with state auditor, researched for new deposit box for campgrounds, coordinated with engineering department to use seeder, and coordinated for soil sampling at OCLAP.

Old Business

Vehicle Purchase: Checked out available vehicles for purchase, decided on a Ford Edge for \$41,000. Will be auctioning off the old Dooley through Spanky's.

TF Clark Updates: Behrens checked into history of Clark's Park for possible opening to archery hunting and didn't find any verbiage suggesting that the land has been willed as a wildlife preserve or has use restrictions. Horne, Conrad, and Behrens suggested not allowing trapping in park. Allen inquired as to which area of the park would be open to hunting—Horne answered part of the north area of Clark's Park. It was suggested that open hunting could be allowed without limiting the number of hunters. Adolphs said she would talk to neighboring landowners to let them know that hunting may be allowed at Clark's Park at some point. The need to advertise this change, after it gets put into effect, was discussed—without attracting an excessive amount of hunters.

Culvert Repair Bids: Behrens reached out to Grout Scouts (no show) and DenCo Highway for quotes on culvert repair. The quote from DenCo was \$11,400 for the repair. Behrens says this money could be taken out of the LAD fund. A motion to have DenCo fix the culvert was put for by Wacha, seconded by Adolphs, all voting aye.

Fun Night Planning Updates: Behrens and Genaw discussed the plan for Fun Night. Delania Halter has commitments for donations from Iowa Premium and Dirt Haven Acres and has contacted Central Iowa Farm Store, Wayward Social, Bark Box, and Chewy. She will reach out to a handful of other businesses as well. All present discussed which businesses they could ask for donations. Halter presented bids for dinner catering for Fun Night from Spanky's, La Carreta, and dessert from Ma Brown's cookies. Tickets for admission and the gun raffle were dispersed to board members to sell, along with posters and sale logs.

New Business

New railing at Nature Center: Behrens presented quotes for a new railing for the nature center deck, which board members reviewed. Wacha brought up need to conform to OSHA requirements. Wacha, Adolphs, and Keenan preferred a vertical style of railing with wooden handrails and upright metal slats. Wacha suggested reaching out to county safety manager to find out what the safety standards are for a railing. Allen put forth a motion to approve the afore described material for the handrail, seconded by Adolphs, all voting aye.

New seeding areas: Behrens commented that hillsides by beach parking lot, area by culvert, and a few other pockets of land could be converted to prairie for less maintenance. He has been coordinating to borrow equipment for seeding and has ordered seeds. Behrens says he has 5.5 acres that he plans to seed immediately, as well as other areas selected for seeding in future years.

Camping rates/opening: Conrad suggested turning on electric in the campground on April 1st but leaving water off until approximately May 1st depending on weather. The rate for April will be \$15, with the normal-season rate being \$20. The cost is \$10 per tent. The rate for all sites at TF Clark is \$10 per night. Staff suggested moving the campground at Clark's Park towards the road and creek in future years, possibly adding a disc golf course, with positive reception by the board.

ATV rules: Behrens brought up rules on allowing ATVs or golf carts on park roads. Conrad suggested that golf carts shouldn't be allowed, but many folks use ATVs the same as vehicles and it would make sense to allow them on park roads, with no off-roading allowed. Conrad suggested enforcing ATV use the same as car use. Wacha commented that, since state parks allow ATV presence on roads, we should allow them on county park roads, with Adolphs, Conrad, Behrens, and Horne expressing agreement. Allen voiced his lack of support for allowing ATVs. Wacha suggested that the tax on UTV/ATV registration partially funds the state conservation fund. Adolphs moved to allow side-by-sides on roadways in Tama County Parks, seconded by Wacha, Adolphs and Wacha voting aye, Allen voting nay.

Conrad discovered that trail cameras are not allowed on Tama county grounds. Conrad suggested allowing trail cams in areas other than campgrounds or indoor areas. Adolphs expressed support, with an added addition that the board is not responsible for camera. Wacha suggested allowing cameras only in public hunting areas, with Adolphs, Conrad, and Allen expressing support. Wacha motioned to allow trail cams in public hunting areas with the addendum that the board is not responsible for them, seconded by Allen, all voting aye.

Equipment purchases: Behrens and staff have been looking at some new equipment for general maintenance and fire control. Staff have also been looking at getting a seeder for native seeds, potentially sharing the cost with another conservation organization and renting it out. Keenan inquired about a seeder at Otter Creek Marsh, asking if staff could borrow that instead; Horne said that it could be used. Behrens stated that, with all of the areas he plans to seed, it would get lots of use, and allowing rentals would offset the cost. Wacha and Adolphs expressed support for the project if cost-sharing can be done. Adolphs, Wacha, and Keenan expressed support for the idea, with the expectation that Behrens will do some more research for quotes.

Floor Discussion

Behrens informed the board that he would be taking a few days off in the coming month. Adolphs inquired about mileage reimbursement for board members, with Behrens saying he would look into it.

Allen brought up Oxbow Bottoms and wanted to know the plan for this year. Behrens said he would contact some DNR folks to discuss grants and funding for that project. Behrens expressed a desire to develop Oxbow Bottoms and some of the less-developed areas into good habitat for wildlife. Allen also inquired about filling potholes at Manatts, with staff saying that they can put some rock out there to fill the potholes. Allen also inquired about clearing trash on the surrounding land. Wacha suggested that the land is owned by Manatts, with the county having a cheap lease on it.

Adjourn

With no further discussion items, it was motioned by Adolphs, seconded by Wacha, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m., all voting aye.

Board Chair

Tama County Conservation Board