

**Flathead County Weed/Parks & Recreation
Board Meeting
311 FFA Drive – Kalispell MT 59901
Conference Room**

**Agenda
Monday, August 6, 2018
8:30 AM**

- Call to Order
- Approve Previous Minutes
- Public Comment
- Parks & Recreation Department Report
 - Trails Plan Update
 - Trail Evaluation Form
 - Trail Development Policy – Rachel Ezell, Planning & Zoning
 - Lake Park Addition Tree Replacement – Comment
 - Foy's to Blacktail Trails – Gabe Dillon
 - Whitefish Stage Road Switchbacks – RPA Engineering Report & 50K Grant Match
 - Somers Company Town Project Park
 - Cash-In-Lieu Balance
- Weed Department Report
 - Whitetop Cost-Share
 - Partnership Weed Work
- Kalispell Elementary Gym Equipment Proposal
- Other Business
- Matters of the Board
- Adjourn

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: August 6, 2018

Members of the Board in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, 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:

Turner Askew – Citizen

Amanda Davey – Flathead County Parks & Recreation

Gabe Dillon – Foy's to Blacktail Trails

Rachel Ezell – Flathead County Planning & Zoning

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 August 6, 2018. The meeting convened at 8:30AM, President Woll presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the June 4, 2018 meeting of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

Mary Ruby moved to approve the June 4, 2018 Board minutes.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Parks & Recreation Department Report

- **Lake Park Addition Tree Replacement – Comment** (This item was moved up on the agenda.)
Jed stated that the case regarding dead trees has been settled and involved a lot of emotion and opinions. As of today, the Department has expended approximately 3K for site preparation to remove 4 trees and stumps. The trees removed were in a cluster within 15 yards of each other. One damaged tree stump could not be removed as it would damage other live trees.

The purpose today is to move forward in discussion regarding tree replacement, with consideration given to the following: provide 60'-80' of shade and 18' – 25' in height with proper spacing; how the park and trees will appear from the shoreline; site support for soils, light and root balls; long-lived; deciduous or non-deciduous; warranty to ensure growth; fertilization and water; purchase from a local vendor with trees established in this area.

Should a County park stand out and look different from adjacent properties? On site are a few Tamarack and Birch trees, and an adjacent site has been considerably cleared out. Many park users feel that the replacement trees should be Cottonwoods, the same as those removed.

Turner Askew heard a conversation that County is required to put Cottonwoods back in. He thinks we would want to consult a forester (Ed Lieser was mentioned) to discuss the best tree replacement. He would hope we would consider what the best tree would be rather than to replace what was there. It was agreed to consult a silviculturist for recommendations, and then post in the paper to encourage public comment, including neighbors.

Jim Buechle moved to hire or consult a silviculturist to make a tree replacement recommendation for Lake Park Addition in Whitefish.

Mary Ruby seconded the motion.

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

Amanda Davey reported that the following activities were completed: a State tournament, high school beach volleyball, adult volleyball, and summer t-ball. New gear was recently purchased, and the shirts were a hit, bringing in about \$500 in 2 days. Upcoming fall programs include: men's/women's ball, co-rec softball, little kids flag football, adult flag football, whacky bowl (2nd year on this one) and kid's Olympics.

New programs are being considered, some that will require additional gym time – co-ed basketball, paddle board race at Foy's Beach Access, a scavenger hunt, 4 on 4 flag football; and approach a semi-pro team in the Valley about making Hillcrest field suitable to host their games.

Kalispell Elementary Gym Request (This item was moved up on the agenda.)

Jed reported that gym space is imperative to Department income, particularly in the winter. The gym project has ebbed and flowed. Jed has asked what the needs are as schools expand, and Superintendent of Kalispell Public Schools Mark Flatau asked the Department to consider a monetary contribution which will in turn result in securing the Department's future for gym space. Schools gyms could be used in conjunction with construction of our own facility, which would significantly increase the income potential.

39K – Gym divider curtains

83K – Practice basketball hoops for 3 gyms

18.5K – Scoreboards for 3 gyms

140.5K – Total costs

The Board generally agreed in part, to contribute toward these costs, with a written commitment for Recreation Department gym time. Finance, legal (securing time through the MOU), and Commissioner input is needed.

Elise moved to have staff look into the financial and legal aspects for potential contribution.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Parks & Recreation Department Report, continued

Bigfork Dock will host a poker run this Sunday, August 12th. The permit for this event was issued by the Road Department, not the Parks Department. The neighbor, Bill Meyers of Pointer Scenic Cruises is upset due to the increased activity at the dock. The Parks Department continues to assist with dock maintenance; however, it does not receive any income from events there.

- **Trails Plan Update**

Mary Ruby stated that the survey showed that people want trails connected. The proposed RV park (264 parcels) south of town is promoting their location with a focus on Rails to Trails. They advertise a healthy lifestyle alternative including hiking and biking. The rough draft of the Trails Plan will be completed this month and then will be presented to this Board. We want to make sure that the trails plan is solid and has adequate public input prior to presentation to the Commission.

- **Trail Evaluation Form** – (This topic was covered in the item below – Trail Development Policy.)

