

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation
MINUTES
Board of Directors
Meeting Date: April 4, 2011

Members of the Board in attendance:

James Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Elise Robocker, Ray Sanders

Members of the Board not in attendance:

Jim Watson

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Tom Esch – Foys to Blacktail Trails

Clifford Kipp – Montana Conservation Corps

Tamara Tanberg – Lakeside Parks Advisory Committee

Linda Tutvedt – Foys/Herron Advisory Committee

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors, Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation, was held in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana, on April 4, 2011. The meeting convened at 8:35 A.M., Chairman Sanders presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the March 7, 2011 meetings of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board and approved as printed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Foys to Blacktail Trails

Tom Esch reported that the group continues to fundraise for Phases II & III, applying for grants, contacting former donors, and a raffle scheduled for November. May 7th is the 3rd annual Herron Hustle; June 4th is National Trails Day; and in August there will be a Paddlethon with kayaks & canoes around Foys and then a run and bicycle events. Insurance for these events will be obtained.

Cliff Kipp of the Montana Conservation Corps reported that the County was invoiced \$13,000 for 2009 Herron Park project work which was paid in August of 2010. The 2011 Recreational Trails Grantees were funded at 54%, so the Service Order with Flathead County will be amended to reflect a reduced payment amount until such time the grant is awarded in full.

Nineteen crew leaders will be training on the trails for 3 weeks, which will be done regardless of grant money because the Corps is committed to the project and will not leave an unfinished trail. A work plan has been submitted and the horse folks have been kept in the loop.

MCC is running Volunteer Day on June 4th because they have the necessary insurance, however, ultimately FTBT will host this event.

It was agreed to submit a grant application for next year in spite of the uncertainty of funding as Debbie Pierson has already gone through this process twice.

Elise Robocker made a motion to proceed with a Recreational Trails Program grant application for 2012. Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Bigfork Advisory Committee

Skip Gilmore was not present; however, Superintendent Jed Fisher reviewed an email received from Mr. Gilmore – see **Attachment “A”**.

Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that he and Recreation Director Robert Tuman met with Skip Gilmore of the Bigfork Advisory Committee, a representative of Bandits Soccer Club, the Athletic Director of Bigfork High School, a spokesperson for Babe Ruth baseball and t-ball major and minor. The purpose of the meeting was to meet, exchange names and phone numbers, and to improve communication regarding scheduling of sports events at Carlyle Johnson. The Parks & Recreation Department intended to take over registration for all sports activities; however, this will wait until next year. The group was put on notice and told to expect to pay. Some ground rules were discussed, such as moving nets off the fields – a total of 15 to 19 nets. Bigfork Bandits reported there is no spring soccer this year. Baseball will give us a schedule for coordination of traffic. Insurance requirements are in place.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

Linda Tutvedt reported that Committee members met with the folks from the dog park in Whitefish. This dog park has open space where it is easy to keep dogs in sight as opposed to Herron Park, which has trees and other wildlife, in particular, a special rare frog. The Committee supports a dog park, although at a different location than Herron Park. Two potential locations were discussed – Kid’s Sport off of Hwy 93 and the land behind Flathead Valley Community College. Tutvedt indicated that the Committee will support but not lead this effort.

Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett stated that it is normal to have conflict when we start to enforce “No Dogs” or “Dogs Must Be Leashed” rules, and he commented that the situation has improved.

Tutvedt discussed doing her own collection of donations for Herron Park and turning the proceeds over to the Parks & Recreation Department. It was discussed that the County Auditors may have an issue with this. Tutvedt will see if Flathead Combined Training Association can put a note about donations on their website. It was suggested that the Parks Department might consider language regarding an annual donation on park signs.

Lakeside Advisory Report

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that he met with representatives of the Committee and discussed user fees for the tennis courts. The possibility of an annual fee was reviewed as well as holding on fee charges for the 1st year in order to determine the amount of use. The need to develop a fee schedule for the courts exists. The importance of the Parks Department being aware of scheduling was discussed.

All user groups have a fee and a fee structure is needed because there are base expenses to maintain the parks. A comment was made about a potential public perception that they are paying for their own park. Mr. Fisher reminded the Board that the taxpayers invested 50K into the tennis courts and we need to be sure that additional

costs are considered and covered. Ms. Tanberg indicated that the Committee will continue to fundraise for maintenance costs.

It was reported that there is an open position on the Committee, which will be advertised.

Middle Forks Parks Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Middle Forks Parks Advisory Committee.

