



LAGRANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD  
MINUTES  
September 23, 2021  
7:00PM  
Pine Knob Clubhouse

**PRESENT:** Bob Arnold, Julia Wolheter, Eric Maginn

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mary Franke, George Dewald, Emily Wolfe, Steve McKowen, Steve Engleking,  
Mr. Wolheter

**MINUTES:** Eric Maginn moved and Julia Wolheter seconded a motion to approve the minutes from the August 26, 2021 meeting. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. Mike Metz Fen LWCF Project – The boardwalks are almost done. The bridge still needs constructed. Kevin Northup has been out to start laying the limestone trails. Recent heavy rains have delayed trail work for a bit. George Dewald is hoping (weather & time permitting) to have the trails complete by November of this year.
- B. Track Steer Quotes – George Dewald presented 3 quotes for review.  
All three were test-drove on Tuesday. All 3 are fairly comparable. Expense would be entered into our vehicle rotation and traded when due for a new one. Attachments included are: Bucket, pallet forks, grapple hook, post auger, and cutter/bushhog. These attachments prove necessary for the kind of work the Parks Dept. does and would allow freedom to do more work ourselves within our schedule rather than pay for rentals or hire others. We can forgo the new car in next years rotation to add \$36,500 towards the purchase, with the balance to hopefully come from the Commissioner’s Capital Fund with approval. Timeline: board approves their selection tonight, commissioners approve, then order. If the order is placed in the next 2 weeks, expected delivery would be March 2022.  
John Deere \$7,488 – George Dewald recommends for approval. Better safety features, extended warranty, reverse fan option, better control, heavier quality, history of prompt service, ability to do some repair work in house, highest resale value when trading, smoother ride.  
New Holland \$80,007 – George Dewald learned that this can tend to have problems with the hydraulic system over time. Otherwise, it handled very well during the test drive.  
Kubota \$72,500 – This unit was a little lighter than the others; it can do the job but maybe not as well or for as long.  
Julia Wolheter moved and Eric Maginn seconded a motion to accept George Dewald’s recommendation to approve the quote for the John Deere 325G Trackloader. Motion carried. Will be brought before the Commissioners for approval at the next meeting on October 4, 2021.
- C. Delt Pavilion – Mary Franke received an email from Kurt Bachman regarding the Big Long Lake property. Kurt Bachman’s communication with the heir of the previous property owners sounds promising. Once formally approved, the property will be appraised and sold at auction. The money will be given to the Parks Department to be used for construction of new Delt pavilion and be named “Greenwood Pavilion” in honor of the family. Mary Franke has also met with the Dekko Foundation for the interview portion of the submitted grant request for the new pavilion. There hasn’t been a decision yet.

## NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Award – Mary Franke traveled to Indianapolis today, with Mike Metz and Kathy Hopper, to receive the Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence for the Mike Metz Fen/Duff Lake Fen Restoration Project. Mary Franke accepted the award on behalf of the LaGrange County Parks Dept. and gave a short powerpoint presentation sharing the project process and results. Mary shared that several people approached her and commented on a wonderful project, and they will plan to visit the park when they travel this way. Overall, it was a nice event to attend. On a side note, the driving conditions were horrible.
  
- B. Delt Water Test – August routine water tests showed Coliform and E. Coli in water samples. Repeat samples were taken with poor results. George Dewald sanitized the well system for more repeat samples that tested fine. September routine water tests resulted in the same process. George Dewald sanitized the well system again today for water samples to be taken again next week. IDEM inspector visited Delt Park and doesn’t have any idea why; the inspector stated that an increase of bad water tests has been noted in the county. The current well at Delt was installed in 1993 and is 4” at 30’ deep. Sanderson Well Drilling visited and looked at the well system. Replacing the well would cost around \$8,500.
  
- C. Events/Programs
  1. Music in the Park – Here nor There performed at Dallas Sweetgum Pavilion on September 18, 2021. Mary Franke attended and reported the attendance to be about 12 people. Previously, both Grey Autumn and Second Wind Bands had 20-25 people at each concert. Disappointment was expressed in this summer event. If it is tried again next year, grants will be applied for to cover the costs of band fees.
  2. Not So Spooky Trail Event – Planned for October 21 and 22, 2021 with two sessions, 3-4:30pm and 5:30-7pm. The Friends of LaGrange County Parks will be there to help. The Dekalb Horsemen have agreed to be there to provide horse-drawn wagon rides through the woods. Event has been posted on facebook. Event will be held at Maple Wood.
  3. Free Canoeing Day – Event was at Pine Knob Park on Saturday, August 28, 2021 from 10am – 2pm offering free canoe rides in 30 minute sessions on Meter Lake. Leslie Arnold didn’t have any interest due to the extreme heat. Leslie is planning another Free Canoeing Day this Saturday, September 25, 2021
  
- D. Other
  1. Relay for Life Event at Delt Church Park this Saturday, September 25.
  2. Sugar Bush Supplies – Since Maple Syrup Festival was cancelled again this year, this money will be used to purchase stainless steel spiles to replace the plastic. Stainless steel will last forever and are easier to sanitize while the plastic spiles only last a few years. Everyone agreed this is a good idea.
  3. Mary Franke introduced a new “event” for the near future. Albion and Kendallville have implemented a “Story walk trail”. It is typically a half mile loop trail with pages of a story mounted periodically for children to read as they are walking the trail. This sounds like a great idea to try. George Dewald will plan to make the waterproof display boxes for the book pages. We haven’t decided which park or trail to use yet.
  4. Playground Equipment Grant – Results won’t be known until November.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT:**

1. Mary Franke shared a quarterly report of our 2 most used funds, 1179 and 1219, as well as a balance sheet of the separate accounts, for the board to review. Unless something unforeseen is needed, our budget balance should carry us through the end of the year.
2. The board asked about the results of the 2022 Budget. Mary Franke reported that Steve McKowen backed the \$20 wage increase request for the ranger position; however, the increase was approved for \$17.50. Other wage increases were denied in favor of a straight 5% wage increase.

## **CLAIMS:**

Eric Maginn moved and Julia Wolheter seconded a motion to accept September claims as presented. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Wolfe, for Ardala Hepler

EW/ew