

Polk County Conservation Board
5:30 p.m. - Polk County Administration Bldg., Room 120
111 Court Ave., Des Moines, IA

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

The Polk County Conservation Board met in person for regular session on Wednesday, November 10, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

- #21-1101 Roll Call
Members Present: **Crane, Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer, Cataldo**
Members Absent:
- #21-1102 Public Comments
- #21-1103 Financial Reports
- #21-1104 **MOVED BY Cataldo** to approve the October 13, 2021 meeting minutes.
Vote Yea: **Crane, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Lewis, Altringer**
Members Absent:

CONSENT AGENDA

- #21-1105 **Approving** bill list.
- #21-1106 **Ratifying** electronic vote approving quotes from Grimes Paving and Asphalt Corp. to repave a section of the Great Western Trail from Hwy 28 to Willow Ave in a contract amount of \$24,150 plus a 10% (\$2,415.00) contingency.
- #21-1107 **Approving** a Settlement & Release Agreement between the City of West Des Moines and Polk County Conservation Board for the site restoration of pedestrian underpass proposed on the Great Western Trail.
- #21-1108 **Approving** proposed fees for Jester Park Golf Course. All fees will become effective on January 1, 2022.
- #21-1109 **Approving** revised job description for the seasonal Conservation Laborer – Construction position and establishing the miscellaneous pay rate at \$19.00 - \$20.00 per hour.
- #21-1110 **Approving** quote from Clark Boat Co. Inc. for purchase of a custom accessible pontoon boat as a part of the Easter Lake North Shore restoration efforts - \$78,177.00.
- #21-1111 **Awarding** lowest contractor bid for hazard ash tree removal from PCC Easter Lake and Thomas Mitchell to J. Pettiecord, Inc. in a contracted

amount not to exceed \$47,575.00 with a 10% contingency (\$4,325.00).

- #21-1112 **Awarding** lowest contractor bid for tree removal at Easter Lake Park to J. Pettiecord, Inc. in a contracted amount of \$38,400.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by **Lewis** to approve the consent agenda.

Vote Yea: **Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Lewis, Cataldo, Altringer**

Members Absent:

ACTION ITEMS

- #21-1113 **Approving** the application for the FLAP (Federal Lands Access Program) grant with a request of \$1.3M with a 20% (\$260,000) match for the Broadway Ave to Neal Smith Trail connection project.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by **Cataldo** to approve Action Item 21-1113.

Vote Yea: **Altringer, Lewis, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**

Members Absent:

- #21-1114 **Approving** Fee for Service Agreement with Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI) in the amount of \$217,560 for an adult CCMI crew beginning 3-7-22 to 12-8-22.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by **Lewis** to approve Action Item 21-1114.

Vote Yea: **Altringer, Lewis, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**

Members Absent:

BOARD DISCUSSION

Director's Remarks

Doug Romig is leaving PCC after six years of service – he has been the Director's right hand, a guru regarding operations and personnel, and set up PCC to succeed with the Great Outdoors Foundation partnership. He is moving to Thornton, CO, which will be a good move for him and his family.

Kami Rankin has been offered and has accepted the role of Deputy Director. She has been with PCC for 23 years and will facilitate continuity of leadership and allow PCC to move forward quickly with future plans.

Rankin: I am excited to support PCC in this new role. PCC has a great staff and I am grateful to serve. We have posted my old role of Community Outreach Supervisor today and will hire a candidate after the holiday.

Lewis: Do you post Internally first or is it posted within PCC, then Polk County, then posted externally?

Leopold: Depends on the role – this position was posted both internally and externally at the same time.

