

**Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation**  
**MINUTES**  
**Board of Directors**  
**Meeting Date: July 11, 2011**

**Members of the Board in attendance:**

James Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Elise Robocker, Ray Sanders, Jim Watson

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

None

***Also in attendance:***

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

***Others Present:***

Sharon Hopkins – Bigfork Advisory Committee

Tamara Tanberg – Lakeside Parks Advisory Committee

Robert Tuman – Flathead County Recreation Supervisor

Elaine Wilson – Prospective Lakeside Advisory Committee Member

Andy Young – Foy/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 July 11, 2011. The meeting convened at 8:33 A.M., Chairman Sanders presiding.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the June 6, 2011 meetings of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board and approved.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Carlyle Johnson Proposed Fees and Usage**

Neither Mr. Ian MacCallum of Bigfork High School soccer nor Mr. Shane Curtis had arrived at this point in the meeting so it was agreed to continue to the next agenda item.

**Park Facility Rental User Insurance Update**

Michele Haarr reported that this subject was reviewed with County Attorney Peter Steele who indicated that it was not a viable option and would be a conflict of interest. Organized park user groups will continue to provide their own insurance. Superintendent Fisher reminded the Board that this relates to the presentation by Kim Thomas of Western States Insurance. Western States would sell the County a master policy and park users would purchase insurance from the County. The Parks & Recreation Department would have to recoup this cost for the program to be beneficial.

## **Potoczny Park Lease Agreement**

Superintendent Jed Fisher presented a renewal permit for lease of Joe Potoczny Park between Flathead National Forest and Flathead County Parks & Recreation Department – see **Attachment A**. Jim Buechle questioned whether it had been modified from the previous agreement. Superintendent Fisher indicated that it was substantially the same; however he had not perused it.

Jim Buechle made a motion to approve the permit renewal between Flathead National Forest and Flathead County Parks & Recreation Department to expire December 31, 2020. Jim Watson recommended that the County Attorney review this document prior to a vote by this Board. It was agreed that the document be sent to the County Attorney for review and comments. Jim Buechle withdrew the motion.

## **Bigfork Advisory Committee**

Carlyle Johnson – Sharon Hopkins reported that there was no longer any overflow parking available at Dana Hemphill's property due to the lack of an agreement. Ms. Hopkins further stated that Mr. Hemphill indicated that he would not sign any agreement. Superintendent Jed Fisher and Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett will meet with Hemphill.

## **Foys/Herron Advisory Report**

Andy Young reported that the group has not met for several weeks. He recommended Linda Hellman and David Girardot as Advisory Committee members with Ms. Hellman as the 5<sup>th</sup> member and Mr. Girardot becoming the alternate.

Foys Beach – It has been very busy at Foys since the weather improved. With the high water level there is less beach area but more use. The work on the ramp and launch made things better and the buoyed area works well to separate swimmers and boaters. Assistant Superintendent Jewett reported 130 vehicles at Foys over the past weekend and only 28 at the State beach. Jim Watson commented that he has counted as many as 300 vehicles.

Progress regarding the path to the shore at Foys was questioned. Superintendent Fisher reported that the job is in the hands of the Planning and Zoning Department and we are waiting to hear back.

The Montana Department of Transportation has given the Road Department the authority to reduce the speed limit from 50 to 35 mph along Foys Lake Road in front of the Lake access. The Parks Department will calendar to contact the Road Department June 1<sup>st</sup> and September 5<sup>th</sup> each year to change speed limit signing.

Mr. Young noted that a vendor had set up in the parking once or twice but has not been seen recently. Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that a father and son who operate an ice cream business is permitted by the State, not the County. Mr. Jewett spoke with the pair, who were unhappy, but understood they needed to relocate from Foys beach to the State beach.

Herron Park - Young reported that Herron has grass and lots of it. The water table is high and the grass is long. Some events have been cancelled. Young and his wife Pat rode the area and noted standing water. The Parks Department borrowed a swather from Triple W Equipment and will be cutting areas to accommodate Park reservations. It was noted that Triple W has been very accommodating in lending equipment.

An adult rider's camp will be held this weekend. Trail work completed by Foys To Blacktail Trails has been wonderful. The views and vistas are everywhere with meandering trails. It is great to have a facility like this so close to town.

Foy's Center – The schoolhouse remodel looks great.

Superintendent Fisher reminded everyone that public meetings for Advisory Committees need to be held in a public place rather than a private residence. Jim Watson commented that the County Commissioners and the Governor are subject to the same requirements.

