

**Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation**

**MINUTES**

**Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**Meeting Date: March 6, 2017**

**Members of the Board in attendance:**

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

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

All Board members were present.

**Also in attendance:**

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

**Others Present:**

Susan Nicosia – City of Columbia Falls

Richard Lauer – Foys to Blacktail Trails

Fred Biche – City of Kalispell

Cliff Kipp – Foys Herron Advisory

**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 6, 2017. The meeting convened at 8:32AM, Chairman Fisher presiding.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the December 5, 2016 Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

**Jim Buechle moved to approve the December 5, 2016 Board minutes.**

**Pete Woll 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 – Susan Nicosia, Columbia Falls City Manager**

Ms. Nicosia spoke on behalf of a cooperative effort in weed control between the City of Columbia Falls and the County. MCA 7-22-2121 states that the Board shall provide for management of noxious weeds on land owned or controlled by municipalities within the district. The County collects \$13,464 from the City of Columbia Falls through a tax levy for the Weed fund. Outside cities in Flathead County account for 70.6% of the levied funds. Budget planning is in process and it would be good to reach an understanding now. In addition, it is important to provide taxpayers a direct answer and avoid a government ‘run-around’.

Superintendent Jed Fisher agreed that it is important to clarify what the Weed District is doing for individual cities. He supports having an agreement in place that specifies what the County does. Providing the City with 13K would be virtually ineffective due to the corresponding cost of weed spray equipment, herbicides, and staffing. Funds would be better spent on noxious weed mitigation, including education, bio-control, and all

other integrated methods as opposed to enforcement. Minimal herbicide application is anticipated due to consideration of citizens' sensitivities to the odor of herbicides and to the herbicides themselves. Some ideas are to provide a rental weed spray tank dedicated for City use several weeks per year, in addition to training City staff in weed control procedures, and identification of weed hot spots. Ultimately, it is the landowner's responsibility to control noxious weeds up to the boulevard and halfway to the alley.

Superintendent Fisher will set up a meeting with Ms. Nicosia and representatives from both the City of Whitefish and the City of Kalispell to discuss the matter.

### **Violation Notice for Noxious Weeds MCA 7-22-2116**

The Violation Notice for Noxious Weeds MCA 7-22-2116 has been updated and reviewed by the County Attorney. It is used to post property in the event the landowner is non-responsive to enforcement efforts.

**Jim Buechle moved to approve the updated "Violation Notice for Noxious Weeds MCA 7-22-2116".**

**Mary Ruby seconded the motion.**

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

### **County Athletic Complex Report**

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that the County Commissioners denied the request to accept a donation of land to build a 12-13 million dollar County Athletic Complex. The project was too large in scope and there was a significant concern about the cost of ongoing operations and maintenance. In addition, the Commissioners are opposed to providing infrastructure costs on private property, even if the land is donated.

In its place, there is general agreement to scale back the project budget to 4 million and explore alternate gym locations, such as the potential purchase of the Conrad Complex, or a multi-use facility at the County Fairground property or the property immediately north of the Fairgrounds. Department staff will meet with the Finance Director this week.

Superintendent Fisher requested permission to move forward with discussion regarding a new venue and reduced scope for the gym, and to schedule a meeting with Commissioner Gary Krueger, Fairgrounds Manager Mark Campbell, and Recreation Supervisor Bob Tuman. Board members Mary Ruby and Pete Woll offered to assist with this effort.

### **Advisory Committees**

**Letters of Interest** – Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that all Advisory Committee members' terms expired at the end of January. Two ads were placed soliciting members, and an email was sent to all committee members on January 4<sup>th</sup>, reminding them of the January 31<sup>st</sup> expiration date with a reminder to submit letters of interest. A total of 5 letters were received: Bigfork: Walter Kuhn; Herron-Foys: Orrin Webber, Margaret Herron, Cliff Kipp, and Linda Tutvedt.

**Mary Ruby moved to make the following Advisory Committee appointments: Bigfork: Walter Kuhn; Herron-Foys: Orrin Webber, Margaret Herron, Cliff Kipp, and Linda Tutvedt.**

**Elise Robocker seconded the motion.**

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

### **Disbanding Due to Insufficient Quotas**

Two ads and an email soliciting letters of interest to serve on advisory committees elicited only 5 responses. Superintendent Jed Fisher recommended discontinuing all advisory committees with the exception of Herron Foys and Bigfork, unless there is a special project or need.

