

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: April 1, 2019

Members of the Board in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Samuel Harworth, Jessica Treweek, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

All members of the Board were present.

Also in attendance:

Jed Fisher, Superintendent; Gordon Jewett, Assistant Superintendent and Haily Hoff, Clerk

Others Present:

Sarah Dakin – Gateway to Glacier Trail

Gary Reese – Rails to Trails

Darin Fisher – County Resident

Alan Myers-Davis – Whitefish Legacy Partners

Valerie Parsons – Gateway to Glacier Trail

Richard Turbiak – Citizens for a Better Flathead

Gabriel Dillon – Foys to Blacktail Trails

Orrin Webber – Foys to Blacktail Trails

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 April 1, 2019. The meeting convened at 8:30AM, President Woll presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the March 4, 2019, meeting of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

Jim Buechle moved to approve the March 4, 2019 Board minutes.

Jessica Treweek seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

Orrin Webber reported that he visited Herron Park yesterday. Within 15 minutes, he counted 23 dogs in the park and only 4 of them were on leash. Mr. Webber feels that a stronger enforcement presence is needed to combat the ongoing loose dog problem.

Parks & Recreation Department Report

◦ Trails Plan Update Report

Gabe Dillon explained that changes to the language of the introduction were made, citations were added and statistics were removed. Mr. Dillon asked if the board was comfortable with the modification. Pete Woll responded that following an internal meeting with County officials, the direction from the Commissioners is to focus on maintenance funding solutions. This process is entering a regroup stage. Jed Fisher stated that this is

not bad news and can have a positive outcome going forward. The real challenge is finding sources without using PILT funding, a special improvement vote or cutting the budget of another department. The Road & Bridge Department would carry the majority of the financial burden with overlay costs ranging from \$16,000 to \$45,000 per mile depending on the area. If current agreements are breached, trails are to be removed and taken back to bare ground.

Gabe Dillon presented publications on the Raccoon River Valley Trail in Central Iowa. It boasts 89 miles of scenic, paved trails through three counties. The majority of this trail project is owned and managed by the Conservation Boards of each county and includes fourteen communities. Usage fees are \$2 per day or \$10 annually. Similar usage fees could generate some revenue for future maintenance costs. Mr. Dillon also introduced the possibility of attaining grant funding through The Montana Tourism Grant Program. This grant program is funded by bed tax and awards approximately \$750,000 each year to projects that strengthen Montana's economy through tourism and recreation. RTP expires next year for awards up to \$100,000 for projects completed from 2020-2023.

Jed Fisher stated that of the millions of dollars available in grants, it is not a permanent funding mechanism for long term maintenance needs. Mr. Fisher also mentioned that the Parks Department's mill levy has remained the same since 1997 and it would take a large-scale recreation center type of facility to generate enough revenue to supplement funding trail projects. Jessica Treweek added that we live in a tourist-based economy and annexing the trail systems into Montana State Parks could be a possibility.

Alan Myers-Davis of Whitefish Legacy Partners said that their board voted against implanting user fees. Largely because of this, donations to the group increased exponentially. Benefits of trails are large and generate millions to the community as a whole. Liabilities exist everywhere and he is happy to answer any survey questions or concerns regarding their economic impact study.

Gabe Dillon asked the Board for direction to take back to the committee regarding the Trails Plan. Pete Woll explained that the Board is in a quandary for a solution to please the Commission. Mr. Dillon reiterated that the current plan does not mandate any funding, it is just a document. They are reluctant to expend more time and effort into the draft if they are no longer going to receive any feedback from the Board. Jed Fisher stated that the County Attorney, Planning, Commissioner Holmquist and others all felt that maintenance funding was the main issue with the plan.

Gabe Dillon reported on a volunteer training session that will take place at 311 FFA Drive in Kalispell on Wednesday, April 24th. These trainings are valuable and he thanked the Parks Department for putting it on.

◦ **Disband Advisory Committees**

Jed Fisher explained that advisory committees typically dissolve over time. Groups pull away after minutes are provided and recommendations are made. Groups of this nature can continue to meet privately if they so choose. The Commissioners have legal concerns with groups meeting on behalf of Flathead County business.

Weed Department Report

Gordon Jewett met with the City of Columbia Falls regarding weed control. Flathead County Weed District is supplying Columbia Falls with a sprayer and \$1,500 worth of herbicide to be applied by a licensed applicator. At the end of the season, Columbia Falls City will report back to the Weed Department with what they have accomplished for the year. Mr. Fisher added that in some cases, inner city code enforcement can produce faster results in areas that just need mowed.

◦ **City of Kalispell Weed Management Agreement**

President Woll reviewed and signed the updated weed management agreement for Kalispell City.

◦ **Chemical Bid**

Gordon Jewett reported that the 2019 bid information has been released. The sealed bids will be opened by the Commissioners Office on April 11th. Approximately \$40,000 worth of herbicide will need to be ordered this season. Existing stock is always used first.

Other Business

Orrin Webber has seen the Forest Service and Fish Wildlife & Parks Department post signage after they have been treated to inform people using those areas. Gordon Jewett stated that there is no legal requirement to post notification and that action of that nature can sometimes cause unnecessary panic.

Matters of the Board

There were no matters of the Board.

Adjourn

Jessica Treweek moved to adjourn the meeting at 09:31AM.


Samuel Harworth seconded the motion.

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

The time and place of the next meeting is **Monday, May 6, 2019** at 8:30AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board

Approved:



Pete Woll, Board President

5/6/19

Date