Other things of note:

- Bond passed by 81.3% (2012 Bond passed by 72%)
- Dubuque was unsuccessful in passing a Bond
- AARP & IA Taxpayers Association endorsements helped with public perception
- GOF fundraised \$350,000 for the Bond Campaign
- Polk County residents and surrounding communities recognize the great work that PCC has accomplished!
- Responsible Spending
 - PCC has a strategic plan
 - New Sustainability/Diversity-Equity-Inclusion/Land Acquisition Committees are meeting regularly and will have reports in January 2022
 - PCC partners with other Polk Co departments – discussions with General Services regarding fleet of electric vehicles
 - Deputy Director has compiled a list of existing maintenance needs and projects, as well as list of new projects on the horizon:
 - Sleepy Hollow
 - Copper Creek
 - Speck Property-Research Station
 - Easter Lake Campground
 - Yellow Banks Full Service Campground
 - Trail Connections
 - Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt-additional camping
 - PCC Staffing has grown by 1 or 2 FTE's per year – we need a Water Quality Coordinator, FT Naturalist, FT Horticulturist, 2 FTE's at Sleepy Hollow, and \$50,000 in additional PT help
 - A 5% across the board increase is recommended as PCC only makes up 4% of the Polk County budget
 - DSM Public Works is the only other agency that is involved with water quality
 - PCC plans on leveraging the \$65 Million to increase to over \$100 Million
 - There is \$50 Million available in federal funding for water quality – PCC will pursue these funds and identify uses within the county

Cataldo: What about ICON?

Leopold: ICON focuses mostly on water trails, so would recommend scheduling a longer planning session to establish spending patterns for all needs in the next 5-10 years.

Crane: I would recommend scheduling this planning session before the end of 2021.

Leopold: Agreed – contractors are already reaching out to see if we need their services now that they know the Bond has passed.

Lewis: How long will the 2012 Bond expenditures overlap with 2022 Bond spending? When do we start spending 2022 Bond funds?

Leopold: After bid letting starts we have three years to spend the funds. There is about \$3.5

Million left of the 2012 Bond but it's tied up mostly in Natural Resources projects and land acquisitions. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation outstanding debts also need to be paid.

Altringer: I appreciate the work that went into formulating the existing Strategic Plan, because we don't want to distract from the vision established within the plan. We need to maintain voter confidence.

Leopold: PCC did what it said it would do for the 2012 Bond so we have earned the public's trust, which was evident with the new Bond vote.

More PCC News:

- PCC was awarded the 2021 Excellence in Concrete Award for Lauridsen Skatepark
- Monarch Story – a late-blooming monarch was discovered by PCC staff and after a plea was sent out to social media, was delivered safely to Texas where it can continue its migratory journey without being in danger of freezing.
- It has been determined that over 100 ash trees will need to be removed from PCC parks due to Emerald Ash Borer damage. The removal and replacement costs are considerable.
- Sleigh Rides have generated over \$21,000 in revenue the first week they were offered for booking!
- Director's Reports will resume in Jan or Feb 2022.
- The Easter Lake North Shore Project Campaign has raised over \$1.67 Million as of 11-10-21. It was asked how large the accessible pontoon boat would be – it will be around 22'-24' long and will be able to accommodate 12 wheelchairs.

Extended Planning Session scheduled for: Thursday, January 6th, 2022 at JPNC
10:00 AM-4:00 PM

Board & Chair Remarks

Cataldo: When will Bond letting begin and will there be overlap with the 2012 Bond?

Leopold: It will take another 1-1.5 years to spend the remaining 2012 Bond funds – at the end of 2022 we should have a final report of the 2012 Bond Expenditures, update the pie chart showing fund allocation, and pay outstanding debts with the Iowa Heritage Foundation.

Crane: I am super happy, excited, and want to thank all who voted to pass the \$65 Million Bond!

CLOSED SESSION

- #21-1115 Moved by **Ryan Crane** to go into closed session pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.5(j) to discuss the purchase or sale of particular real estate only where premature disclosure could be reasonably expected to increase the price the governmental body would have to pay for that property or reduce the price the governmental body would receive for that property.
Vote Yea: **Crane, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Altringer, Lewis**
Members Absent:

Closed Session Attendees: Katie Stoklasa, Rich Leopold, Ryan Crane, Cassie Cook, Doug Sheeley, Kate Clark, Greg Lewis, Natalie McFarlane, Jill Altringer

Action on closed session:

Moved by Mollenhauer to return to open session.

Vote Yea: **Crane, Altringer, Lewis, Mollenhauer, Cataldo**

Members Absent:

Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at **6:56** p.m.