**Elise Robocker moved to inactivate all advisory committees with the exception of Herron-Foys and Bigfork.**

**Mary Ruby seconded the motion.**

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

**Capital Improvements – Hillcrest and Foys Lake**

This agenda item is on hold due to available funds being diverted for a downsized County gymnasium.

**Bigfork Advisory Report**

Edd Blackler sent an email resigning from the Bigfork Advisory Committee.

**Riverbend Concert Association Memorandum of Understanding** – An MOU has been prepared which is essentially the same as prior years with the exception of the concert dates. The rate of \$1550 for the season is renewable on an annual basis with the rate consistent through the 2019 season.

**Mary Ruby moved to authorize the Board Chairman to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Riverbend Concert Association for the use of Riverbend Stage at Sliter Park for a period of one year.**

**Pete Woll seconded the motion.**

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

**Foys to Blacktail Trails Report**

**Proposed Easement from Herron Park to Blacktail Mountain**

Richard Lauer reported that all easements connecting Herron Park to Blacktail Mountain have been filed, and a Recreational Trails Program grant has been submitted, with a decision expected in May. Mr. Lauer thanked the Department for their support letter. The funding mechanism for sponsors begins in June with the Herron Half trail run. Herron had frequent winter recreation use including sledding, snowshoeing and cross country skiing.

**Foys/Herron Advisory Report**

Cliff Kipp reported that Foys/Herron Advisory Committee plans to hold bi-monthly or quarterly meetings as necessary. This Committee would like to be a resource to the Board and Mr. Kipp asked that the Board let them know how they can be of assistance. The group keeps in close communication with Foys to Blacktail Trails. It was suggested that a written reports of proceedings be provided to the Board Clerk prior to the Board meetings.

**Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Report**

There was no one present from the Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Committee.

**Lakeside Advisory Report**

There was no one present from the Lakeside Advisory Committee.

**Other Business**

**Recreational Program Supervisors and Contract Positions** – Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that Mike Dyon, Recreational Program Supervisor I, resigned effective January 7, 2017, and Bob Tuman, Recreational Program Supervisor II will resign the end of April. The Department will not post a job opening to replace Mike Dyon until Bob Tuman’s position has been filled, which is expected to happen within the next 30 days. An alternative to filling the position vacated by Mike Dyon would be to use those funds to hire multiple people to run specific sports of interest.

Parks & Recreation: Commissioner Holmquist is interested in the potential purchase of the Conrad Complex. Pond Hockey at Foys Lake Access went well, with a smaller turnout than in the past. The Department may be missing revenue opportunities by the decision to prohibit vendors in the parks. It was discussed that this

decision was made on the recommendation of the County Attorney. Recently, Fish, Wildlife & Parks have had legal issues relative to vendors.

Weeds: The Weed Department is proceeding with a major rewrite of the Weed Management Plan, which the Commissioners would like to have completed in-house, with plans to include soil scientists, bee people and wildlife people. For areas that cannot be completed in house, it is possible that the Department of Agriculture may contribute 1-2 K out of the annual \$7,500 from the Special County/Reservation Grant given to each County. The Department will do its best to address known areas of concern.

Montana Weed Control Association is hosting a 2017 Western Spring Weed Manager Training to take place at the County's South Campus building and Hilton Garden Hotel in south Kalispell. The event will begin at 1:00 pm March 22 and conclude on March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 12:00 pm. Board members are welcome to attend.

### **Adjourn**

**Mary Ruby moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:45AM.**

**Jim Buechle seconded the motion.**

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

The time and place of the next regular meeting is **Monday, April 3, 2017** at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

### **Documents Submitted to the Board:**

- **Weed control correspondence dated 1-31-17 from Susan Nicosia, City Manager of Columbia Falls, including attachments from MCA.**
- **Map/Schmetic of Total 2017 FY Tax Levy – Weed Fund 2140 - \$472,189.**
- **Violation Notice for Noxious Weeds MCA 7-22-2016**
- **Parks Advisory Committee Letters of Interest: Bigfork – Walter Kuhn; Herron/Foys: Linda Tutvedt, Cliff Kipp, Margaret Herron, and Orrin Webber.**
- **Riverbend Concert Association Memorandum of Understanding**