

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
BOARD MEETING
Preserves Headquarters
October 25, 2023

PRESENT

Judy Barnard
Mike Eickman
Audrey Johnson
Gloria Lind
Cheryl Maggio
Jerry Paulson
Jeff Tilly

STAFF

Mike Holan, Executive Director
Steve Chapman, Director of Finance
Vaughn Stamm, Director of Operations
Mike Brien, Director of Natural Resources
Sherry Winebaugh, Human Resources Manager
Renee Pixler, Communications Coordinator
Emily Wendlandt, Administrative Assistant
Alana Stratton, Administrative Assistant

GUESTS

Alex Mills
Andrea Wallace Noble
Rebeca Rankins
Liz Wiener
Ann Wasser
Chris Samuelson

ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM, by President Tilly. Recording secretary Kristy Knapp called the roll.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Jerry Paulson led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL of AGENDA and MINUTES Gloria Lind a motion, Audrey Johnson seconded to approve the minutes for September 20, 2023. **Motion passed unanimously.** No changes or additions were made to the agenda.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, AWARDS, and PRESENTATIONS

Introduction- Alana Stratton, Part-Time Administrative Assistant – Jeff Tilly introduced the new Administrative Assistant, Alana Stratton. Alana gave a brief background on herself and the Board welcomed Alana.

Ann Wasser – Ann Wasser provided an update from Severson Dells. Ann thanked the Board for including funding for Severson Dells in the 2024 budget and appreciates the continued support of nature education. Ann mentioned they participated in United Way Day of Caring and had employees from Specialty Screw paint the classroom in the library. They also had the carpet professionally cleaning in the classroom. Ann also thanked Scott and Kyle for doing a whole facility walkthrough and showing them the emergency shutoff for a new risk management plan. Ann thanked Gloria Lind for taking the time to visit the Nature Center to see the facility issues that were discussed at the last Board meeting. Ann mentioned if any of the other Board members would like to take a tour, she would be happy to show them around. Ann announced that the field trips are wrapping up in the next few weeks, which they have hosted 800 students this fall and 2,300 students this year. Lastly, Ann asked the Board to work on making a decision in the near future regarding the canoes and trailer as it pertains to activities for next summer.

NEW BUSINESS

Mike Holan addressed the Board regarding the IAPD conference that is coming up in January. Mike Holan mentioned that if any of the Board members are interested in attending the conference, a resolution will need to be brought to the November Board meeting for Board approval of the funds.

ACTION ITEMS

Bills for September – Judy Barnard made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to authorize the payment of the bills for September in the amount of \$744,488.06. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Budget and Appropriations Ordinance – The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County’s Fiscal Year budget operates from November 1 through October 31. The Board of Commissioners has been presented the proposed Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Annual Budget and Appropriation for review and adoption. The budget has been laid over for 30 days for public review and comment. Judy Barnard made a motion, Cheryl Maggio seconded to amend the environmental education budget so that the \$35,000 that was earmarked for Severson Dells would instead be earmarked for partner organizations. Roll call vote taken. **Amendment to the Budget & Appropriations ordinance passes 4-2 (Audrey Johnson and Jerry Paulson voted no).** That the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Annual Budget and Appropriations be adopted as amended. Roll call vote taken. **Amended Budget & Appropriations ordinance passes 4-3 (Audrey Johnson, Jerry Paulson and Jeff Tilly voted no).**

Levy Ordinance – The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County’s Fiscal Year budget operates from November 1 through October 31. The Board of Commissioners have been presented a proposed tax levy that must be approved to finance the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Annual Budget and Appropriations Ordinance that has been presented to the Board. The tax levy has been laid over for 30 days for public review and comment. Jerry Paulson made a motion, Mike Eickman seconded that the tax levy be adopted. Roll call vote taken. **Levy ordinance passes 6-1 (Audrey Johnson voted no).**

