

**Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation
MINUTES
Meeting of the Board of Directors
Meeting Date: September 11, 2017**

Members of the Board in attendance:

Clyde Fisher, Jim Buechle, Mary Ruby, Elise Robocker, 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:

Caitlin Overland – County Attorney

Orrin Webber – Foys/Herron Advisory

Char Payne – Foys to Blacktail Trails 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 September 11, 2017. The meeting convened at 8:30AM, Chairman Fisher presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the July 10, 2017 of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

Jim Buechle moved to approve the July 10, 2017 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.

Montana Code Annotated 7-22-2134 – Enforcement Spray, District Policy

Superintendent Jed Fisher reviewed the current policy of the Department with regard to spray jobs. Private spray jobs, including work for low income, the elderly and the disabled have been discontinued. Staff has also cut back on roadside spraying by leaving a 5' buffer unsprayed near crops. Recently, the Department has received permission from the Court to perform an enforcement spray for a landowner who is in non-compliance according to Montana Code Annotated. Does the District want to engage in enforcement spray or hire it out to a private applicator?

County Attorney Caitlin Overland reviewed the steps to obtain the court documents necessary to enact enforcement spray jobs. The landowner is given several opportunities to comply prior to pursuing legal action through the court. The primary concern is that the law is followed. The question is how this process will be applied. It is important to use the right herbicide for each situation.

**Pete Woll moved to continue with the District Policy regarding herbicide application.
Jim Buechle seconded the motion.**

Discussion ensued regarding a Department of Agriculture Consent Agreement executed in December 2016, stating that the Department was limiting its use of certain herbicides and discontinuing its herbicide application on certain private lands.

Pete Woll revised his motion to state that the Weed District return to the District policy established prior to the Department of Agriculture Consent Agreement. Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

Attorney Overland will review said Agreement and report back to the Board.

**Mary Ruby moved to table the motion until legal review is complete.
Pete Woll seconded the motion.
There being no further discussion and all in favor – the motion was carried.**

Trails Plan Update

Mary Ruby reported that two trail meetings have occurred with the goal of updating the 2010 Flathead County Trails Plan. It is anticipated that the project will take 6 – 9 months or possibly 1 year to complete. Participants have been asked to submit existing and proposed trails for the GIS Department to include on a County-wide map. Initial assignments include submission of 5 goals and a review of Chapter 1 of the existing Trail Plan. Meetings take place on the third Wednesday of each month from 8:30AM – 10:30AM, at 40 11th Street West, Kalispell MT 59901, 2nd floor conference room. Once completed and after public scoping, the Trails Plan update will be presented to the Board for their review and approval, and then forwarded to the County Commission. Volunteers and maintenance will be addressed as part of the plan review.

Bigfork Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Bigfork Advisory Committee. Jed Fisher advised the Board that in a cooperative inter-agency effort, the Parks Department has assisted the Road Department in maintenance of the area around Bigfork Dock. This area is a Road Department responsibility; however, they do not have the tools and equipment for maintenance.

Foys-Herron Advisory Report

Trail Easement Maintenance and Funding for Treatment of Noxious Weeds – Jed stated that there is a lot of interest in helping out with weeds and trail maintenance. Some activities overlap and everyone wants to do it their way. Jed’s opinion is that the Parks Department should perform weed mitigation on the trails and it is not reasonable to place this responsibility on someone else.

Pete Woll moved to have the Flathead County Weed District spray all County easements and trails at Herron Park.

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

Foys to Blacktail Trails Report

Char Payne reported that the Herron Park trail easement owned by Weyerhaeuser was closed due to fire danger, then reopened shortly thereafter. A ‘new trail celebration’ was well attended with an estimate of over 300 people. The event took place at the Foys Community Center and Herron Park and included a passing of the hat for donations. Jim Watson will coordinate volunteer efforts with Gordie for National Public Lands Day, with takes place on September 30th.

County Athletic Complex Report

Jed reported there is an upcoming field trip to tour the Hub Sports Center in Spokane. Participants will include County Administrator Mike Pence, Human Resource Director Tammy Skramovsky, Finance Director Amy Dexter, Maintenance Supervisor Mike Hovila, and Parks & Recreation staff. All aspects of the operation will be reviewed including administration, staffing levels, financials, maintenance, and programming.

Weed Department Report

Correspondence dated September 5, 2017 from Robert and Catherine Foppiano regarding Weed District non-compliance policy was reviewed. The Weed District non-compliance policy follows Montana Code Annotated.

Gordon Jewett reported that all roadside mowing is postponed due to fire restrictions. The first round of mowing was completed and then stopped. Selected locations were mowed due to fire danger with a water truck present. Noxious weed regrowth areas are being sprayed.

A road tour was conducted with enforcement staff to review expectations and problem areas. Approximately 150 enforcement letters were mailed last month.

A hose break on one of the County trucks occurred on a private driveway. The Department of Agriculture and the landowner were immediately notified; the soil was excavated and new soil placed.

Other Business

The Montana Dragon Boat Race permit for Volunteer Park and the Flathead Celtic Festival at Herron Park were both cancelled due to smoke and fire danger. Park closures have been initiated due to fire danger, in particular non-irrigated parks and those with large events scheduled. Belton State, Herron, Many Lakes and Happy Valley parks were mentioned, to name a few. Closures will be decided on a case-by-case basis under the direction of the Parks Superintendent.

Matters of the Board

The meeting was closed for discussion regarding matters of the Board. Upon conclusion of this topic the meeting was reopened.

Adjourn

Mary Ruby moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:15AM.

Elise Robocker 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, November 6, 2017** at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board

Correspondence received September 5, 2017 from Robert and Catherine Foppiano regarding Weed District non-compliance policy.