

The Mahaska County Conservation Board (MCCB) held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, November 20, 2023, at the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) at Caldwell Park. Board Chair Steve Dixon called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Also present at the meeting were Board Members Linda Fox, Jennifer Peterson, and Chuck Webb. Board Member Curt Jager was absent. The members of the staff present were Director Chris Clingan and Naturalist Laura DeCook. Present from the public was Rodney Anderson, President of Friends of Mahaska County Conservation (FMCC).

Board Chair Dixon asked if all the Board members had received the updated Agenda with the addition of Item X Subsection f. Glass Recycling. Fox stated she did not have the current agenda; she did know what the addition entailed. Peterson made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Fox seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Minutes were discussed.

- I. Fox made a motion to approve the Minutes of the October 16, 2023, regular board meeting as presented. Peterson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Expenditures were reviewed.

- I. Clingan discussed several items on the expenditures listing.
- II. The Board asked about the claims for the Halloween Bash. Clingan answered that we had received donation monies for the Halloween Bash from FMCC. These monies were deposited into the donation fund and then when supplies were purchased, paid out of the donation fund.
- III. Peterson made a motion to approve the expenditures as presented. Fox seconded this motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Caldwell Park was addressed.

- I. ELC Playscape Update

A. Clingan discussed the grants and contributions for the playscape.

1. Clingan stated that the Strengthening Community grant was not \$10,000.00 as he originally stated, but \$100,000.00. This grant was submitted October 24, 2023. Clingan said that it is a highly competitive grant.
2. Clingan informed the Board that he submitted the grant application for the George Daily Trust application requesting \$250,000.00 on November 7, 2023.
 - i. Clingan also said that the board for George Daily Trust reviewed the grant application on November 13. He has not heard anything to date.
 - ii. Peterson stated that she has talked with two of the people that sit on that board. They are wanting MCCB to get money from the community, so they can match the donation monies collected. Peterson and Clingan also talked about the phases of the project.
3. Clingan advised the Board that FMCC has received a total of \$9,200.00 of donation monies from Cargill, Pella Corporation, and the Willie VanWeelden memorial.
4. Clingan stated he talked with Ashley Ute about sending out surveys to the community.
5. Clingan told the Board that he signed the paperwork for the \$27,700.00 from the McQuiston Trust. Clingan advised that there will be a public relations event for the presentation of the monies, and he would like to have as many board members as possible attend this.
6. Clingan informed the Board that MCCB received the Iowa Tourism grant today for \$9,600.00. With what has been donated and the grant money, there is approximately \$13,500.00 available for this project. Filming the promotional video won't start until next June. Peterson asked if they would want to film any portion of winter. Clingan said that it will be a couple weeks before they have the contracts out.
7. Discussion ensued.

The Public Safety item was addressed.

- I. Clingan gave an update on Eveland Access Campgrounds.

- A. Clingan stated that the campground has been closed and winterized.
 - B. Clingan told the Board that Brooke Sells was a great help at the campgrounds this season and she is looking forward to coming back next year. Sells will be recognized at this year's volunteer banquet.
- II. Clingan addressed the Issues and Concerns.
- A. Clingan talked about the situation at the Eveland Access campgrounds that was discussed in closed session at the August 3, 2023, monthly board meeting.
 - 1. Clingan stated he and the park rangers worked with the Mahaska County Sheriff's office, the Drug Task Force, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.
 - 2. Clingan went on to discuss, in detail, the law enforcement's plan, surveillance, the arrests (Tiny Northway and Michael Peterson), and the items seized.
 - 3. Clingan talked about the press release.
 - i. Clingan stated he wanted transparency, giving the public the facts. This should alleviate the fears of anyone who has been disinclined to come to the campgrounds because of the criminal activity that has been going on.
 - ii. Clingan also shared that it is his hope that any other associates of the arrested will take note of what has happened, and it will hinder them from taking up activity at the campgrounds.
 - B. Clingan advised the Board of the number of calls for service the Park Rangers responded to.
 - 1. Clingan told the Board that were 27 calls for service which resulted in three citations, three arrests, twelve charges (nine felony charges), three incident reports, and three supplemental reports.
 - 2. Clingan praised the park rangers for the job they have done.
- III. Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau (GTSB) Grant
- A. Clingan reminded the Board that MCCB received the GTSB grant in the amount of \$7,500.00 to equip a patrol vehicle.
 - 1. Clingan said that with this grant MCCB can purchase an in-car video system and a handheld Lidar. Clingan explained that even though there is a speed limit at the campgrounds, the park rangers have never had a way to track the speed of vehicles within the grounds to enforce this law.
 - 2. Clingan informed the Board that to fulfill the requirements of the grant they will pay the park rangers time and a half to be proactive and patrol the roads to the parks. Clingan stated that the time and a half payment will not come out of MCCB's general fund, but will be paid out of the State funds from this grant.
 - 3. Clingan requested permission from the Board to use the State monies to purchase the Lidar and use \$5,000.00 to purchase the in-car video system. Clingan also requested permission to purchase three body cameras (following the outlined estimate).
 - 4. Clingan provided an email from Sector Technology defining the yearly breakdown of cost for a five-year period.
 - i. Year 1: $\$14,073.66 - 5,000.00 =$ approximately \$9,000.00.
 - ii. Years 2 through 5: The cost is \$2,245.40.
 - 5. Clingan added that these items are important in hindering frivolous lawsuits by providing proof/documentation in case of a claim against law enforcement. Clingan stated, in talking with the county attorney's office, there is an expectation to have these items.
 - 6. Dixon asked if the in-car system and body cameras record sound. Clingan advised that they do record sound. Clingan also said that the cameras work well in lowlight situations.
 - 7. Dixon also asked for clarification on the cost and the compatibility of equipment with the Mahaska County Sheriff's office.
 - B. Fox made a motion to approve Clingan's requests as presented. Peterson seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

- C. DeCook stated that she will be placing public service announcements on Facebook. Clingan added that part of MCCB's duty in fulfilling the GTSB grant is providing public education and public service announcements on Facebook provide a way to educate the public.