2024 Fee Schedules – Mike Holan discussed the changes to the fee schedules for the preserve fees and changes. Vaughn Stamm discussed the changes to the fee schedules for the golf fees and charges. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County have set annual fee schedules for Preserve Fees and Charges and Golf Fees and Charges. Staff is proposing increases for various preserve and golf fees and charges in order to provide for inflationary increases associated with the costs of labor, fuel, supplies, equipment, and contractual services encumbered annually by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County. Audrey Johnson made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to approve a resolution to approve the 2024 Preserve Fees and Charges and 2024 Golf Fees and Charges. **Motion passed unanimously.**

2024 Holiday Schedule – Certain days of the calendar year are designated as scheduled holidays. The Preserves has designated the holidays that will be observed. Judy Barnard made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to approve the 2024 Holiday schedule to be observed by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County employees for the year 2024. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Delegate to IAPD Annual Business Meeting – The Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) requires each member agency to select delegates to their Annual Business Meeting which will be held on January 27, 2024. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County is an IAPD member and therefore must assign delegates to represent the Preserves. The Preserves typically assigns the Executive Director as the delegate and up to three other individuals as alternate delegates, comprised of staff and/or Board members. Mike Eickman made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to appoint Mike Holan as the delegate and Vaughn Stamm as the alternate to represent the Preserves for the Illinois Association of Park Districts. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Construct a Sundial at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden – Alex Mills addressed the Board regarding the construction of a sundial at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc (KLEHM). Alex Mills presented

renderings of the sundial to the Board. KLEHM has made and continues to propose improvements to the Carl and Lois Klehm Forest Preserve property owned by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (FPWC) to the mutual benefit of both parties, KLEHM proposes that the construction of a sundial upon the property will provide additional educational benefit and enhanced standing as a botanical garden. The sundial shall be constructed directly north of the Visitors Center, in the upper portion of the entry ellipse landscape, where it can be viewed and interacted with by visitors of all ages and abilities. KLEHM believes in good faith that the ultimate cost of this improvement shall be over \$10,000 and is likely to cost approximately \$25,000. KLEHM shall endeavor to fund this improvement solely through restricted contributions, grants, and other funds solicited and received by the organization, of which \$24,447.43 are currently held for this improvement. Jerry Paulson made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to approve Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc.'s construction of a sundial that will cost in excess of \$10,000. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Accepting the Donation of the Bradley and Georgann Gummow Family Foundation Entry Water Feature – Alex Mills addressed the Board regarding the water feature at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc. (KLEHM). For those who have not seen the water feature at night, Alex presented photos for the Board to view. KLEHM has made improvements to property owned by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (FPWC), named Carl and Lois Klehm Forest Preserve. The improvements include the construction of a water feature consisting of a pond and waterfall structure and its associated pond liner, pump, aerator, sand and stone, a concrete patio and sidewalk, electric service, panels, junction boxes, timers, controls and outlets, landscaping including plant materials and screening structures, and irrigation system improvements. The improvements were funded by KLEHM via charitable contributions, external grant funds and direct investments by the Board of Directors. KLEHM intends to continue to fund and perform regular and routine maintenance to the water feature to keep it operating in a safe and functional manner. The Board of Directors of KLEHM has approved the donation to the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County via a Resolution 2023-04. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County recognizes the value of the entry water feature as \$264,162.56. Jerry Paulson made a motion, Audrey Johnson seconded to accept the gift of the Bradley and Georgann Gummow Family Foundation Entry Water Feature and improvements at Carl and Lois Klehm Forest Preserve from Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Accepting the Donation of the Garden Pavilion Irrigation System – Alex Mills addressed the Board regarding the garden pavilion irrigation system at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc. (KLEHM). KLEHM has made improvements to property owned by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (FPWC), named Carl and Lois Klehm Forest Preserve. The improvements include the construction of an irrigation system within the site consisting of excavation and construction of the feature itself, as well as all engineering work necessary to accomplish said installation. KLEHM has invested a total of \$5,560.00 of its own organizational funds, including but not limited to grant funds and other restricted contributions, into said improvements. KLEHM intends to continue to fund and perform regular and routine maintenance to the irrigation system. The Board of Directors of KLEHM has approved the donation and transfer of assets to the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County via a Resolution 2023-05. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County recognizes the value of the Garden Pavilion Irrigation System improvements as \$5,560.00. Mike Eickman made a motion, Judy Barnard seconded to accept the gift of the Garden Pavilion Irrigation System at Carl and Lois Klehm Forest Preserve from Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Accepting the Donation of the Parking Lot Median Improvements – Alex Mills addressed the Board regarding the parking lot median improvements at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc. (KLEHM). Alex presented photos of the parking lot median improvements. KLEHM has made visitor parking lot improvements to control erosion and improve drainage to property owned by the Forest Preserves of

