

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County  
**BOARD MEETING**  
Forest Preserve Headquarters  
December 20, 2023

**PRESENT**

Judy Barnard  
Mike Eickman  
Audrey Johnson  
Gloria Lind  
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  
Ann Wasser  
Liz Wiener

**ROLL CALL**

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

**PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE** Mike Eickman led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL of AGENDA and MINUTES** Gloria Lind made a motion, Judy Barnard Second to approve the minutes for the November 11, 2023 Board Training Meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.** Mike Eickman made a motion, Gloria Lind second to approve the minutes for the November 15, 2023 Board Meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.** No changes or additions were made to the agenda.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Rockford Tax Rebate – Mike Holan mentioned Mayor McNamara sent him a proposal regarding a tax rebate program for anyone that is building a new home in Rockford. The program would be a 100% tax rebate for three years. Mike mentioned the County is not participating in this program due to it only being in Rockford and not the entire county. Jeff Tilly and Cheryl Maggio mentioned they would like to see the Forest Preserve participate in other ways like a welcome package or free services. Audrey Johnson mentioned working with RACVB or title companies for packages from the Forest Preserve. Jeff Tilly asked Mike Holan to let Mayor McNamara know the Board’s consensus is to not participate in the rebate program.

Audrey Johnson addressed the education and networking page in the IAPD magazine on training for Commissioners. She thinks the free Zoom trainings may be a great resource for the Commissioners. Mike Holan mentioned the Board training budget has been reduced the last few years and if any Commissioner would like to participate in future training, let him know so the funds can be built into the budget again for next year.

Jeff Tilly mentioned he spoke with Chris Samuelson a couple weeks ago regarding the next steps moving forward and he received the impression that Chris and the Severson Dells’ Board are interested in continuing and growing a partnership with the Forest Preserve. Chris and Jeff look forward to mending bridges and moving forward in the future.

**ACTION ITEMS**

Bills for November – Gloria Lind made a motion, Mike Eickman second to authorize the payment of the bills for November in the amount of \$497,970.42. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Purchase of Loader Tractors – Judy Barnard made a motion, Gloria Lind second to approve the purchase of the Loader Trucks. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Approval to Amend Employee Handbook – Mike Eickman made a motion, Audrey Johnson second to amend the Employee Handbook. Roll Call Vote Taken. **Motion passes 7-0.**

Approval by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County of Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc.’s Construction of a Children’s Double Hammock Play Feature – Gloria Lind made a motion, Audrey Johnson second to approve the construction of a children’s double hammock play feature. **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. Mike Brien announced the forestry mowing at Funderburg started today. The forestry mowing will be completed by March 15, 2024, with the treating of resprouts throughout the summer. Signs will be posted on stie explaining the process. Those signs can then be reused at other locations that will have similar projects.

Golf Operations – Vaughn Stamm, Rich Rosenstiel, Tyler Knapp, and Mark Freiman submitted a written report.

Marketing – Renee Pixler submitted a written report. Renee mentioned the Career/Volunteer Open House was yesterday at Headquarters. There were 42 people who attended with a good mix of volunteer and career seekers. There was good press on WREX and with Aaron Wilson on WIFR.

Human Resources – Sherry Winebaugh submitted a written report.

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

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Audrey Johnson made a motion to go into closed session at 6:16 PM. At 6:48 PM, the meeting returned to open session. No action was taken while in closed session.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS**

December 21 – Restoration Work Day at Pecatonica Forest Preserve from 9:00am – 12:00pm.

December 29 – Howl at the Moon Hike at Hononegah Forest Preserve starting at 4:30pm.

January 4 – Restoration Work Day at Roland Olson from 9:00am – 12:00pm.

January 11 – Restoration Work Day at Macktown Forest Preserve from 9:00am – 12:00pm.

Judy Barnard thanked staff for doing a great job on the Employee Appreciation Recognition Luncheon. Judy also wanted to thank those that came to Lee Johnson’s party.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Gloria Lind made a motion, Judy Barnard second adjourn the meeting at 6:52 PM. Motion passed unanimously. Next board meeting 5:30 PM, Wednesday, January 17, Preserve Headquarters.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kristy Knapp  
Recording Secretary