

**Wapello County Conservation Board**  
**Regular Meeting Notice**  
**Monday July 14<sup>th</sup> , 2025**  
**5:30 PM Meeting**  
**Pioneer Ridge Nature Center (1339 HWY 63, Bloomfield)**  
**Agenda**

**Call to Order:**

Jeff called the meeting to order at 5:30PM.

**Roll Call:**

John Henscheid, Jeff Layton, Aaron Ruff, Sophie Rotole, and Beth Doggett

**Staff Present:**

Rick Tebbs, Paul Totten, Amanda Jones, Cari Nicely, John Scott, Mike McCall, and Sara Runyan

**Approval of Agenda:**

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

**Approval of Previous Monthly Meeting Minutes:**

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

**Recognition of Guests:**

Todd Carrol

Todd Carrol came to speak to the board about access to his property that borders Sycamore Wildlife Area along the old railroad right-of-way. There is some clarity needed about boundary lines along the railroad right-of-way. Todd is wanting to clean up his area and rebuild the fence, he would like the board to consider selling their part of the railroad right-of-way. This would allow Todd to clean the site and redo the fence to give the public a clear boundary where the public land ends. The current fence boundary does not fully encompass the land WCCB owns.

Discussion followed over whether or not the board could sell the property due to it being a mitigation site, the ability for Todd to clean up the railroad right-of-way on the WCCB side, and the possibility that the fence is the responsibility of the DOT.

Rick will contact the DOT and discuss the fencing in reference to who is responsible for maintaining the fence and proceed from there.

**Claims:**

- **Conservation**

Aaron moved to approve the conservation claims for the month of July, Beth seconded, approved.

- **Gothic House**

John moved to approve the AGHC claims for the month of July, Aaron seconded, approved.

**Old Business:**

- **Campground Update**

There is some remaining work to be completed by Vicker; leak in the bathroom and light in the shelter. Staff is currently putting up shade structures at the sites. Supervisors requested all claims be completed in the 24/25 fiscal year, Rick has not received the checks yet. Once the checks are cashed Amanda can complete the final reimbursement request from the state of Iowa.

## **New Business:**

- **Primitive Camping Rates**

The Director asked the board to assess the primitive campground rates. The primitive camping rates did not change with the campground opening. Discussion followed over neighboring primitive campground pricing. Aaron moved to increase primitive camping rates from \$10 to \$20 a night, John seconded, approved.

Amanda asked the board for clarification on the additional tent at campsites. In the past, additional tents were allowed for a \$5 fee. Currently that is not an option, and only one "camping unit" is allowed per site. Board discussion followed over what members of the public are currently asking for, pricing, and where the tents were allowed to be.

John moved to allow one camper and one tent (two camping units total) for no additional fee, but indicated on the reservation, Aaron seconded, approved.

- **Approval of New County Policies**

The board of supervisors have adopted new county employee policies for employee mileage reimbursement and bid opening.

The bid policies states that bids must be opened by the auditor, the board discussed having changes made to reflect state code stating that bids must be opened by the Conservation Board. Aaron moved to adopt the policies with the change that the Conservation Board open bids for the conservation board in place of the Auditor. John seconded, approved.

The county has proposed adopting the IRS mileage reimbursement guidelines. The county guidelines do not include the stipulation that if a county vehicle is available for use, and the employee drives a personal vehicle, the mileage will be reimbursed at 21 cents a mile. The board discussed. Aaron moved to adopt the mileage reimbursement policy with the additional IRS stipulation on personal vehicles, John seconded, approved.

- **Rainbow Bridge**

Kolby Mercer sent a PowerPoint detailing a rainbow bridge and grant opportunity. Sara and Kolby had recently been discussing a sensory trail near the nature center, but the trail would need a bridge. The length of the bridge would affect cost. The board discussed the bridge and its alignment with the conservation board's mission. The board will not pursue the grant at this time, but is willing to look into other bridge options for the sensory trail.

- **Approve Water Garden Bill**

The second half of the water garden bill was brought to the board for review. The bill is to finish the water garden work being done by a volunteer. The bill totals \$4,438.81. Aaron moved to approve the remaining water garden bill, John seconded, approved.

- **Membership to ITIP**

Amanda would like to obtain an ITip membership for the conservation department. Cari explained that the AGHC is already a member, and Amanda would have access to a lot of benefits with membership. Discussion followed regarding pricing. Aaron approved an ITip membership for the conservation department, John seconded, approved.

- **360 Imagery of Des Moines River**

The Iowa DNR recently hosted a Zoom meeting for county conservation boards along the Des Moines river. The meeting discussed a company obtaining 360 imagery of the Des Moines River. This imagery would work similarly to google maps. The DNR is covering half of the price of the project, and requesting county conservation boards who would like to participate to pay a percentage. Wapello County's percentage would be roughly \$2,600. Discussion followed over benefits of buying in to the program. Rick will continue to gather

information about the project and pass it along to the board as it becomes available. Aaron moved to allow Rick to make the decision without board approval to join into the program if the staff and director deem it a good fit for the department, John seconded, approved.

### **American Gothic Board Updates**

Cari updated the board about what will be happening this summer at the AGHC. This fiscal year the AGHC saw over 32k visitors, not including those who stopped during RAGBRAI.

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

Sara dispensed McCollough Design packets to the board. She will be meeting with McCollough Design soon to discuss the a la cart pricing detailed in the packet. Once the pricing is established, Amanda and Sara will begin working on fundraising in the community for the project.

Sara asked the board to consider asking the Board of Supervisors to transition the seasonal naturalist to a year round part time naturalist position. She discussed the need for this position and the benefits of hiring a part time employee instead of an AmeriCorps Member. She discussed the financial aspect of this position and the amount the budget would need to be amended to support this position moving forward.

AmeriCorps is asking to know soon if we want another position in the fall. The board will consider this and discuss at the next board meeting.

Rick is working with contractors for storm damage at the Eddyville dunes, have to have estimates before insurance pays.

Supervisor Zeigler touched base with Rick about adding conservation board to the county's comprehensive plan. May be an additional 20k. They could also possibly do the plan in house.

### **Conservation Board Comments:**

### **Adjournment:**

Aaron moved to adjourn the meeting, John seconded, meeting adjourned at 6:50PM.