

**Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation**

**MINUTES**

**Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**Meeting Date: November 14, 2016**

**Members of the Board in attendance:**

Clyde Fisher, Jim Buechle, Elise Robocker, Mary Ruby

**Members of the Board not in attendance:**

Pete Woll

**Also in attendance:**

Jed Fisher, Superintendent; Gordon Jewett, Assistant Superintendent; Michele Haarr, Clerk

**Others Present:**

Laura Katzman – Flathead Land Trust

Charline Payne – Foys to Blacktail Trails and Flathead Combined Training Association

Walter Kuhn – Bigfork Advisory Committee

Edd Blackler – Bigfork Advisory Committee

Lorrie Woods – citizen

**Call to Order**

A meeting of the Board of Directors for Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation was held in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana on November 14, 2016. The meeting convened at 8:31AM, Chairman Fisher presiding.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the October 3, 2016 of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

**Jim Buechle moved to approve the October 3, 2016 Board minutes.**

**Mary Ruby seconded the motion.**

**There being no discussion and all in favor ~ the motion was carried.**

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Big Sky Park Surplus and Sale – Steven Knoll**

Mr. Knoll stated his interest in purchasing Big Sky Park in Kalispell, which is adjacent to his property and would be used as an extension of his yard. This 1 acre park is located on Big Sky Blvd off of Two Mile Drive and described as containing a little creek with a swampy bottom. Superintendent Jed Fisher indicated that this is an unmaintained park and due to the topography it makes sense to surplus and sell it, and remove it from the tax rolls. Procedure requires a survey and appraisal, followed by auction. The minimum bid must be 90% of the appraised value, and there is no guarantee that Mr. Knoll would have the winning bid. Some of the Board members will tour the park tomorrow.

**Laura Katzman – Proposal for Bird Viewing Area at Grosswiler Property**

Laura Katzman stated that subsequent to her presentation at the Weed/Parks September Board meeting, Fish, Wildlife & Parks expressed an interest in partnering with Flathead Land Trust regarding liability concerns for

the proposed bird viewing area at the Grosswiler property. This is a rare opportunity to conserve almost 400 acres of farmland with a 45 acre pothole wetland that is home to the highest numbers and diversity of wetland birds in the Valley.

Promotional flyers have been distributed, a video launch on Facebook will be released today, and fundraising is going exceptionally well. At the present time, 70K in non-federal matching funds is needed. The Board was impressed with the project and complimented the group for the excellent progress in raising awareness and funding. Some of the Board members may tour the area tomorrow.

### **County Athletic Complex Report**

The County Commissioners and the County Administrator have received the Athletic Complex Business Plan and a meeting with individual Commissioners is forthcoming, after which the project will be rolled out to the public and the press. Superintendent Jed Fisher will meet with a potential donor this week.

### **Weed Department Report**

#### **Department of Agriculture – Letter of Consent**

Superintendent Jed Fisher read into record a letter to Ron de Yong of the Department of Agriculture, as follows, in response to their Consent Agreement regarding the matter of the civil penalty against Flathead County, case file 16-11224. The Consent Agreement called for a fine of \$750 unless the District “provides evidence... that the District has enacted policies and procedures for herbicide product selection that protects agriculture land, agriculture producers and especially agriculture land areas where sensitive/susceptible commodities are grown.”

“The following policies have been enacted by the Flathead County Weed District to be in accordance with the Consent Agreement negotiated between the Montana Department of Agriculture and Flathead County.

1. A total re-write of the Flathead County Weed Management Plan will be implemented once funding for this effort is secured. Until that time, the following amendments are included in our existing plan:
  - A. The chemical Tordon will no longer be used within the valley floor. Specifically, near any type of agriculture cropping situation.
  - B. A reasonable setback to all agriculture cropping areas has been implemented.
  - C. As always, all chemical labels will be reviewed frequently by all of our applicators.
  - D. Staff will continue attending all available training opportunities offered by the Montana Department of Agriculture or the Western Area Weed Council.
  - E. All applicators will be educated to provide enhanced information on their daily spray report forms, e.g., major weather changes, noticeable crop rotation, areas of right-of-way encroachment or unauthorized use of public rights-of-way.
  - F. Reduce applications on private lands until liability concerns are addressed in the weed management plan update.”

