

Hill County Park Board Meeting Minutes  
Timmons Room, Courthouse  
Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, 5:30 P.M.

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

**Board Members Absent:** Jake Strissel, Ursula Brese

**Guests:** Lowell Alcock, Rose Cloninger, Renelle Braaten, Will Rawn, Mike Velk, Penny Velk, Robert Williams, Patrick Johnston with HDN

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion made by Mark to approve minutes for August and September. Seconded by Pam. Motion Passed.

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion made by Lou to approve agenda for August and September. Seconded by Mark. Motion Passed.

**Public Comment on Agenda Item/Agenda Requests:**

*Renelle B.* - passed around her statement to the board members and it included the reasons why she is against combining the Rules and Regulations with the Finance and Planning committee.

*Lowell A.* - asked about the three-year average, questioning if it is fair to the Park. Stating he didn't understand it and asked who came up with it. Chad replied, it's been around for a long time. The 3-year average is around to support the Park more than the Ranchers. If the Ranchers don't fulfill their obligation for their allotment, they either have to pay off the remainder of the allotment or they lose the numbers. Basically, losing 1/3 at a time, if they don't graze at all.

*Will R.* - commented, drop the grazing committee, and turn the function over to a fundraising committee distinct from finance. The reason is very simple, there is a danger when you keep doing something long enough you lose sight of your objectives. The Parks' website states that the purpose of the Park is year-round recreation and conservation, it's important to keep a focus on that.

**Cabin Business:** #10 Alkali Springs Lane Cabin Transfer- from Dad who has passed away to Son. Motion made by Lou to approve the transfer. Seconded by Pam. Motion Passed.

#10 Pine Coulee Lane Cabin Transfer- from shared owner to sole owner. Motion made by Lou to approve the transfer. Seconded by Mark. Motion Passed.

**Old Business:**

**Lodge Planning Committee:** The committee has met a couple of times, the most recent was last Monday out at the Lodge. They looked at how the Lodge sat on the property, as well as other placement options. Earlier today they met with A&E who gave the committee a couple of design options that were passed around the room. The two options passed around were one single level and the other had a loft with bedrooms. There is still a struggle with the budget as the cost with inflation is not in our favor. Jeff added that we are trying to make sure we can get the best Lodge we can for what money we will have so working with square footage right now. Mark commented to the room to keep in mind the designs are just samples. Lou showed us a spread sheet he has made for himself to track the money we are needing. For funding the Lodge there is a discrepancy from the Mil Levey and FOBCP. The total funding is \$1,980,000.00 and the total estimated cost not including the tear down or refurbishing the inside is roughly \$2,186,060.00. Lou reached out to two other groups to see if they would be able to help obtain more funding. The Bannock group out of Bozeman usually help with fund raising for the Universities. They helped with the fund-raising campaign for the Tilleman field at Northern and the Hansel group has helped with fund raising campaigns out in Rocky Boy

and Box Elder. They are not able to give a rate at this time without more details. Lou then stated if we could secure \$500,000.00 with some sort of campaign then we would be in a better position than where we are at. Bear Paw Development might be another option to help secure funding as well.

**Grazing Allotments 3-year Averages approval:** Revote due to a conflict of interest. Mark made a motion to approve the Grazing Committees recommendation to use the three-year average allotments. Seconded by Pam. Motion approved. One Opposed.

**Grazing Committee Reappointments from September's Agenda:** A notice for applicants has been posted. It has been posted at the Courthouse on the bulletin boards and also published in the paper to run for two weeks ending October 16<sup>th</sup>. 2023.

**Spring Developments:** The Board approved repair work for Johnny Austin to repair the spring. Johnny Austin put in an estimate for a new Spring it would be between the Lions campground and the Broughs Coulee area. One of the reasons for doing this is for dispersion of the cattle as they will walk for a while to drink out of a stock tank verses the creek. The bid for his new developments is the max the price will be, there is a chance it could be less. The estimate he gave was \$11,000.00. If it gets approved, he can get started right away otherwise it will have to be put off until next year depending on the weather.

Mark asked how far apart from other springs it is. Chad replied stating its quite away from Alkali Springs the other would be in Mooney's Coulee or Blackie Coulee. Mark then asked Chad if he feels there is good flow in that area. Chad stated yes very good flow. Tony added that it would be very beneficial, especially for the South end of the park. Chad said Leon LaSalle took a look at it and it has a lot of water and it's in a good location as well.

Lou made a motion to approve the new Spring Development to go in between the Lions campground and the Broughs Coulee area. Seconded by Mark. Motion passed.

Chad stated repairs to the Taylor Road tank will be getting done. They need to reset and move it slightly. It could be anywhere from \$3,000 to \$4,000. Lou asked if they will be moving it back to the West? Chad replied, No, to the East.

**Park Fees:** Jeff tabled it until November to give the Board time to figure out what they are going to do with the Finance and Planning committee, possibly combining with Rules and Regulations committee as that decision has not been made.

