

Tippecanoe County Park and Recreation Board
Minutes of February 3, 2021
Tippecanoe County Office Building – Tippecanoe Room
20 North Third Street
Lafayette, IN 47901

Present: Board members Denny Mellon, Mike Gery, Karen Mitchell, Dave Luhman and Opal Kuhl. Also in attendance were Matt Salsbery, Paula Bennett and staff members Randy Lower and Allen Nail.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Mike Gery.

November minutes were unanimously approved on a motion by Denny Mellon and seconded by Opal Kuhl.

Special meeting minutes:

11-4-2020 - Minutes were unanimously approved on a motion by Opal Kuhl and seconded by Denny Mellon.

11-17-2020 - Minutes were unanimously approved on a motion by Opal Kuhl and seconded by Denny Mellon.

Election of 2021 Officers:

Mike Gery asked for nominations.

- President: Mike Gery motioned to retain John Gambs as President, seconded by Denny Mellon, carried unanimously.
- Vice President: Denny Mellon motioned to retain Mike Gery as Vice President, seconded by Opal Kuhl, carried unanimously.
- Executive Secretary: Denny Mellon motioned that the person holding the position of Superintendent will act as Executive Secretary of the Park Board, seconded by Opal Kuhl, carried unanimously.

Claims were reviewed and unanimously approved on a motion by Denny Mellon and a second by Opal Kuhl.

Opening of Cash Rental Bids: As of the time of the meeting, 3 bids were submitted for the 25 acres across from the entrance of Ross Hills Park. Bids will be taken until 4pm today and the office is staffed to accept bids until that time. Bids will be opened after 4 pm and the highest bidder will be contacted. Two appraisals were completed on the land and the average of the median fair market rental value of the two appraisals is \$237.50 per acre. The highest bid should be 90% of FMV (\$213.75) per acre. Per statute, any accepted bid less than 90% would require public notice. All bids will be available for public

inspection at the Park Board Office during regular office hours and masks are required. Accommodations can be made for public inspection outside of regular hours. Denny Mellon motioned for the Park Board to take all bids submitted by 4 pm today under advisement. The highest bidder will be contacted and terms of the agreement discussed with the bidder. The agreement will then go before the Board. Opal Kuhl seconded, carried unanimously.

Appointments to the Park Foundation Board: Allen contacted Esther Chosnek and she has agreed to serve another term on the Board. Allen also spoke to Dave Luhman and he has also agreed to serve on the Board. Opal Kuhl motioned to nominate Dave Luhman to serve on the Foundation Board. Denny Mellon seconded, carried unanimously. Opal moved that Esther Chosnek be reappointed to the Park Foundation Board. Denny Mellon seconded, carried unanimously.

Old Business:

2020 Budget – The Board reviewed the final 2020 budget report outlining total expenses for the year, monies that will be returned to the General Fund and monies that will be encumbered for projects and expenses in 2021.

2020 Review – Randy Lower spoke to the Board and reviewed accomplishments in 2020. One of the largest projects at Ross Camp was the re-roof of Assembly Hall. New steel siding was placed on the upper portion of the perimeter of the lower Battlefield Museum, replacing badly weathered T-111 panels. Also at BF Park, the chapel received new fascia boards and gutter repairs. The foundation blockwork on the west side of the Maintenance Servicenter was repointed, shrubbery was removed and the block was sealed to keep water/moisture out of the shop. The second maintenance barn was repaired to alleviate leakage areas. Randy acknowledged the effort of Jed Wright and Tom Shipley taking the lead and completing all of these projects in-house. Pit toilets at Mar-Len Park and the Fort were remediated and removed.

Encumbered funds from 2020 will be used to: (1) Replace the BF Monument lights. Existing fixtures have been in place for several decades and are energy inefficient. (2) The Ross Camp driveways will be patched and resealed all the way back to the campground. (3) The Battlefield Environmental Ed Building (retreat center) will receive new doors and a set of windows. (4) Plastic barricades were purchased for pedestrian and/or traffic control at the Amphitheater. (5) Funds were also encumbered for design work to enhance Tecumseh Trails Park. Allen added a thank you to Randy for his effort in securing bids for these projects and for his “get it done” attitude.

New Business:

- Fees, Charges, Policies & Rates for 2021: Staff has recommended that rates and policies remain the same for 2021. A nominal increase at Ross Camp could occur in 2022 but at this time, a fee

increase is not warranted. Denny moved to approve the 2021 rental fees as presented, Opah Kuhl seconded, carried unanimously.

- 2021 Budget Report: The Board reviewed the 2021 operating budget and the January budget report. There were no questions or concerns. Allen is optimistic that the department will be able to sustain operations in 2021 within the approved budget.
- 2021 Events Status: The Feast is currently scheduled for the 2nd week in October. Indiana Fiddlers' has moved their event to August. Camp WACK (Water Adventure Camp for Kids) hopes to hold their event to July if health conditions allow and is seeking permission from the Board to utilize BNA. Denny Mellon moved to allow Camp WACK to use BNA during the second week in July 2021. Opal Kuhl seconded, carried unanimously.
- Superintendent's Report:

TCHA has expressed an interest in displaying the original BF eagle at the Museum. The eagle would remain PB property but on display for public enjoyment and to tell its history. TCHA will provide Allen with a document they use when displaying artifacts. Matt would review the agreement and then submit it to the Board for review.

The aluminum welds on the new eagle were damaged during transport from Detroit. The company has picked up the eagle for repairs and will then return it to the BF when it is fixed.

DNR will go to the State Budget Committee to pursue resuming the Next Level Trails grant that was put on hold due to the financial impact of Covid-19. Allen is unsure of specific details but wants to pursue the finishing touches on the trail design at BNA.

Allen is working with HR to make minor adjustments to the Assistant Maintenance Director position in order to post the position; it will be advertised internally and externally.

- Miscellaneous: Commissioner Tom Murtaugh joined the meeting and updated the Board on the current financial status of the County as it relates to parks funding opportunities. He indicated that while it is a fluid situation, it currently appears that Tippecanoe County has not been as severely impacted by COVID-19 shortfalls as some other counties. He encouraged Allen and Randy to get together with Council reps in advance of the 2022 Budget Hearings.
- Allen thanked Paula Bennett and Max Walling for their help in airing the meeting and for the use of the Tippecanoe Room.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM.

Minutes compiled by Mary Barrett.