

**Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation
MINUTES
Meeting of the Board of Directors
Meeting Date: March 1, 2021**

Members of the Board in attendance:

James Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Lori Moran, Jessica Treweek, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

All Board members were in attendance.

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Amanda Davey

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 March 1, 2021. The meeting convened at 8:31 AM, President Woll presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the February 1, 2021, meeting of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board. Lori Moran pointed out that her name was misspelled.

Lori Moran moved to approve the February 1, 2021 Board minutes with the spelling correction.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Parks & Recreation Report

Jed reported that at Pete's direction, he met with Jessica, Lori and one of the three Commissioners regarding the trail plan funding. It was explained that putting all of the money toward the one project of rebuilding the switchbacks off of Whitefish Stage going down into Kalispell City's Lawrence Park would not be the most effective use of resources for the trails system as a whole. This project could cost well over \$500,000. The Commissioners ignored the bid for that work two years ago for \$435,000. The main reason that work was discussed in the first place was because a wealthy homeowner in the adjacent subdivision was willing to invest some of his own money to improve that access. When the assessments were made and the bids were received, that individual changed his mind. It was also mentioned that the pedestrian bridge in Lawrence Park may also be the County's responsibility. The Commissioners rejected the recommendation from the Weed & Parks Board to begin the maintenance work put in the maintenance plan that we bought from Robert Peccia & Associates as well as the Board's recommendation for a voted mill levy for funding trail maintenance costs. Mr. Fisher stated that he would rather see those switchbacks torn out and returned to a natural grade and redirect that funding to a more appropriate project. A legal opinion for this option is pending with Tara in the County Attorney's office.

Jessica Treweek made a motion to explore more cost-effective alternatives to manage the switchback trail off Whitefish Stage Road.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Commissioner Brad Abell will be out this afternoon to discuss the possibility of removing the existing switchback trail connecting Whitefish Stage Road to Lawrence Park. Another topic of discussion will be the possibility of reallocating some CIP funding and potential use of cash in lieu dollars to dedicate for a basic gym facility at Hillcrest Park. Lori Moran mentioned that Covid19 precautions have reduced are already limited space for programming in local school gymnasiums. Amanda Davey reported that she has been permanently evacuated from those gyms for her adult programs. Mrs. Davey also reported that she just returned from Arizona where her daughter participated in a youth travel basketball tournament. The tournament took place in hotel conference rooms over a three-day period and brought in over \$600K. This is just one example of the kind of potential that exists in offering regional tournaments of this nature to a place like the Flathead Valley, which is already a popular travel destination. Talented athletes exist in the Flathead Valley and they need a place to train and play. Most of the programs offered by Flathead County Parks & Recreation are designed for introducing sports to children that wouldn't otherwise have an opportunity to participate or advance.

Gordie is moving forward with the Herron Park crossing project to obtain culverts and material for installation. A permit is drafted but a change in the weather is needed before any work can be performed. Jed has been in contact with Art Krueger in Meadow Hills subdivision regarding the possibility of installing some playground equipment in that park.

A recent storm downed a tree at Ben Williams Park in Lakeside and destroyed the pavilion. Weather has been conducive for a lot of clean-up work in parks. Most of the machine maintenance work is completed and equipment is ready for the busy season ahead.

Youth basketball, volleyball and t-ball registrations are all underway and two positions are currently open for the General Park & Recreation Workers at the Conrad Complex.

Weed Department Report

Gordie requested a recommendation from the Board on timing for equipment replacement. Weed equipment pickups are typically replaced around 80K miles because of the hard miles they endure. Spray trucks spend a lot of time through tough terrain at low speed so the engine wear is much more than the actual miles indicate. Park pickups are generally replaced around 100K miles. Tractors have been historically flagged for replacement around 4K hours. Clyde Fisher indicated his support of the existing replacement schedule. Tractors generally see around 500-600 hours per season. A recent surplus pickup that went to auction and was expected to bring in \$3-4K sold for \$8,700.

Noel Jinings indicated that she has small landowner seminar presentation via Zoom on March 31st at 6:00 p.m. There will be no charge this year and registrants are able to enroll separately for topics that are of interest to them. A high volume of subdivision requests are still coming through. Warmer weather has been a driving factor in increased phone calls scheduling site visits this spring.

The chemical bid will be submitted for bid this month. Jim Buechle asked why the purchase price for chemicals has been lower in recent years. Gordie explained that post-patent generic chemicals are much cheaper and have proven to be just as effective and has forced the bigger companies to be more competitive with their pricing.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Matters of the Board

President Woll closed the session for personnel discussion.

President Woll reopened the meeting from closed session and stated that he would like the Board to meet on April 5th. Mr. Woll indicated that he would be meeting with the Commissioners individually about the potential of filling Mr. Fisher's position with existing staff and more would be known after that takes place. Jed Fisher has served Flathead County since April 1, 1990 and his last working day is scheduled for March 31st, 2021.

Adjourn

Jessica Treweek moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 AM.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Approved:



Pete Woll, Board President



Date