



LINN COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MONDAY, AUGUST 23, 2021, BOARD MEETING

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Linn County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on **August 23, 2021**, at Wickiup Hill Learning Center, 10260 Morris Hills Road, Toddville, IA 52341.

Board Members Present

Hillary Hughes Steve Emerson, Cindy Burke and Brent Oleson
Cindy Burke, Hillary Hughes, Brent Oleson and Steve Emerson joined the meeting by phone.

Board Members Absent

John Hanson

Staff Present

Dennis Goemaat, Director; Daniel Gibbins, Deputy Director; Randy Burke, Planner; Ryan Schlader, Community Outreach Specialist;

Others Present

Ted Hoffman

Call To Order

Board Vice President Hughes called the meeting to order at 12:02 PM

Public Comment

A letter was received from Ted Hoffman concerning industrial solar energy projects. Ted Hoffman attended and offered public comment concerning his use of Conservation areas and input requesting the Conservation Board not place solar panels on the Linn Learning Farm property. Mr. Hoffman expressed concern for the NextEra proposal to lease the Conservation property for industrial solar installations due to loss of wildlife habitat, length of contract, non-local corporate oversight and other reasons. Mr. Hoffman urged the Conservation Board to reject the NextEra proposal for the Learning Farm property.

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

Motion by Emerson, second by Burke

To approve the consent agenda.

Vote: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Hanson

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

ITEM C1. Approve minutes of the July 19, 2021 monthly meeting

ITEM C2. Approve claims list and expenditures – Claims List #2022-2.

Claims and Transfer list #2022-2 involving claim #2-62 through #2-192.

ITEM C3. Receive and place on file the July 2021 financial/budget report.

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ITEM C4. Receive and place on file the July 2021 activity report.

ITEM C5. Acceptance of gifts.

1. Gift #1-2022 – Monetary donation (\$500) from Center Point Historical Society for use at the Center Point Depot.
2. Gift #2-2022 - Monetary donation (\$50) from Sandra Merritt for support of Wickiup Hill Learning Center.

ITEM C6. Authorize staff to submit a Trees Forever Green Initiative Grant for tree planting.

ITEM C7. Authorize staff to submit a Derecho Community Forestry Grant Program for tree planting.

ITEM C8. Capital Improvement Program updates report.

REGULAR AGENDA:

ITEM R2. Public hearing regarding the proposed plans, specifications, form of contract and estimated cost for the Plains campground improvements at Pinicon Ridge Park, Project #13-20.

The Conservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with Iowa law regarding the proposed plans, specifications, form of contract and estimated costs for the Plains campground improvements at Pinicon Ridge Park, Project #13-20. The published notice of the public hearing was presented. No written or oral comments or objections were received.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Oleson

To close the public hearing.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Hanson

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ITEM R3. Discuss and decide on Resolution #2021-18, approval of the plans and specifications, form of contract and estimated construction costs for the Plains campground improvements at Pinicon Ridge Park, Project #13-20.

Randy Burke reviewed the plans and specifications, form of contract and estimated construction costs for the Plains campground improvements at Pinicon Ridge Park, Project #13-20.

MOTION by Burke, second by Emerson

To adopt Resolution #2021-18 indicating that a public hearing was held and approving the plans, specifications, form of contract and estimated costs for the Plains campground improvements at Pinicon Ridge Park, Project #13-20, and to authorize staff to receive and open bids.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Hanson

ITEM R4. Discuss and decide on bids received for the Wanatee Park tributary stabilization project, Project #26-19F.

Randy Burke reviewed bids received for the Wanatee Park tributary stabilization project, Project #26-19F. Apparent low bid was from Rathje Construction with a bid of \$157,981.30. Bids received are as follows:

Company	Bid
Rathje Construction Co.	\$157,981.30
Conolly Construction	\$172,615.60
RES Great Lakes LLC	\$189,593.00
Country Landscapes, Inc.	\$167,821.38

MOTION by Emerson, second by Oleson

To accept the low bid of \$157,981.30 from Rathje Construction for project #26-19F and authorize the Director to sign and execute a contract on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Hanson

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ITEM R5. Discuss and decide regarding bids received for the Cedar Valley Nature Trail, Hoover section repairs, Project #2-21.

