

**Wapello County Conservation Board**  
**Regular Meeting Notice**  
**Thursday January 16, 2025**  
**5:30 PM Meeting**  
**Pioneer Ridge Nature Center (1339 HWY 63, Bloomfield)**  
**Minutes**

**Call to Order:**

John called the meeting to order at 5:30PM

**Roll Call:**

John Henscheid, Aaron Ruff, Beth Doggett, Sophie Rotole, Jeff Layton (zoom)

**Staff Present:**

Rick Tebbs, Paul Totten, Sara Runayn, Amanda Jones, and Cari Nicely

**Approval of Agenda:**

Aaron moved to approve the agenda, Beth seconded, approved.

**Approval of Previous Monthly Meeting Minutes:**

Aaron moved to approve the previous month's meeting minutes, Beth seconded, approved.

**Recognition of Guests:**

None.

**Claims:**

- WCCB claims for the month of December were submitted for approval.

Aaron moved to approve the WCCB claims for the month of December, Beth seconded, approved.

- The American Gothic House Center (AGHC) claims and revenue for the month of December were submitted for approval.

Aaron moved to approve the AGHC claims and revenue for the month of December, Beth seconded, approved.

**Old Business:**

- **Campground Host Update**

There has been no new applicants for the campground host, the current applicants have checked in on applications. The board would like to meet applicants. Amanda will contact them and invite them to the next meeting.

- **24/25 Fiscal Year Budget**

Rick will be out of town, Amanda will attend the budget meeting with the Board of Supervisors next week. Rick invited the board to join. They will check their schedule. The meeting will be held next Thursday at 2:00PM.

- **Pioneer Ridge Nature Center Displays**

Sara met with McCollough designs, reviewed the nature center design plans, and discussed concerns brought forth by the board. He will create a new design packet and add a la cart options for the board to do displays gradually.

Sara also met with Colby Streeby about starting a youth conservation board. There may be some funding available for the group through REAP and it would be a great way to get the youth involved in conservation minded topics. The board was very supportive of the idea. It would likely start in the fall of 2025.

Sara spoke to the board about another high school student interested in working at the nature center for school credit. She will be meeting with him soon.

#### **New Business:**

- **Approve By Laws**

Rick distributed by laws to the board for review. Aaron moved to table, Beth. The board will table until next meeting for the board to review the by-laws.

- **Approve Cabin Rental Agreements**

Beth moved to approve the standing cabin rental agreements, Sophie seconded, approved.

- **2025 Campground Pricing**

Rick spoke about people asking about cabin prices for the upcoming season. The board discussed the new amenities and compared the new campground to surrounding campgrounds. They want to reflect the recent upgrades while keeping the campground affordable. Beth moved to price the campsites at \$32 a night, Aaron seconded, approved.

- **Advertise for Operation Supervisor replacement due to retirement**

Rick asked for approval to advertise for the Operation's Supervisor position as Paul nears retirement. There is no set day. Aaron moved to advertise for the position, Beth seconded, approved.

- **Board Member Appointment to Heritage Board**

Marsha recently stepped down from the heritage board leaving a vacancy for a WCCB member, Rick extended the offer to WCCB members. Aaron volunteered to join the Heritage Board and represent WCCB.

- **Additional week of vacation for Director**

Rick spoke to the board about some upcoming personal matters that may greatly affect his vacation time. He currently has three weeks. Aaron moved to give Rick an additional week of vacation upon his anniversary date in March.

- **Board Approval of Longevity Pay**

It recently came to the Director's attention that employees had not been receiving longevity pay after being moved to salary. Aaron moved for the affected employees to receive back pay for the year they had not received after being switched to hourly, Beth seconded, Approved.

- **2025 Annual Conference- Okoboji September 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>**

Rick encouraged the board to attend before we host in 2027. Rick has been meeting with Mahaska County discussing plans for the 2027 conference.

#### **American Gothic Board Updates**

Cari informed the board on updates for the gothic house.

#### **Staff Reports and Comments:**

Amanda spoke to the board about the low rental rate of the camping cabins. In 2024 the camping cabins were only rented 13 times. This would be a great time to update the camping cabins. She spoke about the trend of glamping and how it has become very popular. The upgrades would range roughly \$2,000-\$3,000 and include a tv, new bed, furniture, upgraded wifi, and more amenities. The board agreed it was a good idea and would like to look at also upgrading the other cabins in time.

**Conservation Board Comments:**

Amanda spoke about upgrading cabins and the board

**Adjournment:**

Beth moved to adjourn at 6:47 PM, Aaron seconded, the meeting adjourned.