

O'Brien County Conservation Board

Minutes

April 14, 2021

The O'Brien County Conservation Board met in regular session at the Prairie Heritage Center at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were: Royd Chambers, Kathy Luedke, Jack Wallinga, Sherri Bootsma and Darwin Dau.

Visitors from the community included Carolyn Bootsma, Mary Hicks, Molly Hicks, Dave Koehlmoos, Denise Steffen, Lydia Hansen, Claude Struve, Mari Radtke, Tom Konz, Randy Feekes, Terry Feekes, John Farrell, Donna Farrell, Jolene Hultgren and Patty Vollink.

On a motion by Wallinga, seconded by Luedke, the minutes from the March 10, 2021 meeting were approved. Motion carried, unanimous. Monthly expenditures were approved on a motion by Wallinga, seconded Dau. Motion carried, unanimous.

A new bridge to Scout Island at Mill Creek Park has been built by the County Engineer. The bridge will be able to withstand the weight of riprap being hauled across it to complete the Scout Island Shoreline Armoring Project. The director informed the board that as soon as the required permit is received from the Army Corps of Engineers, the riprap will be hauled to and placed around the island.

On a motion by Bootsma, seconded by Dau, Luke Jenness and Bryce Batien will be hired as summer help. Jenness will begin working on May 17 at a rate of \$12/hour. Batien will begin working on May 12 at a rate of \$11/hour. Motion carried, unanimous.

There continues to be a lack of volunteers to work at the Prairie Heritage Center on weekends. Advertisements have been placed in the N'West Iowa Review, at the courthouse and the center, on the website and on the Facebook page. A brochure informing visitors about volunteer opportunities has also been created and is available at the Prairie Heritage Center. The board will revisit this issue at the May meeting.

Eric Brown of Paullina Hardware approached the board to discuss storing water recreation equipment at Mill Creek Park. This equipment is rented out to visitors of the park by his hardware store. Brown also proposed having a canoe race at Mill Creek Lake on June 26. The possibility of doing the canoe race as a fundraising partnership between the Conservation Board and the Chamber was discussed. The board would like for Brown to return to the May meeting with proposals for these two topics.

Dave Stoll had requested to be on the agenda to discuss items pertaining to the Little Sioux Valley Conservation Association, but did not attend the meeting. No updates or information was given.

Tom Konz questioned the director about food plots being allowed at the Hannibal Waterman Wildlife Area, the Waterman Wildlife Addition Area, and the Crosbie Area. The director informed Konz that he had spoken to Todd Bishop of the IDNR, and that it is permissible for 10% of those areas to be planted and maintained as food plots. According to Bishop, it is also permissible for hay to be harvested as long as it is strictly used for feeding the Conservation Board's bison herd.

The board received comments from Patty Volink and Jolene Hultgren about horseback riding at the McCormack area.

County email addresses have been assigned to board members Luedke, Wallinga and Chambers. The email addresses for Conservation Board members are available on the Conservation Board's website under the "Contact" tab.

The board was brought up-to-date on the 2021 camping season. The three hosts from last year will return. Camping will begin April 30 and continue through October 3.

Abbie Parker, O'Brien County Naturalist, provided the board with information regarding the environmental education program and the success of the events that have been held. The chairman thanked Parker for all of her good work.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at the Mill Creek Park Lodge.

  
Lloyd E. Chambers