

Harrison County Conservation Board
Monthly Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 6, 2024
Willow Lake

The Harrison County Conservation Board (HCCB) held its regular May meeting on Monday, May 6, 2024 at the Willow Lake Nature Center. President Nate Epperson called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Those members present were Ben McIntosh, Kris Pauley, Kimberly Nunez, and Danelle Myer. Also present were Natural Resource Technician Thad Pothast, Operations Supervisor Mike Weis, Supervisor Tony Smith, and Director Scott Nelson. Visitors were Don Blackford, Stephanie Blackford, Althea Harwood, Rebecca Wilkerson, Gary Wilkerson, Leana Goodrich, and Lynn Goodrich.

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Minutes, and Bills was made by McIntosh, seconded by Nunez. Motion carried.

Public Comments. Introductions were made by all in attendance. The Board heard and listened to the visitors on their comments and concerns. No action was taken.

Nelson gave the following Updates:

- The Harrison County Pheasants Forever Chapter presented the HCCB with a check in the amount of \$10,000 to partner in the acquisition of the Doidge Wildlife Area. This brings the total amount of project funding to \$100,000, with the total amount needed at \$120,000.
- A budget amendment was submitted for the Trust and General Fund. Both accounts are requesting uncaptured revenues to be spent. The Public Hearing on the amendment requests will be on May 16th.
- Staff poured a 12 ft x 45 ft boat ramp at Schaben Park while the water levels are so low.
- Pothast participated in the Loess Hills Fire Partners burn week in the norther hills region.
- A Spring Open House was held on May 1st with 125 people participating in a tree give away, facepainting by Sara Epperson, and hotdog/chips/water supplied by the local grocery stores.
- Upcoming:
 - Nelson will be attending the Iowa County Conservation System (ICCS) Board of Directors meeting in Des Moines on May 9.
 - Summer Inters will be starting in the next couple of weeks.

The Board discussed the Kline Feedlot proposal that was presented at the April meeting. The Board was not in favor of having a large, confined animal feeding operation (CAFO) on any border of a public area due to the inevitable odor problems along with the diminished outdoor experience by the user. In the spirit of being a good neighbor, there was a consensus of the group that Nelson produces a letter to the Klines, and to meet with them, in order to discuss possibilities of other locations, possible, planting of trees, etc.

Nelson presented Resolution 2024-2 for submission of a grant to the Gilchrist Foundation to partner in the acquisition of the Doidge Wildlife Area. The grant request is in the amount of 36,500. After discussion, a motion was made by Pauley, seconded by Myer, to approve the Resolution. Motion carried.

Nelson presented the Board of Supervisors Loan Agreement AMENDMENT #1 for approval and signatures. This agreement is to allow the HCCB to access the remaining loan amount for Phase II, which is the demolition of the old shop/offices, grading, new maintenance shop, water distribution well, parking lot extension, roadway alignment. The agreement also extends the loan period by three years, ending on June 30, 2031. A motion to approve the Amendment #1 loan agreement was made by Pauley, seconded by McIntosh. Motion passed unanimously.

Nelson presented updated information concerning the needing of an engineering firm to assist the HCCB in navigating the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) due to being a public water supply entity. Bolten/Menk has agreed to design and administer the project at the cost of a one-time sum of \$15,000. The cost of the well itself is not included. After discussion, a motion to approve Bolten/Menk to engineer the project was made by Nunez, seconded by Pauley. Motion carried.

The Natural Resource Technician position at the Welcome Center produced 10 applications, of which 5 were interviewed. All were great candidates, but Scott Epperson of rural Magnolia was chosen by the interview team to fill the position. Mr. Epperson will begin his duties on Monday, May 20th with a salary of \$40,700/year plus standard county benefits. A motion was made by McIntosh, seconded by Nunez to approve the hiring of Scott Epperson to fill the vacant position of Resource Technician. President Epperson abstained. Motion carried.

With incoming storm warnings, the Board chose to not act at this time on the Strategic Master Plan. They will provide Nelson with feedback by May 20th so he can compile and send it to Bolten/Menk before the June 3rd meeting.

The Executive Director committee comprised of McIntosh and Epperson updated the Board on the search process.

Department Reports were reviewed.

In Other/Future: The next meeting will be on June 3rd at the Welcome Center. Salary recommendations and Fall Conference information will be on the agenda. The July meeting will be on the 8th instead of the 1st.

With no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 pm was made by Pauley.

Nate Epperson, President

Kris Pauley, Vice-Pres

Danelle Myer, Secretary