Winnebago County (FPWC), named Carl and Lois Klehm Forest Preserve. The improvements include the construction of crossing swales running perpendicular with the parking lot medians that are constructed of rip rap stone, as well as a swale running laterally along the south face of the median also constructed of rip rap stone, and all engineering work necessary to facilitate said installation. KLEHM and FPWC partnered to make the improvements whereby KLEHM funded the materials, equipment rental, labor and engineering services collectively valued at \$7,451.00 and FPWC provided in-kind services to haul the rip rap stone and mulch. KLEHM intends to continue to fund and perform regular and routine maintenance to the parking lot median. The Board of Directors of KLEHM has approved the donation and transfer of assets to the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County via a Resolution 2023-06. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County recognizes the value of the parking lot median improvements as \$7,451.00. Gloria Lind made a motion, Judy Barnard seconded to accept the gift of the parking lot median improvements at Carl and Lois Klehm Forest Preserve from Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Accepting the Donation of the Dwarf Conifer Garden – Alex Mills addressed the Board regarding the dwarf conifer garden at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc. (KLEHM). Alex presented photos of the dwarf conifer garden with the potential of phase two happening at a later date. KLEHM has made improvements to property owned by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (FPWC), named Carl and Lois Klehm Forest Preserve located at the intersection of South Main Street and Clifton Avenue in Rockford, Illinois. The improvements include the construction of a raised garden bed consisting of specialized soil and planter mix, stone, and specimen plant material, as well as all professional design work necessary to accomplish said installation. KLEHM has invested a total of \$9,814.39 of its own organizational funds, including but not limited to grant funds and other restricted contributions, into said improvements. KLEHM intends to continue to fund and perform regular and routine maintenance to the Dwarf Conifer Garden. The Board of Directors of KLEHM has approved the donation and transfer of assets to the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County via a Resolution 2023-07. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County recognizes the value of the Dwarf Conifer Garden improvements as \$9,814.39. Gloria Lind made a motion, Jerry Paulson seconded to accept the gift of the Dwarf Conifer Garden at Carl and Lois Klehm Forest Preserve from Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Bids for Forestry Mowing at Funderburg Forest Preserve – Mike Brien addressed the Board regarding the Forestry Mowing at Funderburg Forest Preserve. Mike Brien stated the project will start as early as November 15th which at that time outreach to the public will be done and signage will be posted. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County was awarded \$50,000 from The Conservation Fund, as mitigation for impacts caused by the construction and maintenance of the Endbridge Pipelines, LLC. Flanagan South Pipeline. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County agreed to enhance and restore 50 acres of habitat for the federally endangered Indiana bat at Funderburg Forest Preserve as a condition of acceptance for the above award. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners approved an additional \$50,000 of project funding in the 2024 capital budget. (7) Seven firms submitted a bid detailing the number of acres that they are able to forestry mow and chemically treat woody resprouts on for the not-to-exceed amount of \$100,000.00. The qualified low bid was submitted by Stantec Consulting Services Inc. for the treatment of (80) eighty acres at Funderburg Forest Preserve. The total cost as specified is \$100,000.00, which the staff budgeted \$100,000.00 for this project in the 2024 budget. Jerry Paulson made a motion, Audrey Johnson seconded to accept the bid from Stantec Consulting Services Inc., 209 Commerce Parkway, Cottage Grove, WI 53527 to complete (80) eighty acres of treatment for the project ‘Forestry Mowing at Funderburg Forest Preserve’ for the price of \$100,000.00. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Purchase for Skid Loader – Mike Brien addressed the Board regarding the purchase of a skid loader. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners approved a purchase of