Randy Burke reviewed bids received for the Cedar Valley Nature Trail, Hoover section repairs, Project #2-21. Apparent low bid was from Midwest Concrete Inc. with a bid of \$172,401.75. Bids received are as follows:

Company	Bid
Midwest Concrete Inc.	\$172,401.75
Ralston Construction Inc.	\$196,259.37

MOTION by Burke, second by Emerson

To accept the low bid of \$172,401.75 from Midwest Concrete Inc. for project #2-21 and authorize the Director to sign and execute a contract on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Hanson

ITEM R6. Discuss and decide regarding approving a contract with YTT Engineers for planning and design work on the Cedar Valley Nature Trail from Urbana to the Benton/Buchanan County line and authorizing the Director to sign the agreement.

Randy Burke reviewed the design contract with YTT Engineers for planning and design work on the Cedar Valley Nature Trail from Urbana to the Benton/Buchanan County line.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Burke

To authorize the Director to sign and execute a contract on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Hanson

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ITEM R7. Discuss and decide regarding approving an agreement with the City of Urbana for connections from a housing development to the Cedar Valley Nature Trail and authorizing the Board President to sign the agreement.

Gibbins reviewed the agreement with the City of Urbana for connections from a housing development to the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. Goemaat described the original easement agreement for this portion of the trail, which included allowance for development connections to the trail.

MOTION by Burke, second Emerson

To approve the agreement and authorize the Board President to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Hanson

ITEM R8. Discuss and decide regarding a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area and Wickiup Hill Learning Area and authorize the Director to sign the MOU.

Goemaat and Schlader reviewed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area and Wickiup Hill Learning Area.

MOTION by Emerson, second Burke

To authorize the Director to sign the MOU on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Hanson

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ITEM R9. Discuss and decide regarding approving an agreement for funding from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program and authorizing the Director to sign the agreement.

Goemaat reviewed an agreement for grant funding reimbursement from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program.

MOTION by Burke, second Emerson

To authorize the Director to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Hanson

ITEM R10. Discuss and decide regarding approving a contract with Anderson Bogert Engineers for route planning and preliminary design for the Wapsi Bluff Trail and authorize the Director to sign the contract.

Goemaat reviewed a contract with Anderson Bogert Engineers for route planning and preliminary design for the Wapsi Bluff Trail.

MOTION by Emerson, second Burke

To authorize the Director to sign and execute the contract on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Hanson

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ITEM R11. Discuss and decide regarding approving road seal coat repairs at Morgan Creek and Wanatee Parks and authorize the Executive Director to sign the contract with LL Pelling.

Goemaat reviewed a project for seal coat repairs at Morgan Creek and Wanatee Parks and efforts to compile quotes from local contractors that conduct this work.

MOTION by Burke, second Emerson

To approve the project not to exceed \$122,790.20 and to authorize the Director to sign and execute a contract on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Hanson

ITEM R12. Board member / staff reports – Board members and staff may report and/or discuss meetings or activities in which they have been involved.

- 1) Community Outreach/Marketing: Ryan Schlader reported on community outreach and marketing efforts including derecho anniversary communications, Gazette editorial, derecho reforestation video, drone video update of Morgan Creek Park, etc.

- 1) Updates:
 - a. Conservation Corps work program to assist with derecho-damaged forest restoration. Gibbins reported on an opportunity to hire an AmeriCorps based Conservation Corps work unit for 2022 to begin work on reforestation of derecho damaged woodlands, invasive species management and other natural resources management projects. Goemaat described next steps to develop a contract for Board approval.
 - b. Covid changes due to Delta variant. Goemaat reviewed recent Covid updates including suggested management of requests for facility reservation refunds. Board consensus was to keep with current refund policy in regard to Covid-19.
 - c. Goemaat updated the Board on Covid-19 trail funding applications.

ITEM R13. Public comment

None.

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ITEM R14. Closed Session – The Conservation Board will go into closed session to discuss the acquisition of particular real estate in accordance with Section 21.5 (1)(j) of the Iowa Code.

MOTION by Burke, second by Emerson

To go into closed session at 12:49 PM for the purpose of discussing acquisition of particular real estate in accordance with section 21.5(1)(j) Code of Iowa.

VOTE: aye: Hughes
 aye: Emerson
 aye: Burke
 aye: Oleson
 nay: none
 absent: Hanson

MOTION by Burke, second by Emerson

To go out of closed session at 12:57 PM.

VOTE: aye: Hughes
 aye: Emerson
 aye: Burke
 aye: Oleson
 nay: none
 absent: Hanson


ITEM R15. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:58 PM


Daniel Gibbins typed the above minutes.

SEAL





Recording Secretary



Board Secretary