The Prairie Planting for Swanson Property was discussed.

- I. Clingan notified the Board that the Mahaska County Pheasants Forever group has agreed to pay for the prairie seeding up to \$5,000.00 at the Swanson Property. Clingan asked that the Board thank them for their continued partnership. Clingan stated that in the short time he has been director, the Mahaska County Pheasants Forever group have given MCCB close to \$20,000.00 towards various habitat related projects. Fox asked that Wedgewood send a thank you card to the Mahaska County Pheasants Forever group on behalf of the Board.

New Equipment was addressed.

- I. Clingan advised that MCCB's fleet is aging and discussed beginning a replacement cycle for the vehicles.
 - A. Clingan listed options from the various dealerships.
 1. Kraig Ford located a '23 Ford F150 in Olathe, Kansas (\$48,035.76) and a '23 Chevrolet Silverado at Shottenkirk, Waukee, Iowa (49,965.95) – no municipal lease option.
 2. Karl Chevrolet has a '24 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 (49,560.24) available in January. This is a police package vehicle that includes wiring ports for electronics, heavier brake pads, better suspension and comes with an all-terrain tire (BF Goodrich valued at approximately \$1,300.00). Karl Chevrolet has lease options, no mileage limit and 7.99% interest. Clingan included 2-year, 4-year, and 5-year options.
 3. Clingan added that there would be a cost to transfer equipment to a new vehicle (capped at \$7,000.00).
 - B. Discussion ensued regarding but not limited to, the vehicles, trade-in value for Clingan's vehicle, funding the purchase of the vehicle, purchasing outright versus leasing, mileage on current vehicles, and how this works on MCCB's budget.
 - C. Clingan notified the Board that he had discussed the vehicles with Board Member Jager and Jager supports purchasing the '24 Chevrolet Silverado 1500.
 - D. Clingan made a recommendation to purchase outright the '24 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 from Karl Chevrolet allowing Karl Chevrolet the ability to move all the patrol equipment over to the new truck using the camping reserve fund.
 - E. Clingan presented a chart of the MCCB's current fleet, including age, and Kelly Blue Book value which included a depreciation schedule for the fleet.
 - F. Webb made a motion to accept Clingan's recommendation. Fox seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Setting the December Board Meeting was addressed.

- I. The December board meeting is set for December 18, 2023.
 - A. Clingan asked about having a Christmas potluck at 5:30 p.m. with the meeting to follow at 6:00 p.m.
 - B. Clingan stated he would provide the meat for the potluck.
 - C. Clingan recommended inviting the FMCC to the potluck.
 - D. The Board concurred with the meeting date, potluck, and times for each event.

In Other Business:

- I. Rodney Anderson, President of FMCC discussed several items.
 - A. Anderson talked about the donations received from Cargill for the playscape.
 - B. Anderson spoke about the donation of 160 lbs. of birdseed from Theisen's in Pella.
 - C. Anderson stated FMCC raised \$500.00 at the campground.
 - D. Anderson informed the Board that FMCC will pay for the trumpeter swan mount and for a Christmas tree for the ELC.

E. Anderson said that FMCC will pick up the wolf display next week. Discussion ensued regarding the wolf display.

II. Clingan addressed a couple items.

A. Clingan discussed the park planning/public meeting.

1. Clingan said that he received the draft of the plan for our parks which focused on our parks and their infrastructures.
2. Clingan stated the next step is, in early January, to have a public meeting to get the public's opinion on what they would like and how to enhance the parks. Clingan would like as many people as possible, from around the county, to attend this meeting.
3. Clingan advised that after the public meeting is held, there will be a meeting with the state representatives etc. This meeting will be held in January also.
4. Clingan told the Board that the University of Iowa Engineering department can create park plans. They charge approximately \$1,000.00 a project for plans. These plans could be used for different grants in the future.

B. Clingan asked who is on the budget committee.

1. The Board informed him that the Board President is generally on the budget committee. Steve Dixon, Curt Jager, and Chris Clingan will make up the budget committee.
2. Clingan stated he would like to approach the budget planning differently. Instead of figuring the budget without knowing what the Mahaska County Board of Supervisors may appropriate, he would like to have an idea so the committee could get a close approximation for the budget.

C. Clingan informed the Board that the bird food giveaway was a success. DeCook added that there were around 100 people that took advantage of the free bird food on Saturday and approximately \$300.00 was collected in donations. The last of the bird food was given away today.

D. Clingan discussed the glass recycling bin the landfill placed at the ELC. The landfill told Clingan that if there are any issues with the bin MCCB can contact them and they will come clean the area and remove the bin.

III. Dixon addressed a couple items.

A. Dixon said that the paint is peeling off the steel structure on the front awning.

B. Dixon asked DeCook if she had any use for the Legion's old, popped popcorn.

IV. Fox said they saw the albino deer at Maskunky.

Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Fox seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Chairman _____

Secretary _____

Date _____

Date _____