

OSCEOLA COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD MINUTES

February 16, 2021

The Osceola County Conservation Board met pursuant to the law electronically via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, with the following members present: John Corbett, Ann Byers, John Schmidt, Jason Otto, and Zach Marco.

Absent: Jerry Helmers, Supervisor's Liaison

Staff present: Nick Schmalen, Director

Visitors: Ty Schultz, Osceola SWCD; Justin Trout, NRCS; Chris Hattendorf, C&B Operations

The meeting was opened at 7:00 P.M. by John Schmidt, Chairperson.

A motion was made by John Corbett, seconded by Zach Marco, to approve the agenda with moving some of the discussion of agenda item #8 (Tractor Bids Revisited) to after item #2 (approval of the Agenda), and item #5 (Loof Farm Discussion) to after agenda item #3 (approval of the Minutes). All voted "AYE," motion carried.

Chris Hattendorf presented information on the John Deere Tractor that he had bid for consideration by the Osceola County Conservation Board. He refigured the bid for the tractor, and got the price down to \$90,000.00 to trade.

A motion was made by Ann Byers, seconded by Jason Otto, to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. All voted "AYE," motion carried.

Discussion was held on the Loof Farm, and if the Conservation Board wished to continue pursuing the Conservation Farm idea or go in a different direction. All Board members got a chance to state their opinions, with all of them being in favor of attempting to work with the Osceola Soil and Water Conservation District to turn the South quarter of the property into a Conservation Demonstration Farm. Director Nicholas Schmalen was also allowed to give his opinion and stated he would rather see the property converted into habitat over a period of several years, as that is what the will of Cecil Loof stated it was to be used for. Nick will get together with Ann, and they will look at the draft plan to if/where it could be adjusted to maximize habitat benefits.

A motion was made by Zach Marco, seconded by John Corbett, to pay the attached claims. All voted "AYE," motion carried.

Zach Marco informed the Board that the Ocheyedon Catfish Club was looking at updating/replacing/moving the Ocheyedon Sign located at the Ocheyedon North Y Rest Area.

The Osceola County Conservation Board's Administrative Policies were reviewed, with discussion centered on the Cell Phone Stipend for Employees. A motion was made by John Corbett, seconded by Zach Marco, to increase the cell phone stipend to \$45/month. All voted "AYE," motion carried. Director Nicholas Schmalen will amend the policy for approval at the next meeting.

The bids for replacing the 5603 Tractor were discussed again, with Director Nicholas Schmalen informing the Board that the Osceola County Board of Supervisors increased the budget to allow a purchase of a tractor up to \$87,000 for FY 2021/2022. He also informed the Board that he did get another bid, as requested by the Osceola County BOS, for a New Holland T6.165 that came up to \$87,500.00 to trade. As the New Holland bid and the new bid from C&B Operations were still more money, the Board stuck with the decision to purchase the Kubota from Jaycox Implement.

The Troutfest event that was held on January 30 was discussed. Director Nicholas Schmalen informed the Board there were 118 registered participants for the event.

A motion was made by John Corbett, seconded by Zach Marco, to adopt the following Mission Statement. "The Osceola County Conservation Board's mission is to preserve and enhance our natural resources by providing opportunities that improve the public's connection to the natural environment through programs of environmental education, ecosystem management, and outdoor recreation." All voted "AYE," motion carried.

Discussion was continued on removal of the ability of people to hunt at Willow Creek County Park. A motion was made by Jason Otto, seconded by Zach Marco, to deem the area west of the Driveway at Willow Creek County Park as a County Park, No Hunting Allowed. All voted "AYE," motion carried. Signs will be made and installed on the property to allow enforcement of this rule change.

Director Nicholas Schmalen submitted the Monthly Schedule.

Under General Board Business, the Loof Memorial Conservation Scholarship was discussed.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Zach Marco, seconded by John Corbett, to adjourn at 8:39 P.M. All voted "AYE," motion carried.

Nicholas J. Schmalen, Director

Jason Otto, Chairperson