- **Trail Development Policy – Rachel Ezell, Planning & Zoning**

Rachel Ezell of Planning & Zoning has gathered public input about frustration regarding what to do and where to go if there is interest in developing a trail. The current plan update is meant to be all-inclusive with a clearly defined process for trail development. The Board was referred to Chapter 1 – Mission, Vision & Goals, Trails Develop checklist, and the Trails Evaluation form. This will involve the Parks Board review and evaluation of proposals and Rachel wants to be sure that the Board is willing to take on this responsibility. Consistency in evaluation is important. New trails will require a trail maintenance plan that may involve a variety of funding options, including volunteerism. A portion of develop costs will be provided to County, with proper investment so money can grow.

Mary Ruby moved to approve the Trails Evaluation Form.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

Clyde Fisher opposed the motion.

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

- **Foys to Blacktail Trails – Gabe Dillon**

Gabe Dillon stated that the Forest Service carries federal insurance, fully trains volunteers, and then select who does what. This is a hurdle that the County can't get over.

Gordie said that the County sends an ATV & UTV to Herron Park for annual weed spraying. Gabe wants to advertise this and have FTBT help with signing.

Staining tables is underway and FTBT would like to help. Jed responded that the Department has hired temporary contract labor to help stain and will evaluate what is left, then hook up with FTBT for potential additional help.

Have garbage cans been ordered for placement at the Notch and Family trails? How can FTBT help? Gordie has bear-aware cans in stock but needs to consider how to get them emptied. Jed said we can easily place the cans but we do not have to staff to pick up trash. Garbage is now a 7-days a week concern. Gordie will provide costs and statistics regarding park garbage and the Board will consider a "Pack It In – Pack It Out" policy. Volunteer Park has 6 overflowing cans every day.

- **Lake Park Addition Tree Replacement – Comment** (This item was moved up on the agenda.)

- **Whitefish Stage Road Switchbacks – RPA Engineering Report & 50K Grant Match**

RPA completed their study and the cost estimate to repair the switchbacks on the trail adjacent to Whitefish Stage Road. An estimate of 360K has been provided – a large amount of money for a relatively short trail. Rachel Ezell plans to put together an application for a TA grant, which has a match. She has reached out to local business owners who have an interest in the outdoors in this area. Can the County participate in matching funds? Rachel asked if the Parks Department has worked with the City

to improve trails, and stated there is a first time for everything. We probably need to bring the City into the conversation to develop partnerships. It was agreed to explore a partnership with the City and obtain a legal opinion regarding alternatives to mitigate the concerns.

- **Somers Company Town Project Park**

A change in land use will need this Board's recommendation prior to going before the County Commission.

Elise Robocker moved to support the Somers Company Town Project Park proposal.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

- **Cash-In-Lieu Balance**

Jed estimated there is 297K in this fund and will confirm the balance with Finance.

Weed Department Report

Things look pretty good out there and current hot weather requires alternative projects. The Department has responsibilities with County Roads, Parks, DOT, Forest Service, etc., and does the best it can with Parks, usually spraying Parks last.

- **Whitetop Cost-Share**

As reported in June, Whitetop (Hoary Cress) has exploded in Lake County and is getting worse each year. It has taken over to the north on Hwy 93 and Nine-Pipes, and to the south by Missoula. Lake County is inundated and we want to avoid having Flathead County in the same situation. It has been contained in Somers pretty well, however, staff is really seeing it pop up in formerly small patches. We need to address this concern now in order to be effective in control efforts. This weed is difficult to control because it appears in early spring, and really likes disturbed sites. It is early to flower, and early to seed – and is on the move with 50-60 known sites that are of concern. In the past this Board has taken on special weed projects and the Department is interested in trying to help people out a little. Jed is interested in a cost-share formula with the Department supplying labor, and charging for chemical.

The Flathead Conservation District Board is adamant about having a weed person in the Fair booth at all times. Jed stated the Department will put in 2½ days. Next year we hope to get the Montana Weed Control Association trailer for the Fair.

- **Partnership Weed Work**

Jed really feels we are missing the boat with Flathead Conservation District work. The Audubon Society was denied a Grant for weed control at Owens Sowerwine and Flathead Conservation District will address this concern.

Kalispell Elementary Gym Equipment Proposal (This item was moved up on the agenda.)

Other Business

There was no other business.

Matters of the Board

There were no matters of the Board.

Adjourn

Jim Buechle moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:25AM.

Mary Ruby seconded the motion.

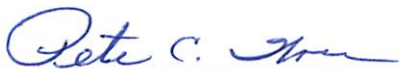
There being no discussion and all in favor – the motion was carried.

Due to the Labor Day holiday on the normally scheduled meeting day, the time and place of the next regular meeting is Tuesday September 11, 2018 at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board

- Trail Evaluation Form
- Whitefish Stage Road Switchbacks – RPA Engineering Report
- Somers Company Town Project Park
- Kalispell Elementary Gym Equipment Proposal
- Parks Cash-in-Lieu Summary

Approved:



Pete Woll, Board President



Date