

Hill County Park Board Meeting Minutes
Timmons Room, Courthouse
Monday, September 11th, 2023, 5:30 P.M.

NO VOTES WILL TAKE PLACE AS IT WAS NOT PUBLISHED IN THE PAPER OR POSTED FOR THE PUBLIC

Board Members Present: Larry Kinsella, Mark Peterson, Sheri Williams, Tony Reum, Lou Hagner, Pam Wilson, and Park Superintendent Chad Edgar, Chairman Jeff Jensen joined on speakerphone.

Board Members Absent: Jake Strissel, Ursula Brese

Guests: Lowell Alcock, Rose Cloninger, Adam Zinn, Michael Rodriguez NMBI, Tim Leeds

Approval of Minutes: Motion made by Lou to approve minutes with amendments. Seconded by Mark.

Amendments include: Statement from Lou under Committee Appointments- Lou *raised question about Grazing committee appointments, stating "There is not uniform understanding concerning appointment to this committee- Sheri will look into it."*

Public Comments- Lowell commented *as far as the Kallenberger situation going on and the selections of committee reappointments should be chosen more wisely so we don't have conflict later.*

Grazing Committee- Rose stated- *The motion made by Larry and seconded by Tony for the 3-year averages should be Void because its conflict of interest for both of them as it affects them directly. They should have abstained themselves from the vote. After some discussion Mark suggested at the next meeting the 3-year average be revisited and voted on again with Larry and Tony abstaining from the motion if there is one.*

Grazing committee- *defer the Grazing Committee members reappoints to the next meeting.*

Approval of Agenda: Motion made by Lou to approve agenda for discussion only.

Public Comment on Agenda Item/Agenda Requests: NA

Cabin Business: #10 Alkali Springs Lane Cabin Transfer- from Dad who has passed away to Son all paperwork turned in. Move to next meeting to be voted on. He will not need to be present.

Old Business:

Lodge Committee: Met with the Architects at the Lodge. Discussions about what the committee was brainstorming for needs and wants. They had good input for the committee as well, they presented different concepts of different buildings they have done. The group walked around and looked at how to place the building, looking further south for better views. They talked about whether or not to have a second floor, if they don't maybe have a second building that would act in place of the second floor. They also went over the kitchen area. The Architects will come back with several different ideas to choose from. The sprinkler system in the building along with the requirements and whether or not we need a cistern for the sprinkler system. Lighting, plug ins, IT, power, ground source heat or propane were also discussed.

Mark handed out an information packet from Rim Rock for the Board members to go over, the application will be sent back to them letting them know the Board approves.

Lou noted during the interview, that they would present us with places to go for grants but didn't catch where. Mark answered stating Rural development, C-pace- (the county has not approved for use in Hill County), MSU Geothermal- are the places to look at for grants moving forward no background on the MSU Geothermal so Mark will call on them. Lou asked if the meeting with them is September 19th, 2023, at 2 P.M.

New Business:

Committee appointments: Jeff would like each board member to email him their thoughts, with the pros and cons for combining the Rules & Regulations committee and Finance & Planning committee into one committee or to keep them separate.

Internal communications/notices and Public notices: Lou deferred until the next meeting when more members are face to face. Like today we had trouble getting our agenda out and getting everyone informed. The commissioner's calendar and some agenda items are normally published in the newspaper, unfortunately not necessarily all the time as our agenda didn't show up at all. Maybe a newsletter or posting different things or putting an announcement board outside the office. An idea about having four methods of posting: Paper, Radio, Courthouse, and Website access was suggested. Sheri is working on getting the County website up and running. There will be an announcement when it is ready to launch.