### ***New Business:***

**Internal communications/notices and public notices:** Lou said he is concerned with how we deal with the public and how we communicate internally stating it's a big deal how we do our business. We need to find a way to be more transparent about what we are doing, the meetings we are having, and what is going on in the Park.

Lou listed some ideas he had to keep our selves and the public informed: Reestablish and use the email list for the Park, Park website, a calendar or a what's news on the web site with links to all of the boards and committees with attachments, a physical bulletin board, maybe post things at the post office, public bulletin board at North 40, Bing n' Bobs or IGA. Lou believes that the Park Board needs to share the smaller meetings and conversations that the board members are having with the public.

### **Discussion and Vote on Combining Rules and Regulations (R&R) and Finance and Planning (F&P) Committees:**

When the Committees were established, they did a good job and at this point the Park is in good shape, however the committees are having trouble getting members, and they have only met a few times. Currently there are people on the F&P Committee that don't want to be on it anymore. Jeff stated that he is not here to

ruin anything, he would like to streamline it and make it more efficient, and getting a Committee that's more active should make it more efficient. Jeff opened the topic up for discussion to the Board members.

Mark said in a casual conversation he had with a couple of R&R Committee members, they stated that they don't want to participate on other Committees. There is a chance we might lose two members, hopefully someone is willing to take their place.

Pam stated she wants to see a Committee of the Board. Get rid of the F&P and the R&R, they did a lot of work, but she thinks we need to have more people other than the three that were there plus a board member. We need to find people who are well versed, not all cabin owners and not all grazers or hayers. They can be part of it, but we need a diverse group of people that want to be on a Committee.

Lou spoke about the email he sent to the Park Board members stating that he strongly feels we need to maintain the F&P and R&R Committees as they are. He said the matter of them not meeting is a bit of our own fault. Currently we could pass along the Park fees over to the F&P committee and Chad has a list of things at different times that we need to repair and find funding for. After this Lodge is finished, we seriously need to look at the Bathhouse and what needs to be done. We need to set up a plan for the long run and the committees can help with that.

Lou made a motion to maintain the two committees we have now. Motion died due to no second.

Pam made a motion to combine the Rules and Regulations committee with the Finance and Planning committee. Motion Seconded by Larry. Motion Passed. Opposed by One.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Rules and Regulations Committee:** None.

**Finance and Planning Committee:** None.

**Grazing Committee:** None.

### **Group Reports:**

**Cabin Owner's Report:** None.

**Friends of Beaver Creek Park:** None.

### **Superintendent Report:**

- Park usage is slow as normal after Labor day compounding with the rainy weekends we've had.
- Park conditions have improved incredibly. We had 2" of rain in September and some over Labor day weekend but the cool nights have helped, and the grass is starting to turn green again.
- Cattle numbers are at 1124 cows on the park mostly pairs. We had a smooth start to the season for cattle grazing.
- Park work: we prepared for the colder weather. Winterizing the camp including the Lodge, bathhouse, sprinkler system has all been done.
- Spring Tank cleaning and rail repairs are complete except the some of the tanks that need major repairs.
- Working on getting prices for installing the slab in the barn as well as the spring Tanks.
- Trimming trees in the Park and at Kiwanis has been done.
- Hauling gravel to fix some of the roads for winter.
- Disk Golf baskets have been put away.
- One of the signs in the Park was hit and stolen it was reported to the Sheriff's office.
- Dave finished cleaning out the fire pits, they are 100% cleaned this year.
- Cody Nagal with FWP contacted Chad about installing a water monitoring device in conjunction with DNRC and Rocky Boy to coordinate water from the East Fork Damn into the Park they will be put in a discrete location where they can monitor the flows of the creek. Sharing of the data will be available if we need it.
- Danielle had a shirt made and brought a hat for us to look at. Chad asked the board if we would be interested in selling them again. We can bring prices to the Board at the next meeting.

**Claims:** Lou made a Motion to approve the August Claims. Seconded by Mark. Motion Passed.

Mark made a Motion to approve the September Claims. Seconded by Larry. Motion Passed.

**Public Comment:** Lou asked about the beaver status, Chad said we are having issues at Kiwanis.

*Rose C.* - The cabin owners pay for the land only. They have to pay to fix their own fences and cabins, they also pay a garbage fee. She said they got charged \$37.50 for garbage fees on their lease and again \$49.00 on their taxes. The cabin owners don't get paid for fencing, they don't get road patrol and no road work gets done. They maintain their sites at their own cost and it's a lot. Rose added that she thinks that the apparel is a good idea.

Lowell A.- The cabin owner's lease a 100 x100 patch of dirt it's as nice as we make them. We pump our own toilets and it cost the Park nothing. Cabin rates go up every two years by 3%, there is no end, come up with something fair.

Robert W, - To elaborate on Lowell, our fees (cabin owners') are compounded they go up every year. If more participation is what you are looking for, have public comments after every agenda item.

***The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 P.M.***

**Next meeting:** November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Timmons Room at Courthouse at 5:30 pm.