Other Business

- Dog Ordinance Fine Increase – Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that relative to the dogs off leash fine, the County Animal Wardens feel that \$35 is sufficient. Mr. Jewett took this recommendation to the County Attorney, along with the \$125 fine charged by the Forest Service. Fish, Wildlife and Parks charges \$85 for dog off leash fines.

Jim Buechle made a motion to increase the dog infraction fine to \$125.00 per violation.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

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

- Conservation Corps/RTP Funding – This topic was discussed earlier in this meeting.
- Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust – A grant application will be submitted for the upcoming year.
- Park Rental User Fee – Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that fees will be considered on a case-by-case basis for use by non-profit groups. There was discussion of written criteria for decisions to avoid a case-by-case decision. Linda Tutvedt would like to have scholarships available and commented that if everyone is run out of the parks they will be real cheap to use. Tutvedt recommended a flat low fee for non-profit groups with scholarships tied to it. There was discussion that a reasonable fee needs to be set, with acknowledgment of ongoing costs. A 50% reduction from published rates was discussed for non-profit groups. If this should be unsatisfactory it may go before the Board for further consideration.

Elise Robocker made a motion to reduce park user fees by 50% of the published rate for non-profit groups.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

- Davar Gardner Appraisal Discussion – New Information – Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that Dykstra's number came in at 235K – 245K; PC Musgrove and Larry Wakefield came in at 140K – 142K. The County Attorney advised that the Department cannot pay more than the lowest appraisal – 140K.

Clyde Fisher made a motion to cease investigations toward purchase of Davar Gardener's property located at Little Bitterroot Lake.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

- County Attorney Reviews and Recommendations – Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that County Attorney Peter Steele indicated that the documents for the Weed Department chemical bid appeared to be in order and approved their release for bidding. Attorney Steele further indicated that Flathead County could not be a non-profit entity for the purpose of fundraising. Lastly, Steele indicated that any offer to

purchase Davar Gardner's property located at Little Bitterroot Lake would need to be at the lowest appraised value – 140K.

Mr. Jewett requested that the Board adopt a "No Dogs" policy at Volunteer Park in Lakeside, Conrad Complex in Kalispell; and Carlyle Johnson Park in Bigfork. These areas get a lot of use and there are typically a lot of dog feces.

Jewett reported that Attorney Steele commended the Board's manner of doing business.

Elise Robocker made a motion to adopt a "No Dogs" policy at Volunteer Park in Lakeside, Conrad Complex in Kalispell, and Carlyle Johnson Park in Bigfork.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

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

- Conrad Complex Batting Cages – Michael Kazmier is interested in building batting cages at the Complex. Flathead County would receive a percentage of the proceeds and any vandalism would be at the expense of Kazmier. Profit percentages paid elsewhere need to be determined. Kazmier will present his ideas at the next Board meeting.

- Other Business – Superintendent Jed Fisher
Superintendent Fisher reported that the County budget process calls for capital improvement projects over 5K planned for the next 20 years, which he is unable to anticipate.

Fisher further reported that the State Legislature bill on volunteerism did not pass.

It was discussed and agreed that Superintendent Fisher is the spokesperson for the press on any departmental related topic after the Board has discussed the topic. Board members should refrain from making comments individually or from indicating their participation on this Board, unless the Board is aware of the statements prior to the event.

Fisher apologized to the Board for his method in handling a difference of opinion with a Board member during a recent Board meeting. Fisher acknowledged that he should have handled the disagreement in a different manner and it was not his role to do so during a Board meeting.

Adjournment

The time and place of the next regular meeting is Monday, May 2, 2011 in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana, and the April 4, 2011 meeting was adjourned at 9:45 A.M.

Michele Haarr

From: Skip Gilmore [skipgilmore@centurytel.net]
Sent: Monday, March 21, 2011 11:37 AM
To: J Fisher
Cc: Michele Haarr
Subject: April meeting

Jed,

Since I will be unable to attend the April meeting, I will try to summarize Bigfork activities and requests and follow-up at the May meeting. I, personally, think the idea of acquiring an auditorium is a good one. It is a buyer's market and may become more so in the coming year. The downside is that a slow recovery of the economy could reduce the profitability of programs and use. With that said, it is a good direction to go for future growth with some risk involved.

I would like to see a renewal of last year's MOA with Shawnee Dr. property owner, Dana Hemphill, as we will require overflow parking at approximately four events, depending on scheduling agreements between Bob and the sports organizations. I have not heard from either Bob or the organizations to date and will attempt to contact them this week.

If you are able to secure a position for a FT/PT care-taker at Sliter's park, please let me know as there are some locals that would be very interested in applying. Just a heads-up when the posting goes in would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Skip Gilmore

Bigfork Parks Advisory Committee