

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: May 2, 2016

Members of the Board in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Pete Woll, Elise Robocker, Mary Ruby

Members of the Board not in attendance:

All members of the Board were present.

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Edd Blackler – Bigfork Advisory

Vance Carolin – Many Lakes Homeowners Association Vice-President

Dale Haarr – Citizen

Gary Krueger – Flathead County Commissioner

Charline Payne – Foys to Blacktail Trails

Randy Sundberg – Many Lakes President

Evan Carter – Flathead County Weed District Staff

Steve Drent – Flathead County Weed District Staff

Clay Fischer – Flathead County Weed District Staff

Aaron Guzman – Flathead County Weed District Staff

Terry Halvonik – Flathead County Weed District Staff

Scott Jorgenson – Flathead County Weed District Staff

Kat Pine – Flathead County Weed District Staff

Pat Staunton – Flathead County Weed District Staff

Tammy Skramovsky – Flathead County Human Resource Officer

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 May 2, 2016. The meeting convened at 8:31AM, Chairman Fisher presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the April 4, 2016 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 April 4, 2016 Board minutes.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Weed Department Report

Weed Control Methods – Commissioner Gary Krueger

Commissioner Gary Krueger would like to review the chemicals used by the Weed Department and how they are sprayed. Tordon is highly volatile and he asked the Board to consider not using it. He also requested that the Department's Weed Management Plan be revisited and go to the public. The demographics of the County have changed over the years and now there are a significant number of homes and yards. The County population has significantly increased and people need to know what the Department is doing. Commissioner Krueger again requested that the Department stop using Tordon for the immediate future and take a look at how we are doing.

Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that a variety of herbicides are selectively used, depending upon several factors, including the diversity of the weed population. At the April 2016 meeting, the Board decided to continue using Tordon/Picloram outside of the Flathead Valley floor, and with a great amount of discretion. Currently, the 200 +/- gallons of this herbicide are locked up and to be used only outside of the valley floor. Because this herbicide is reported to have up to 7 years residual and longer in a crop area, any use is carefully considered. Some crops are more susceptible than others.

The County's Weed Management Plan is updated regularly, however, to date, it has not gone through any public comment process in order to make citizens aware and to voice any concerns, nor had approval at the Commission. Updating this Plan to include specific information about herbicides was discussed. The final County Plan should be posted on the Weed Department's website, along with links to the herbicide manufacturers.

An email was received from Montana Association of Counties (MACo) suggesting that Counties provide information regarding chemicals used, their effects, and residual. Several options to accomplish this was suggested including an agenda item for the County Commission to discuss chemicals used, locations, and chemical information. It was also recommended to invite the press to allow an article to be published regarding the availability for knowledge of the chemicals. Counties may also choose to place an ad indicating the chemicals used and where County residents may receive more information.

Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that advertising what the Department does is good business and could allay potential concern. He pointed out that all staff are licensed and experienced. Determination of spray used is based on careful assessment of many factors while in the field, such as existing weeds, the weather, the soil type, wind, etc.

Elise Robocker moved to continue the use of Tordon/Picloram as needed and in a judicious manner.

There was discussion regarding flagging areas sprayed. Mapping would be a better option.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

Superintendent Fisher stated that this herbicide will not be used on the Flathead Valley floor until the "Flathead Valley floor" is defined.

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

Pete Woll moved to have staff revise the County Weed Management Plan; send it to the County Attorney for review and comments, and present for public input.

Mary Ruby seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Krueger commended the work that the Department has done.

Eisinger Motors Property Offer

Superintendent Jed Fisher reviewed an offer from Greg Eisinger for land donation of approximately 3 acres adjacent to their location at Eisinger Motors, 2565 Hwy 93. This offer has also been made to both Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Flathead Land Trust. While the property has a nice flat area, there is substantial slumping adjacent to the river located directly east. Because park property with water frontage is a Parks Master Plan priority, Superintendent Fisher wanted the matter to be properly vetted.

Jim Buechle moved to decline Greg Eisinger's offer to donate approximately 3 acres of land adjacent to Eisinger Motors, 2565 Hwy 93, Kalispell.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

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

Advisory Committee Handbook Revised

The Advisory Committee Handbook has been reviewed by the County Attorney and is ready for the Board's consideration. Recent revisions further clarify the Committee's roles with regard organization, attendance and presentations at Board meetings, and fundraising. Committees are directed to staff for maintenance concerns, and to the Board for other topics or special projects.

Elise Robocker moved to approve the Advisory Committee Handbook as revised.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Bigfork Advisory Report

Edd Blackler had no particular input and asked if there was any information he needs to carry back to the Advisory Committee. Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that it is important to keep the integrity of the walking path on the bridge as separate and segregated to provide safe access to Sliter Park for the community.

Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork – MOU Renewal

Paul Mutascio reviewed the history of Sliter Park and the lease between PacifiCorp and Flathead County, as well as contributions made by CFBB. A good relationship has been established between CFBB and the Department. The MOU remains the same as fiscal year '16, with the exception of current dates.

Superintendent Jed Fisher pointed out that the Board cannot commit to future funding to maintain any park in the event the County Commission decides to surplus and sell any of them.

Jim Buechle moved to renew the Sliter Park Agreement for fiscal year 2017, and to forward it to the County Commission for their review and approval.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

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

Foys to Blacktail Trails Report

Charline Payne reported that negotiations are continuing and going smoothly with private landowners and Weyerhaeuser to obtain easements to connect Herron Park to Blacktail Mountain. It's been a dry year and the Herron Park meadow is in good shape.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

Charline Payne reported that Flathead Combined Training Association (FCTA) has a new website. FCTA would like to meet and discuss their responsibilities at Herron Park.

Herron Park Meadow – Culverts

Board members took a tour of Herron Park meadow and culverts. It is suspected that there is no cure for control of the stream running through the meadow because it is spring-fed underground, so it will always be wet. A suggestion was made to investigate putting the creek back in its original channel –which can still be seen. This would require studies to be funded from the next budget year. The Department would like to reach an informed and prudent solution. Historic photos will be sought.

Mary Ruby moved to proceed with a study of potential solutions to the culvert/meadow concern at Herron Park, with the intent to budget any needed funds toward this effort in fiscal year 2018.

Jim Buechle amended the motion to include doing nothing until we have more information.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

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

Charline Payne stated that recent culvert work at Herron Park was not performed by Foys to Blacktail Trails (FTBT) members, nor do they know who did it. Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett expressed his concern regarding the protocol for activity at County parks. There needs to be more dialogue to ensure that all anticipated work is in the best interests of the Board and the Department; and is consistent with the Parks Master Plan. It was recommended that FTBT and Montana Conservation Corps submit an annual written work plan that can be discussed prior to proceeding with any activity. The work plan would include a case-by-case ‘work order’ describing the anticipated activity, the reason, when it will begin, the timeline, and the number of people involved. It is important that people do not represent the County in any dealings that do not have County authorization.

Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Committee. Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that Susan Wallace was provided the size & standards for memorial plaques in County parks. The Department has not heard anything further regarding the memorial plaque request.

Lakeside Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Lakeside Advisory Committee. Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that close to 100 trees have been cut down at Ben Williams Park due to beetle kill. It was important to act quickly due to minimize potential liability. Staff is working with Department of Transportation to move the limbs to a burn pile, and also arranging for stump removal and replanting a reduced number of trees. There was no logging value to the trees.

Jim Buechle moved to authorize the removal of the dead trees, arrange for stump removal, and replant a reduced number of trees at Ben Williams Park.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

Middle Forks Parks Advisory Report

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

Gateway to Glacier Trails Report

Mary Ruby stated that there is a preliminary bid meeting on May 4th and the group is hoping to contract in June, getting the path underway this summer.

County Gymnasium Report

Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that although a recent Daily Interlake article reported that a site has been selected for the County gymnasium, nothing is final until the Board approves the location. The selection of

Davar Garner's property on Hwy 93 south is the preferred location the advisory group. There will be more information next month, including a business plan. County Administrator Mike Pence would like the Department to visit one more time with Flathead Valley Community College to discuss potential options. While the Board is generally in favor of the project, a business plan is needed before proceeding further.

Gymnasium Advisory Committee Formation

Elise Robocker moved to approve formation of a Gymnasium Advisory Committee.

Mary Ruby seconded the motion.

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

Other Business

Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that its time to tour County Parks in Many Lakes to begin the process of potential surplus and sale of selected lots. A date was set to leave from the Parks office Thursday, May 12th at 10AM. Randy Sundberg, president of Many Lakes Homeowners' Association, will notify homeowners and will be the tour guide. Mr. Sundberg stated for the record that he has no interest in purchasing park property in Many Lakes.

Pete Woll welcomed new Board member Mary Ruby.

Adjourn

Jim Buechle moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:18AM.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

There will be a special meeting of the Board on **Thursday, May 12, 2016, at 9:30AM** in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

The time and place of the next regular meeting is **Monday, June 6, 2016** at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board:

Email from Jim Muskovich of Montana Association of Counties (MACo) dated April 29, 2016, regarding Weed District Spraying.

DRAFT – Handbook of a Parks Advisory Committee, March 2016

Sliter Park Agreement