

La Porte County Park Board Meeting

October 1, 2024 Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order by Ron.

ROLL CALL:

- Present: Mike King, Mary Nell Murphy, Nick Landers, Jim Holifield, Ron Knickrehm, Mary Komenas
- Absent: Amanda Nebelung
- Guests: ALCO TV, Eileen Smiertelny (via Zoom)
- Jeremy Sobecki, Cathy Fuller

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- Jeremy asked to add Resolution 2024-01 to New Business on the agenda
- Mary Nell made a motion to approve the amended agenda; seconded by Mary
- Motion carried 6-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Mike made a motion to approve the minutes from the Sept. 3rd meeting as written; seconded by Jim.
- Motion carried 6-0.
- Jeremy asked that the board also approve the minutes from the special meeting on Aug. 27th.
- Mary made a motion to approve those minutes as well; seconded by Nick.
- Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

- Jeremy mentioned that the account for the part-time/seasonal employees is getting to the point where all the remaining seasonals will have to be let go.
- We will most likely spend every penny this year, which has not happened in a few years.
- Jeremy has estimated the remaining hours for the part-time staff to anticipate pay through the end of the year.
- Jim made a motion to approve the financial report; seconded by Mike.
- Financial report approved 6-0.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

1. Administrative Report

• **Bluhm expansion project update:**

- Jeremy expects that the closing on this property will occur sometime this month; date not yet set.
- Restoration work will then begin.

- **Canada Lodge roof replacement update:**
 - The roof is installed.
 - This project was done none too soon. The roofers found several areas where water had penetrated to the sheeting.
- **Trails master plan update:**
 - Consultant is currently completing an inventory of existing trails
 - Will be meeting with both La Porte and Michigan City
 - Public feedback meetings will also be scheduled.
- **Vehicle replacement update:**
 - Received a motion of support last night from the County Council to move forward with the purchase of four electric vehicles and one public charging station, not to exceed \$90,000
 - Two of these will be for the Parks Dept. and two are for other departments.
 - The public charging station will be at Red Mill.
 - We also applied for and received a grant for \$125,000.
 - Due to the volume of interest in this grant, a large discount was secured, making the price per truck (Ford Lightnings) around \$48,000 each.
 - Projected date for delivery is sometime next spring.
- **Cross Country meet at Bluhm also discussed here.**
 - There were two officers present to monitor traffic, as the runners had to cross the road.
 - Jeremy hopes to be able to reroute the course on the new property so as to make a 5K route without having to cross any traffic.
- **Glow Disc Golf was also discussed here.**
 - Jeremy received positive feedback from the group.
 - Connections were established, looking to a possible future improvement of the course, which we have been wanting to do but were not sure what direction to take.

2. Maintenance & Construction Report

3. Program Report

- **Pioneer Days update**

- Pioneer Days went very well; however, numbers were down this year.
- There were quite a few conflicting events going on elsewhere, so that may have contributed to that.

4. Park Counts

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. **Executive Committee: Ron and Jim**—No report
2. **Budget Committee: Nick and Mary**—No report
3. **Personnel Committee: Nick and Mary**—No report
4. **Property Committee: Mike and Mary Nell**—No report
 - Mike did mention that the Bluhm Expansion Project might make more opportunities for events like the cross-country meet.
5. **Planning Committee: Amanda and Mary Nell**

- **Future of Health Cabin at Red Mill:**
 - Still no decision made, although heavily pointing to tearing down the cabin, but retaining the cement pad for other purposes.
- 6. Rules Committee: Amanda and Mike**
 - **2025 user fees discussion:**
 - Jeremy would like to meet with the Rules Committee to look at a few possible changes.
 - We need to be actively planning for the time when the caretaker position is terminated-most likely next spring.
 - In comparison to La Porte City Parks Cummings Lodge, we have a nicer facility, but are priced lower than they are.
 - Smith Hall price could probably stand to be raised.

OLD BUSINESS: No old business

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Resolution 2024-01: Approval to transfer \$3,000.00 from Non-Reverting: *Other Supplies* account to Non-Reverting: *Other Services* account**
 - Both the Auditor's Office and Jeremy have been working to make sure all spending is being done correctly, according to the State Board of Accounts.
 - It has been pointed out that the purchase of *supplies and goods* cannot come out of the same account as *services provided*.
 - A new account for services has now been set up, and we will be using that going forward to pay for any services.
 - Jim made a motion to approve the transfer of money from our non-reverting supplies to non-reverting services account; seconded by Mary Nell.
 - Motion carried 6-0.
 - Jeremy added that going forward, we can direct monies to either account when we make our deposits.

BOARD & STAFF COMMENTS

- Ron mentioned that he had spoken with April following the Family Fishing Night program and that there were almost 100 people that came out that night! Just proving the point that if you serve food, people show up!
- Jeremy thanked all the park staff and all volunteers for helping with Pioneer Days.
- Jeremy also highlighted October programs.

ADJOURNMENT

- Mike made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mary.
- Motion carried 6-0.
- Meeting adjourned.

**No meeting in November!
Next meeting: Dec. 3, 2024!**