Superintendent Fisher requested the Board’s authorization to send the correspondence to the County Attorney for review and approval, followed by release to Director de Yong.

Flathead Conservation District will help facilitate bringing agencies together for a combined effort in participation in and funding of a new weed management plan.

**Jim Buechle moved to approve the draft correspondence to Director Ron de Yong of the Department of Agriculture in response to their proposed Consent Agreement regarding case file 16-11224. Said draft will be forwarded to the County Attorney for review and approval, and then released to Director de Yong.**

**Elise Robocker seconded the motion.**

**There being no discussion and all in favor ~ the motion was carried.**

Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that all fall weed work is completed. The crew was spraying up to 1 week ago on County sites. Equipment is now being winterized and rental sprayers have been put away for the year. Revegetation projects were completed last month with 1,000 pounds of seed distributed. As the Road Department completed work on Columbia Falls Stage Road, the Weed Department crew shot revegetation. Department crew will be reduced to a single employee at month end.

### **Bigfork Advisory Report**

Edd Blackler reported that a meeting will be held to discuss proposed improvements for the Bigfork Dock, to be funded by Larry Jochim of the Bigfork Community Development Foundation. Walter Kuhn summarized some of the proposed improvements, which included a 4" layer of concrete on the dock surface and the addition of approximately 20 pilings. The meeting will include representatives from the County Commissioners, County Weed District, and County Road Department, Bigfork Advisory Committee, as well as Bigfork Water & Sewer, adjacent landowners to Bigfork Dock, and private citizens. Board members were invited to join the meeting. Work normally scheduled in the fall has been delayed pending determination of improvements. Superintendent Jed Fisher will forward to the Board information provided in email correspondence from Larry Jochim.

There was a request to place a memorial bench at Sliter Park. Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett will meet onsite to review the donation location and particulars.

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that a meeting will be held this week to discuss the possibility of the Agency on Aging taking a portion of Lake Hills Park for construction of a new senior facility and library, for which the Parks Department may anticipate something in return. The meeting is preliminary; however, the Parks Department is hopeful to negotiate a walking path, lights and parking as part of the deal. Board and Advisory Committee members will receive a full report.

### **Foys/Herron Advisory Report**

Charline Payne said there was nothing to report from Foys to Blacktail Trails. She requested that the ground in front of the stables be graded and thanked the Department for weed spraying.

Past conversations regarding potential work on the culvert at Herron Park will be reviewed. There was some discussion about leaving the area as nature dictates.

### **Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Report**

There was no one present from the Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Committee. Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that fundraising efforts continue for the pavilion construction.

### **Lakeside Advisory Report**

There was no one present from the Lakeside Advisory Committee. The slash pile from the Ben Williams Park logging operation was burned. Leveling and over-seeding of the logged area will commence in the spring.

Replacement of diseased trees at Volunteer Park will be reviewed in the spring.

### **Middle Forks Parks Advisory Report**

There are no members of the Middle Forks Parks Advisory Committee.

### **Gateway to Glacier Trails Report**

Mary Ruby reported that Jeff Funk is continuing work on the gazebo construction at Hungry Horse Park. Some failed areas of trail are being repaired by the contractor. The south to the north crossing of the trail by Coram school will probably need a flashing light. Winter trail maintenance is not anticipated.

Glencore may allow a packed trail on their property that would connect to the Gateway to Glacier trail. It has been suggested that Whitefish Legacy Partners update the trail map. A donor in Whitefish may pay for the trail to connect to Columbia Falls.

**Other Business**

There was no other business.

**Adjourn**

**Jim Buechle moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:34AM.**

**Mary Ruby seconded the motion.**

**There being no discussion and all in favor ~ the motion was carried.**

The time and place of the next regular meeting is **Monday, December 5, 2016** at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

**Documents Submitted to the Board:**

**Promotional flyer from Flathead Land Trust “Help Us Conserve a Flathead Valley Ecological and Community Treasure”**

**Draft correspondence to Director Ron de Yong, Department of Agriculture; regarding case file 16-1124**