Park Fees: Pam talked about the prices she has encountered in other places to just camp. Saying they pay a day use fee anywhere they go from \$20 to \$30 just to tent plus an additional \$10 for their car. Some places have no fee for the first car and \$10 for the second car. Some have specific fees depending on the area you are in. Pam did some calculations on fees, and she presented her findings aloud: Continuing saying she thinks there should be a fee for RV dumping, specifying for disposal mileage and pumping however after looking into it she realized most RV dump sites are free. At the Emporium here in Havre it's free if you're staying and \$5 if you're not camping with them. Other places say free as they assume you are staying with them. She continued to say that she is not in favor of the yearly park pass and broke down the prices stating that if you buy a \$55 seasonal and stay 14 days in 1 spot it is \$3.92 a day. If a senior citizen spends \$35 of a year pass and stays 14 days, it's \$2.50 a day. If you choose the day pass and use it for 14 days, it comes out to \$140. She doesn't see how that makes it fair. She included cabin fees going off an estimate of \$475 for the year and breaking it down its \$1.30 per day or \$40 per month. She wanted to get it up to \$100 a month at \$1000 a year \$2.72 a day or \$ 82.19 a month at \$1250 its \$3.42 a day or \$102.73 a month.

She said she was just trying to bring it up, the cost of living is going up for everybody, but the park is not they are staying the same. She stated that she doesn't know why the park isn't raising the fees.

Mark replied saying a number of years ago when we raised the fees wasn't a time frame when we would revisit the fees. Someone stated next year, for new fees further saying it goes up every 2 years by 3% for Cabin fees only. Chad stated it need to be in the policy if that's the way we want it. In 20 years, we have addressed fees every year leaving them as they are more often than not, but we always try to make a point to do it before the first of the year. Usually in November or December we can tell people what the fees are for the next year. Pam continued saying raising fees can help pay for gas to employees and help get new vehicles in the Park. If you go to a day use fee it will get rid of people placing campers unused for the summer. Monitoring the Day use every day is very expensive. You would have to have a guy there patrolling every day no matter what. Lou suggested that this would be a good thing for each board member to write something up and send it to the finance and planning committee to take a look at.

Committee Reports:

Rules and Regulations Committee: None.

Finance and Planning Committee: None.

Grazing Committee: none

Group Reports:

Cabin Owner's Report: Did their road clean up and a potluck.

Friends of Beaver Creek Park: Not Present

Superintendent Report:

- Park usage relatively slow minus Labor Day weekend which was really busy and went really well.

- Park conditions are relatively dry we received .9” on Labor Day along with cooler nights we are getting dew in the mornings.
- Park work: Kiosk is complete, it looks nice. We still need a sticker for current rates.
- Prep for cattle done, all the signs are up, fence is up, and salt has been dispersed.
- Broken rails around Spring Tanks are being repaired.
- Spring Tank repairs have not started yet. Working on getting prices for the major repairs on the Tanks and prioritizing which repairs we will do as well.
- Firepits have been cleaned 95% cleaned out.
- All remaining camp site posts have been added.
- All district signs have been installed and the Mileage sign is up on the North end.
- Graffiti at first lake has been cleaned up as well as the Community Effort site along with the west side shelter.
- One more camp at Kiwanis before we winterize camp. Kiwanis camps went well this summer.
- Lions brought out gravel over Labor Day.

Claims: Claims will be approved at the next meeting.

Public Comment: Lou spoke to Patrick thanking him for advertising cows on the Park. Saying it did draw people’s attention having an article on the first page.

Lou went with the NRCS Hill County Conservation District when they did the monitoring on their five sites August 11th. It was treated as a training session as well as doing the monitoring. They did make it to all five sites and took advantage of everyone’s skills. These studies don’t monitor production, but they do monitor presence and composition. There was a notable variation from low in the park to the west of the Lions camp. Some areas were average and some areas above average but a lot of that was introduced species improving as you go south.

Rose asked if the Spring Tank repairs were coming out of the \$3. Chad replied saying, yes.

Lowell said he wanted to stress again when filling the committees and boards to choose wisely so we don’t have any problems like we’ve had before. He also requested a copy of the Kallenberger settlements and mediation. Mark stated he made the call to the attorney again today and he’ll have to see when he gets it. Lowell stated its public information and involved a lot of people in the room.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 P.M.

Next meeting: October 2nd, 2023, Timmons Room at Courthouse at 5:30 pm.