

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County  
**BOARD MEETING**  
Preserves Headquarters  
December 14, 2022

**PRESENT**

Judy Barnard  
Mike Eickman  
Audrey Johnson-via Zoom  
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  
Ann Wasser, Director of Nature Education  
Sherry Winebaugh, Human Resources Manager  
Renee Henert, Communications Coordinator

**GUESTS**

Aaron Szeto  
Brendan & Andrea Noble  
Jack Armstrong  
Daniel Huntley  
Jackie DeBatista  
Don & Sue Miller  
Jim Larson  
Patty Oliveri  
Brett Hanson  
Margret Hanson  
Steve Vee

Joy Vee  
Liz Wiener  
Mary Kaull  
Jamie Johannsen  
Jennifer & Jackie Kuroda  
James & Alex Marshall  
Stacy Wallace  
Brandon Wallace  
Dana Wallace  
Joyce Gibbons  
Emily K.

Harin Patel  
Jim Roberts  
Bill Houtkamp  
Jessie Crow Mermel  
Victoria Mermel  
Andrea Hazzard  
Catherine Povalitis  
Julie Uram  
Zack O.  
Jared Boeke

**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.

**ELECTION of PRESIDENT and VICE PRESIDENT**

Cheryl Maggio asked for nominations for President from the Board. Judy Barnard made a motion, Gloria Lind second to nominate Jeff Tilly for President. Jeff Tilly accepted the nomination. No other nominations were made for President and nominations were closed for President. Roll Call vote taken. **Motion passes 6-0.** Jeff Tilly was voted in as the Board President. Cheryl Maggio asked for nominations for Vice President from the Board. Judy Barnard made a motion, Gloria Lind second to nominate Mike Eickman for Vice President. Mike Eickman accepted the nomination. No other nominations were made for Vice President and nominations were closed for Vice President. Roll Call vote taken. **Motion passes 6-0.** Mike Eickman was voted in as the Board Vice President.

**APPROVAL of AGENDA and MINUTES** for November 16, 2022 were approved. No changes or additions were made to the agenda.

**PRESENTATIONS and PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

2023 Restoration Manual – Mike Brien – Mike Brien presented the 2023 Natural Resource Management Guide. The cover is courtesy of Ethan, who won the coloring contest at the 100-year anniversary celebration at Hononegah Forest Preserve. Mike reviewed the highlights of the natural resource department for this year which includes, vegetation removal, deer management program, Osprey nesting platforms and other wildlife management activities. Mike also reviewed the seed harvest which includes 185 species, totaling

1,200 pounds of seed collected this year. The total value for the seed is worth approximately \$150,500. The seed collected in 2021 was used at Funderburg Forest Preserve and the Lithuanian Club addition at Kishwaukee River Forest Preserve to plant new prairies. The department also grew over 3,000 plant plugs and planted over 650 trees. Mike reviewed the preserve projects they participated in and what outreach programs and collaboration the natural resource department had in 2022. Mike reviewed the burn summary which had a total of 1,364 acres burned last year in 17 preserves over 19 total days. In addition, Mike reviewed the 2023 natural resource department objectives, which included a general timeline for management activities, priority of invasive species list, the 2023 management activities for the north and south preserves, prairie planting map, priority clearing projects and lastly the burn plans. The Board thanked Mike.

James Larson, Roscoe – James addressed the Commissioners regarding an issue with the lighting in two of the outhouses at Roland Olson Forest Preserve. He would be willing to volunteer his time and paint the inside white in the spring. He also wanted to address the two private entrances and what the management plan is for the land. The board thanked James.

There were 5 speakers who were allowed three minutes each to speak regarding the Severson Dells Agreement – Catherine Povalitis of Rockford read a letter from Colleen and Jack Holmbeck. Jamie Johannsen of Rockford, Daniel Huntley, Don Miller of Rockford and Julie Uram of Rockford all gave a statement to the Board regarding Severson Dells.

Jack Armstrong – Asked if any of the Commissioners were planning on attending the IAPD Conference this year. He thinks they could get great information from the conference.

Jeff Tilly thanked everyone that spoke.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS / DISCUSSION**

Severson Dells Agreement – Jerry Paulson passed out copies of a resolution and addendum that was passed on October 24, 2018. Jerry made a statement regarding the agreement between the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District and the Severson Dells Education Foundation and how it's been said that the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board was not aware of this agreement, nor was it ever adopted by the Board. The facts, however, do not support this. Jerry Paulson continued to state how the facts showed that the Board was aware of the agreement from when it was amended on October 24, 2018 to add a parttime Development and Marketing Assistant to the Severson Dells education staff. The Resolution, adopted unanimously by the Board, refers to the executed agreement of 2012 with its partner group Severson Dells Education Foundation. The October, 2018 resolution was approved 6-0 by the Board and the Addendum to the Agreement was signed by Mike Holan. Clearly, in 2018 Board members and staff of the District were aware of the Agreement between the District and Severson Dells Education Foundation that had been in effect since 2009, although you may not have been aware of the details of the Agreement. In the statement Jerry Paulson agrees that the Agreement needs to be renegotiated, especially to clarify the responsibility for management of the education staff between the District and the Foundation. Jerry Paulson does not agree that it is necessary to eliminate the District's education staff in the process. The debate about what, if any role the District should play in education needs to take place before any decision is made to dissolve or amend the operating agreement between the District and the Severson Dells Education Foundation.

