

**Dickinson County Conservation Board**  
**22785 Nature Center Road, Okoboji, IA**

**5 p.m. Jan. 8, 2020**

**Presiding chair: Steve Anderson**

**Board members: Willia Mueske; Joan Gronstal, via phone**

**Employees: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth**

**Board liaison: Steve Clark; Pam Jordan, via phone**

**Call to order at 5 p.m.**

**Agenda approval:** Gronstal motion with Brooks management plan added, Mueske second. Approved.

**Public comment (limit to 5 minutes):** No public present

**Election of officers:**

-Gronstal motion to have Anderson as chair and Mueske as vice chair for 2020; Mueske second. Approved. Anderson takes over as chair for the remainder of the meeting.

**Consent agenda/items:** Mueske motion to approve, Gronstal second. Approved.

**-Approval of past month's minutes**

**-Recycle report**

**-Environmental education report**

**Dickinson County Conservation Board areas**

**-Brooks sewer line:** A sewer line from the maintenance shop to the sewer line had been freezing. It was camered and found to have three different types of pipe only 3 feet deep that runs under the road. Sorenson would like to replace accessible pipe with PVC in the spring. It's not possible to put the line deeper without breaking up the road, but it could be insulated.

**-Brooks management plan:** The 10-year management plan with Brooks Management LLC has not yet been finalized as details are being worked out. Brooks Management has an issue with the section that states DCCB can terminate the contract at any time without cause. Anderson said he understands the issue without having any cause, but he thinks there should be termination allowed for cause, including breach of contract. Sorenson said a lawyer said that any early termination would most likely cause a lawsuit because "cause" is a gray area. The lawyer has put language together to change that section to allow termination with cause, and the board members agreed that some kind of protection is needed.

Brooks Management would also like DCCB to buy back all equipment and take over leases if there is termination, but Sorenson said if there is cause then there should be no reason that DCCB should have to incur costs in case of termination with cause. The board agreed with that.

Motions are tabled until a final draft of the management agreement is reached.

### **Operations and facility update**

**-Pollinator gift from Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County:** The CFDC has paid for the exhibits in Pollinator Paradise and is now gifting those exhibits to DCCB. Gronstal motion to accept the gift, Mueske second.

Jordan asked if there was a conflict of interest with Tom Maser being CFDC representative as well as being a part of a family donating to the project. There is no conflict.

Approved.

**-Part-time benefits:** DCCB now has four part-time employees that have no holiday pay, no sick time and no vacation benefits. Sorenson would like to keep employees on a moderate wage at less than 30 hours per week, but he sees that is difficult for these employees to make a sufficient living when they can't work their full hours due to holidays or illness. He would like to offer holiday, sick and vacation benefits to part-time employees, but he plans to take this to the Board of Supervisors. Since 30 hours per week is already budgeted, adding these benefits would not add any extra to the budget.

Mueske motion to pursue adding part-time benefits, Gronstal second. Approved.

**-FY2020 proposed budget:** Sorenson presented the proposed 2020 budget that he will also present to the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors.

Anderson asked if there is a massive trails expansion, will there need to be a renegotiation about annual maintenance fees. Sorenson said there will need to be an increase in maintenance fees for FY22 most likely. Jordan said the trails board understands that the maintenance fees will need to be increased as the trails are expanded.

Mueske motion to approve the proposed FY21 budget, Gronstal second, including Sorenson's 3 percent salary increase. Approved.

Sorenson will present to the board of supervisors 1 p.m. Jan. 22.

**Approval of expenses:** Mueske motion to approve expenses, Gronstal second. Approved.

### **General discussion**

-The easement for the old Inn property has been signed and recorded with the county, so there may be movement on that project. If that property does come to DCCB, it should come with an endowment and not impact the DCCB budget hugely.

-A naturalist swap will be held Monday, Jan. 13, at the nature center.

-DCCB will host a district meeting April 15.

-The fall board member conference has been scheduled for Sept. 16-18 in Ames.

**Adjournment:** Mueske motion, Gronstal second. Approved. Adjourn at 6:40 p.m.