

MINUTES
Ashland County Forestry and Recreation Committee
Ashland County Forestry Department
304 West Michigan Street, Butternut, WI 54514
September 6, 2023

Members Present: Marty Vitek, Kathy Schutte, Louis Carl, John Weiner, Gary Mertig

Others present: Forest Administrator Chris Hoffman, Assistant Forest Administrator Tom Ernst, Forestry Office Manager Shana Curry, Avery Jehnke, Ron Stzyndor, Dick Pufall

Present on zoom: Dan Grady, Mary McPhetridge

Kathy Schutte called the meeting to order at 8:56 A.M. and took roll call.

Motion by Gary M. to approve the September 6, 2023 agenda. 2nd by Marty V. Motion Carried.

Chamber of Commerce - Mary states that they have had a great tourist season so far. Fall is the new summer because of all of the activities including Whistlestop, Applefest, Red Clay Classic, etc. Fall color has been growing. People just show up if the weather is nice. They are running ads on Minnesota public radio and tv ads on the Duluth stations. Working on a new visitor guide. Some sad news to report is that the mural that sits West to the courthouse was vandalized. They are working on doing a reward for someone who has information regarding this.

Motion to amend the July 5, 2023 minutes to add information as to what was amended in the previous meeting's minutes. Motion by Louis C. 2nd by Marty V. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the July 5, 2023 amended minutes by Marty V. 2nd by John W. Motion carried.

No fishery report.

No wildlife report.

Avery Jehnke states that the DNR working with the county forest has hit a lull due to other work. DNR is having an audit of state land timber sales. All their timber is certified. Spongy moth defoliation has hit a record in Bayfield County. Fire danger in other areas of the state is persistent. A lot of the state is in a drought due to abnormally dry conditions. They sent firefighters out to different states to help out with fires. Partnership meeting with the forestry department will be happening in September.

Ron Stzyndor gave the snowmobile/ATV report. They have a new treasurer, Jim Meisenheimer. They have been working with Chris on the SNARS program. They have been having meeting every month. They only issue that they are having is that the tucker drivers are not covered by the insurance that they purchased for comp. If there was an accident, damages would be covered, but not the driver. All of the tuckers have been gone over and repaired for the upcoming season. They moved the equipment to a building in Mellen.

Chris talked with Bruce Joanis about the Rec officer report. He states that it's business as usual.

Chris gave the administrators report. The first item was the Variable Acreage Share Loan. This is an annual resolution. We borrow some money from the state to put into our budget. It gets paid back with timber revenue. Motion by Marty V. 2nd by Kathy S. Motion carried.

Second item is the 2024 work plan. This is an annual plan. The plan portion doesn't change much. We add projects and take projects off as they come and go. The one thing that changes the most is the acres of county forest that gets assessed. Motion by Gary M. 2nd by Louis C. Motion carried.

The final item on the list is the timber sales for December. Motion by Kathy S. 2nd by Marty. Motion carried.

Chris states that the timber markets are terrible. The worst he has seen in his forestry career. He is anticipating that by break up 2024, things will be improved.

Expense vouchers were looked at and signed by the committee.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 1, 2023 at 9 a.m. at the Butternut Village Hall.

Motion to adjourn by Kathy S. 2nd by Marty V. Motion carried and meeting was adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

Submitted by Shana Curry
Ashland County Forestry and Recreation Office Manager