

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County  
**BOARD MEETING**  
Forest Preserve Headquarters  
January 17, 2024

**PRESENT**

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

**STAFF**

Mike Holan, Executive Director  
Mike Brien, Director of Natural Resources  
Sherry Winebaugh, Human Resources Manager  
Renee Pixler, Communications Coordinator

**GUESTS**

Alex Mills  
Brendan Noble  
Andrea Wallace Noble  
Ann Wasser  
Jillian Neece

**ROLL CALL**

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

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

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

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, AWARDS, and PRESENTATIONS** Mike Brien presented to the board the 2024 Natural Resource Management Guide. Mike Brien reviewed with the board what was accomplished within The Natural Resource Department in 2023 and shared the course of action that will be taken in the 2024 season. Mike shared the department's objectives which highlighted performing prescribed burns and controlling the invasive species populations within the Forest Preserves. Mike mentioned that their forestry mowing efforts for the 2024 season will be focused at Severson Dells Forest Preserve.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mike Holan addressed to the board that a former seasonal employee who worked at Hononegah Forest Preserve, Mark La van, donated \$200 to the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County asking that it goes towards Hononegah Forest Preserve in some way. Mike mentioned that Renee Pixler will be hosting an event at Hononegah for the Preserve's 100-year anniversary and that the money will be going towards the celebration.

**ACTION ITEMS**

Bills for December – Judy Barnard made a motion to authorize the payment of the bills for December in the amount of \$569,279.66. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Partnership Agreement for Educational Programs with Burpee Museum – Mike Holan prefaced the presentation by recalling how Renee Pixler and April Bieschke had met at an event in the spring of 2023 and ultimately how the idea of a partnership for educational programs with Burpee Museum came to fruition. Renee and April addressed the board to discuss how The Burpee Museum in partnership with The Forest Preserve of Winnebago County can provide children and young adults an ample

environment for educating the youth of the county on nature and natural history as well as providing a safe place for the underprivileged parts of our community to enjoy wildlife. April and Renee answered all of the questions brought forth by the board. Judy Barnard made a motion to accept the partnership agreement for educational programs with the Burpee Museum. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Tree Preservation Policy – Mike Brien presented to the board the Tree Preservation Policy which states that the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County commit to the responsible management of its forest resources and establishes the necessary guidelines for the care of trees. The policy goes in depth to ensure that all tree management procedures are done with protection and preservation in mind. Mike Brien answered all questions brought forth by the board and brought clarity in regards to some of the contents contained in the policy handout. Jerry Paulson made a motion, to accept the Tree Preservation Policy. **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.

Marketing – Renee Pixler submitted a written report.

Human Resources – Sherry Winebaugh submitted a written report.

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

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Judy Barnard made a motion to go into closed session at 6:27 PM. At 6:45 PM, the meeting returned to open session. No action was taken while in closed session.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS**

January 18 – Restoration Work Day at Pecatonica Forest Preserves from 9:00am – 12:00pm.

January 24 – Volunteer Appreciation Event at Headquarters from 5:30pm – 7:00pm.

January 25 – Restoration Work Day at Macktown Forest Preserve from 9:00am – 12:00pm.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Jerry Paulson made a motion, to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 PM. Motion passed unanimously. Next board meeting 5:30 PM, Wednesday, February 21, Preserve Headquarters.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Emily Wendlandt  
Recording Secretary