

Starke County Park Board
August 13, 2024
Meeting Minutes

Present: R. Ballard, T. Busch, K. Norem & S. Byer

R. Ballard introduced Amie Flora as the new superintendent for the department. Mrs. Flora shared her interests in ecology, forestry, local natural resources and her and her family's love for the outdoors. She looks forward to building relationships with and for the board and the community.

K. Norem made the announcement that, based on the fact A. Flora is her daughter, she will be resigning from the board at the end of this meeting. Further, she stated that she did not participate in the interviewing nor hiring process for the position. She will continue to volunteer for various projects associated with the department. T. Busch made the motion to appoint A. Flora as superintendent, S. Byer seconded, and it passed 3-0 with K. Norem abstaining.

C. Hensell from Kramer beach showed photos of the erosion of the sand from the beach and has requested additional sand for the area anticipating a total of three loads may be necessary. S. Byer suggested looking into Pit Run sand as a nicer, cleaner sand. Two locations were mentioned to research the cost. A. Flora will research and arrange sand for the beach.

Mike Reese from Troyer group gave a presentation on finalizing plans for the renovation project and offered a set of plans considered to be 90% complete for the board's review. The next step will be getting DNR review in approximately 3-4 weeks and then Federal approval in September when the projects can go out for bids. Two amendments were discussed for needing additional funds. Work associated with the Historical Federation requests for information and design commitments to ensure they were matching historical window muntin patterns and meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The cost was \$1,790.00. Secondly, an inspection of the existing mechanical system of the Beach House building is necessary to determine the condition of the sanitary sewer under the building and to the street for current condition. The charge for that is estimated to be \$1,412.00. K. Norem made the motion to accept these two claims. S. Byer made a second motion, and it passed 4-0. Christa Hurley showed photos of the preliminary designs. Discussion was held regarding colors of the exterior and interior of the buildings suggesting it be of lighter colors. Also shared were photos of the playground equipment intended for both sides of the parks. The hope is to have the interior of the beach house completed by winter.

K. Carrier of the Prairie Trail club has requested the addition of another sign that would be approximately 4x6. They will present this at a future date.

A request was made by counsel at the budget workshop that the department acquire bids for installing individual electrical meters at each campground site. T. Busch made the motion to table this until a future meeting where S. Byer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

A. Giuliani gave a lift station status report. She reported that prior to the pumps going down the department spent \$23,000.00 on the initial new pump system. When the pumps failed emergency measures were taken to evaluate the situation, continued pumping the influx of ground water, purchasing of a new pump, and installation resulted in an additional \$22,197.00 expense. The original pumps are in Texas having new motors installed into them. Watermark will then send them to Indianapolis and then back to the park. Watermark will provide the start-up and installation. The only costs the department will incur will be the shipping of the pumps from Texas to Indianapolis. After further discussion, the board agreed to the purchase of a second Liberty pump, have Asbury Water install it until our original pumps are returned. A motion to accept this decision was made by S. Byer, K. Norem seconded, and it passed unanimously.

B. Wakefield of the Starke Co. Forest provided an update on the upcoming timber sale. This will be a sealed bid sale with bids accepted until October 10, 2024. These bids will be opened at the October board meeting. Terms will be 25% downpayment within ten days of the sale and the balance due before logging begins on or by 10/8/2025. Mr. Wakefield also announced the third annual World Environmental Day will be held on June 5, 2025, with the theme being the arts.

A motion to accept the minutes of the July meeting was made by S. Byer, K. Norem seconded, T. Busch opposed. It passed 3-1.

K. Norem motioned to accept the payment of claims with S. Byer seconding and passed 4-0.

K. Norem referenced a meeting with T. Busch, Rick Anderson and others involved regarding the tree erosion at the beach. There was a DNR permit from 2022 to complete the project. However, the scope of it was never completed. She presented a letter for R. Ballard to sign requesting an extension of that permit to the DNR and to be sent out for acceptance.

Bob Aloi of Territorial Engineering has reported construction of the English Lake Kayak project will begin shortly. The second will be constructed at St. Road 23 where the property will be purchased from Dr. & Mrs. Fritz for \$1.00. The letter to be sent to them is as follows:

Dear Dr. & Mrs. Fritz,

This shall serve to commemorate our discussions regarding the sale of a portion of your property (southeast corner) on SR 23 at the Yellow River to be used as a public Kayak Launch. We had discussed this to be a sale of property for \$1.00, that the property would be surveyed at our expense, and the deed drafted also at our expense. A valuation of the property can be completed

as well, if you so desire, and any expense associated with that will also be covered by the Park Board. The actual launch will be constructed by the Kankakee River Basin Yellow River Basin Commission as part of their project that is already planned for at the section of the Yellow River later this year.

We are truly excited about the “partnership” with you both and we know it will be a welcomed addition for the enjoyment of our community. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. Please know you have our most sincere appreciation for this generous gift.

Sincerely,
Signed by the board.

Bill Crase will have the LaPorte County surveyor donate his time for this survey. The deed needs to be paid and K. Norem will donate this as a gift to the county as well as the cost of the valuation of said property.

S. Byer made a motion to accept the letter, with T. Busch making the second and it passed unanimously.

G. Laiter presented costs for consideration of adding an aluminum walk-out to the south pier. If ordered this year the cost would be \$11,881.87. He also stated an arial photo of the pier would be beneficial to include in the bid for next year’s installation. K. Norem suggested contacting Tony Mildice Sr. for that service.

The motion to adjourn was made by S. Byer, R. Ballard seconded, passed 4-0.