Jeff Tilly responded and said Jerry Paulson has a lot of valid points but that we are at a point where we need to move forward with creating a new agreement. Jerry Paulson asked for a status report on the negotiations and Judy Barnard replied that a meeting is set up for December 20<sup>th</sup>. Jeff Tilly stated there has been a lot of negative rhetoric established throughout the community on this unfortunate occurrence and would like to put that to an end and start working on what's next. Audrey Johnson made a statement about the negativity and misinformation to the public. She understands their concerns but stated the Commissioners feel very positive towards Severson Dells and know how important the education is at Severson as well as within our

other facilities. Jerry Paulson stated he understands why people are confused because of the way this all happened. Jerry stated it's not what we discussed and not what we agreed to. Jeff Tilly mentioned that Severson Dells is a staple of the Community and the benefits they provide are priceless but the agreement needs to be corrected and done the right way so Severson can flourish. We need to look at the next steps and what Severson needs. Some of the concerns have been not enough time and the employment of current and future employees so they can continue to operate while transitioning. Gloria Lind stated we will not leave Severson high and dry and when this is all done and time has gone by, maybe we can learn more from each other and be able to do more for Severson than in the past.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mike Holan addressed the Commissioners regarding the Mitchell property that was purchased across from Ferguson. The property has around 5 or 6 encroachments that are making it so homeowners cannot sell their property. Mike mentioned he has a surveyor that is supposed to survey each of the parcels so they know exactly where the boundary lines are and where the encroachment is. The Down State Forest Preserve Act will only allow the parcels to be sold for fair market value, meaning the forest preserve will need to get an appraiser. The Board gave their consensus to hire an appraiser for the property.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

Appointment of Officers – The provisions of Section 8 of the Illinois Forest Preserve District Act authorize the President of the Board of Commissioner for the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (FPWC) to appoint Officers for the FPWC. The provisions of Article III, Section 3-2b of the Code of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County authorize that the President, in addition to performing the duties prescribed by statute, shall appoint the Officers of the FPWC. President Jeff Tilly does hereby appoint and the Board of Commissioners does hereby confirm the appointment of Audrey Johnson for Secretary, Steve Chapman for Treasurer, and Cheryl Maggio for Assistant Treasurer, as officers of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County. The Officers shall serve two-year terms of office, which terms shall commence on December 14, 2022 and shall conclude on December 2, 2024. Judy Barnard made a motion and Jerry Paulson and Gloria Lind seconded to approve the appointment of the Officers of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Bills for November – Mike Eickman made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to authorize the payment of the bills for November in the amount of \$415,462.41. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Amendment to the Purchase Resolution for Pickup Trucks – Vaughn Stamm addressed the Board of Commissioners regarding the amendment to the purchase resolution for pickup trucks. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners approved a purchase of five (5) new pickup trucks as part of the FY 2022 Capital Budget. The original bid was awarded to Rock River Ford on December 15, 2021 for five (5) Ford F250 Super Duty 4x4 pickup trucks. The total cost as bid by Rock River Ford was \$174,060.00 for which the staff budgeted \$200,000 for these pickup trucks in the FY 2022 Capital Budget. Production was halted by Ford Motor Company and the vehicles could not be delivered before the end of the FY 2022 Capital Budget cycle in order to facilitate this purchase. Funds allocated for this purchase were carried over as part of the FY 2023 Capital Budget which was approved by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners. Due to market inflation and on-going supply issues, only three (3) pickup trucks can be provided by original bidder at a cost of \$56,835 each or a total of \$170,505 for all three (3) trucks. Gloria Lind made a motion, Judy Barnard seconded to amend the purchase resolution for pickup trucks. **Motion passed unanimously.**

## **STAFF REPORTS**

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

Land and Development – Mike Brien and Mike Groves submitted a written report.

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

Marketing – Renee Henert submitted a written report.

Environmental Education – Ann Wasser submitted a written report. Ann announced the Luminaria event was a success with 700 people over 2 nights. Ann addressed the Board regarding the current situation and the lack of communication with the public on the process. Ann mentioned the reason the public is confused is because the Board hasn't communicated. She doesn't understand why an agreement is being terminated with no communication and that's not what a good partner does. Jeff Tilly stated this is not the appropriate time for this conversation. Jerry Paulson asked who made the decision of terminating the agreement and Jeff Tilly replied that's a conversation for the Board and conversation will be continued under unfinished business as we move forward.

Human Resources/Volunteer Program – Sherry Winebaugh submitted a written report.

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

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6:52 PM.

Next board meeting 5:30 PM, Wednesday, January 18, 2023, Preserve Headquarters

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kristy Knapp  
Recording Secretary