Superintendent Jed Fisher discussed a letter from Kent Laudon that was sent to Commissioner Pamela Holmquist. Mr. Laudon is a frequent user of the park and is upset about the “new” dog leash laws. He is unaware that leash laws have been in effect for quite some time. Laudon has not returned Superintendent Fisher's phone calls. It was generally agreed that the dogs off leash incidents have dramatically improved.

Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett has been swathing the fields at Herron and will continue in order to clear an area for the equestrian events. The hay will be used for rescue animals.

Jim Watson commented that flooding at Herron from the stable to the A-frame shelter is due to an inadequate culvert, which was iced out this season because there is not an established ditch. Watson suggested that the Department may want to look at replacing the culvert with a larger one. In addition, Watson suggested that the stable road may need a better culvert if it continues to be used as sled hill access. Superintendent Fisher will address this concern with Greg Iverson at the Road Department or with Flathead Valley Community College.

Watson also questioned plans to stripe Foy's Lake access parking lot. It was discussed that generally school events get packed but ingress and egress routes are left open. The Department will monitor the situation to determine if the cost balances the benefit.

Watson also suggested that the green gate at Herron Park remain unlocked during events to be available for emergency vehicles and as the primary backcountry route. Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett indicated that Smith Valley Rescue was issued a key and he will check to ensure it is still available to emergency staff. Watson commented that Foy's To Blacktail Trails is now required to complete safety plans for their insurance carrier.

The 2012 Recreational Trails Program application was submitted by the required July 1<sup>st</sup> timeline for a \$12,000 grant. If awarded, the funds will be used maintaining the trails and removal of dead and diseased trees adjacent to the trails. Watson completed the grant application for land acquisition and will provide a copy to the Department.

### **Foy's to Blacktail Trails**

There was no one present.

### **Lakeside Advisory Committee**

Tamara Tanberg introduced Elaine Wilson, who has submitted a letter of interest for membership with this Committee.

Ben Williams – Tamara Tanberg thanked the Board for the benches. Jennifer Drew and Cathy Cummings have established a Community Tennis Association network of people who are available to do maintenance and fundraising, and as such qualify for liability insurance from the United States Tennis Association.

Volunteer Park – Ms. Tanberg received a call from Bruce Ennis, who donated this park to the County. Mr. Ennis is concerned about the excessive amount of trash, in particular from Dairy Queen and especially on

weekends. Mr. Ennis plans to talk with the owner and/or manager at Dairy Queen to see if they are willing to provide clean up at the Park. Tanberg commented there were 5 bags of trash Saturday, July 9<sup>th</sup>. Superintendent Fisher cautioned Tanberg regarding picking up trash due to the possibility of handling hazardous contents.

Tanberg was advised that there will be a volunteer training session at the Parks & Recreation Department this Friday, July 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM. Fresh Life Church will have 22 – 30 attendees who will help with picking up debris from flooding at Leisure Island Park. Anyone who would like to help out in Lakeside is invited to attend. Elaine Wilson commented that there is also excessive trash at Somers Beach.

There was discussion regarding a crosswalk safety concern on Highway 93 in Lakeside. Recently, a child on a bicycle was hit by a car, but was not seriously injured. Tanberg was advised to contact Jim Lynch at the Helena Montana Department of Transportation. Jim Watson suggested that this location may be a good spot for a push button stoplight.

The Foy's Lake access boat launch looks good with the extra paving. Superintendent Fisher indicated that the work was done in conjunction with another Road Department job and saved the Parks & Recreation Department a substantial amount of money.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Lakeside Community Development Foundation and Flathead County Parks and Recreation has not been executed. It was agreed to transfer the funds to the Foundation as previously agreed.

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

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

Jim Watson reminded the Board that Val Parsons is working with the Department of Transportation regarding a trail next to the highway through the Canyon in Hungry Horse that will connect Columbia Falls to Glacier Park. This effort involves the County because of the Trail Plan, as well as the Montana Department of Transportation and both Blackfoot and Flathead tribes. The tote road, which is an old wagon road, still exists and although it is too steep for a pedestrian path it would make an incredible interpretative path. Part of the lore is that the Blackfoot tribe ambushed the Flathead tribe as they came through. It is anticipated that this will take years to plan, execute and complete.

### **Advisory Committee Appointments**

Superintendent Jed Fisher referred Board members to letters of intent received from 3 people who have requested to serve on Advisory Committees. Elaine Wilson requests to serve as an alternate on Lakeside Parks Advisory Committee; Linda Hellman and David Girardot request to serve on Foy's/Herron Advisory Committee – Mr. Girardot would fill an alternate position.