a Forestry Compact Track Loader as part of the 2024 capital budget. There is one manufacturer that produces a forestry oriented compact track loader that meets the required specifications and has adequate regional dealer and maintenance support. There is one Caterpillar dealer network in northern Illinois (Altorfer Cat) and purchasers are restricted to their local dealer. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County's Purchasing Policy (Personnel Policy, Section 3.11, III C.) allows for sole source purchasing of "equipment and supplies for which there is no comparable competitive product or is only available from one supplier". Altorfer Cat of Rockford is expecting a Caterpillar 299D3 XE DM1 Compact Track Loader that meets the specifications required for forestry application in January 2024. The total cost as specified is \$123,200 which the staff budgeted \$130,000 for this piece of equipment in the 2024 budget. Judy Barnard made a motion, Mike Eickman seconded to approve the purchase of a Caterpillar 299D3 XE DM1 Compact Track Loader from Altorfer Cat of Rockford, IL for the price of \$ 123,200. **Motion passed unanimously.**

STAFF REPORTS

Preserve Operations - Vaughn Stamm, Scott Stewart, Scott Wallace, and Bryan Helmold submitted a written report.

Land and Development/Volunteer Program Report – Mike Brien, Mike Groves and Keith Krey submitted a written report.

Golf Operations – Vaughn Stamm, Rich Rosenstiel, Tyler Knapp, and Mark Freiman submitted a written report. Vaughn Stamm announced today is the last day for Macktown golf course for the season. Ledges and Atwood golf courses will remain open weather permitting, with Ledges closing next.

Marketing – Renee Pixler submitted a written report. Renee mentioned there were 25 people at movie night with hopes to have more next year.

Human Resources – Sherry Winebaugh submitted a written report.

Law Enforcement – Sheriff's Department submitted a written report.

Jerry Paulson asked Mike Brien if the information on the monitored rare plants is available and Mike Brien responded that he could be vague with the locations but typically does not disclose.

Judy Barnard asked about the insurance checks and how many vehicles and buildings were damaged. Vaughn Stamm replied that 6-7 vehicles were damaged and 14 facilities were damaged from the storm in April.

Audrey Johnson mentioned that she was at Macktown Living History on Sunday for the Frenchman's Frolic. There were a lot of people there and at the golf course. Audrey announced that her daughter donated a Native American drum to Macktown Living History that can be seen at the education building. The Macktown Living History Board was happy with the donation.

Jeff Tilly wanted to give kudos to Renee for posting something on fall colors at Seward Bluffs Forest Preserve. Renee stated she will be on the news with Aaron Wilson next week.

Mike Eickman announced they had 25 people at Sand Bluff last Friday for Owl night.

CLOSED SESSION

Audrey Johnson made a motion to go into closed session at 6:26 pm. At 6:48 pm, the meeting returned to open session. No action was taken while in closed session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS

October 28 - Howl at the Moon Night Hike at Funderburg Forest Preserve from 7:00pm-8:30pm.

November 4 - Walk With U- Guided Walk at Pecatonica Forest Preserve from 9:00am-10:00am

November 11- Conservation Crew Workday at Severson Dells Nature Center from 9:00am-12:00pm

Judy Barnard asked if a tree can be planted at Indian Hill Forest Preserve in memory of Jake Henry. The Board agreed that a tree should be planted and a plaque will be displayed at Forest Preserve Headquarters.

ADJOURNMENT

Audrey Johnson made a motion Mike Eickman seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 PM. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Next board meeting 5:30 PM, Wednesday, November 15, Preserve Headquarters.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kristy Knapp
Recording Secretary