**Jim Watson made a motion to appoint Linda Hellman as a regular member and David Girardot as an alternate member of the Foy's/Herron Advisory Committee, with terms expiring on January 31, 2014.**

**Jim Buechle seconded the motion.**

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

**Jim Buechle made a motion to appoint Elaine Wilson as an alternate member of the Lakeside Parks Advisory Committee, with a term expiration of January 31, 2014.**

**Jim Watson seconded the motion.**

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

## **Revisit Department Head Spending Authority**

After discussion, it was agreed that the Board would continue to review annual proposed budget cash-in-lieu and capital expenditures. Currently, it is a State requirement that purchases over 50K go before the Commissioners for approval. The Board agreed that this process has worked and once the budget is approved that is the authority for this Department Head to expend funds.

## **Carlyle Johnson Proposed Fees and Usage - continued**

Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that Ian MacCallum represents Bigfork High School soccer interests, and Shane Curtis represents baseball interests at Carlyle Johnson Park. The limited funding from the School District enjoyed in the past is no longer available due to budget cuts and the soccer group has become self funded. They are discussing the possibility of charging admission for home games, advertising with signing in the Park, and selling concessions. Mr. Curtis has a broader scope with ideas for a major overhaul of the Park. Neither Mr. MacCallum nor Mr. Curtis appeared to present their ideas. Superintendent Fisher apologized for their absence.

Sharon Hopkins of the Bigfork Advisory Group will get in touch with both gentlemen to discuss their ideas. Ms. Hopkins commented that area business organizations or private parties could be approached for funding

Bob Tuman of Flathead County Parks and Recreation entered the meeting at this time and stated that the Park could be as well run as the Conrad Complex. Tuman suggested Rotary and other service organizations to help work or write the checks.

It was agreed to calendar a fall date to send out a notice to bring together all interested parties to review ideas and become organized.

## **Adoption of By-Laws**

Although the By-Laws were previously approved by this Board — they were not executed — **see Attachment B**. Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that they have been sent to County Attorney Peter Steele for review.

## **Other Business**

**Bigfork Dock & Floating Logs:** With the recent high water tables in the County, many logs on Flathead Lake have been displaced and are free floating. Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that Bill Meyers floated several large logs against the County dock in Bigfork, which is located adjacent to Meyer's property. Children were playing on these logs creating a serious safety and liability concern. Mr. Meyers insisted that the County move the logs and ultimately the County floated the logs back into the bay.

**Lazer School –** Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that Darlene Schottle, Superintendent of Schools, offered Parks & Recreation an “opportunity” to purchase or be given the old Lazer school site, formerly the old Edgerton School, located on Washington Street behind Taco Bell. After a tour of the facility with Mike Pence, County Administrator; Ken Sesock of the Building Maintenance Department; and Superintendent Fisher, it was determined that the building is too small for a gymnasium and has a substantial amount of asbestos and lead based paint which would require a major investment in retrofitting to conform to current building standards. The building was appraised for 540K in 1996 and even if it was offered at 350K this Department would not benefit when considering retrofitting and operating costs. This topic may be reconsidered if a land swap could be discussed and a cost could be determined to mitigate concerns.

Bob Tuman commented that its biggest advantage would be a long term presence for the Parks & Recreation Department in a more central location. Mr. Tuman stated that his programs are going well, other than interruptions from Mother Nature.

Gymnasium Feasibility Study – Superintendent Fisher informed the Board that he has been unsuccessful in obtaining a reasonable price for a gymnasium feasibility study. The prices he has obtained to date range from 20 – 30K. He will continue to search for firms and pricing.

Rescue Animal Shelter – This topic will be placed on the August agenda. Currently, the use fits well here with the animals ultimately given back or adopted out. It was suggested that the Vocational Agriculture group might participate in the future. This year the hay is provided by the Parks & Recreation Department from Herron Park. Lance Norman of Happy Valley was willing to donate 10-15 % of haying proceeds back to the County and Dave Polansky of Eagle Transit would have donated 25% of the proceeds toward rescue animals. These two gentlemen could not get the job completed in time for scheduled events.

Flathead County Park Rule Enforcement – Jim Watson questioned 0-17 and it was agreed to review it with County Attorney Peter Steele. Apparently he is aware of someone who regularly swims outside of the buoys and was questioning whether the Department would in fact issue a citation for this. It was discussed that this regulation may be unenforceable by the County Parks Department.

### **Adjournment**

The time and place of the next regular meeting is Monday, August 1, 2011 in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana, and the July 11, 2011 meeting was adjourned at 10:26 A.M.