

Starke County Park Board
May 14, 2024
Meeting Minutes

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

R. Ballard announced the reappointments of Karl Swihart and Kathy Norem to the Park Board when the required signatures were secured.

S. Byer made the motion to accept the minutes of both the May 11th regular and May 26, 2024 Special Session meetings. Seconded by T. Busch and passed with all ayes.

B. Wakeland of the Forest made a request to have timber harvested this fall in a sale that would include his personal inventory, creating a larger sale and more buyers. R. Ballard will speak to the auditor to confirm the approval and will set up a sale date in the near future. It was reported that 5 loads of stone have been delivered and spread on the walkway up to the marsh areas. World Environmental Day is scheduled for June 5th. There will be walking tours, guest speakers, a hike and free lunch. Everyone is invited.

A Giuliani reported that bids will go out on 6/13/24 for the English Lake kayak launch project. The Auditor's office will assist by distributing the bid packets to interested bidders. The bids will be opened at the July 9th Park Board Meeting. This is a 90-day contract with sustained completion on 10/31 and final completion on Nov. 27, 2024. The donation fund paid \$3,146.75 to Territorial Engineers for the plans, permitting and coordination of this project. The St. Rd. 23 launch will be funded by KRYRBDC who will already be doing a \$1.8 mil project at the location. There will be no additional costs to the department for completion of this launch. Discussion was held on various ways to ensure these sites are maintained and trash collected. They include utilizing groups like the Boy Scouts, Paddlers Group, etc. as well as having people "adopt" these sites for a 12-month period each.

Discuss was held regarding allowing weekend campers to auger and overnight their boats while camping. It was determined there are not enough resources to oversee the potential needs of this situation. The campers will need to put their boats in and out at the public access launch and overnight parking will be provided at the

campground for their boat and trailer. K. Swihart made a motion to accept this decision, seconded by T. Busch and passed with all ayes.

An update on the piers was given by A. Giuliani reporting there are only 2 slips available. The current revenue paid is \$41,066.00, \$19,250.00 awaiting payment. If other two leased, the seasonal total will be \$61,716.00. This amount includes the credits that were used from the 2022 & 2023 season. The full revenue from the pier slips will be appreciated in the 2025 season.

The pier construction should be complete by week's end. It was decided that the renewal for the pier permits should be done every April.

New vendors have been scheduled for nearly every weekend this season at the beach. This will generate additional revenue as each vendor will pay \$25.00 per day for setting up and from increased traffic to the beach.

T. Williams reported being busy getting the beach and campground ready for season to open next weekend. The department now has a cash register that will be used for tracking at the gate house. There is currently one person hired to watch the gate during the open days of Thursday through Sunday, 9-6. Discussion was shared that there needs to be additional personnel hired but T. Williams believes our current staff will work together to ensure the busy times are covered without incurring overtime. T. Williams offers the ledger to the board each month to show where our financial status lies. T. Busch made the motion, seconded by K. Norem to accept the paying of claims and regular bills. Passed with all ayes.

K. Norem mentioned the need for picnic tables at the beach and campground stating the Indiana Housing Community Development Authority has a grant program that will match a fund-raising project up to \$50,000.00. Discussion was shared on the best way to promote getting donations for and the building of picnic tables. K. Swihart suggested going to the VFW to pick up a donation request form, feeling confident they would donate. It was at this time Mr. & Mrs. Gene Pugh offered to donate 20 tables to our cause. Name plaques will be placed on the donated tables as a sign of appreciation of the support. A campaign will begin by posting on the Facebook and County website pages.

It was announced that the Bass Lake Festival will not be holding any of their scheduled events at the beach this year due to a communication lapsed. Last year, the festival committee failed to provide staffing and support for their activities held at the campground and beach resulting in a high expense for county employees to oversee the events. T. Williams sent a letter to the Festival Committee asking for solutions for this season but a response was never received.

Discussion was held regarding how, if and how much of a Veteran's discount could be offered to the campers and beach goes. The board has asked for additional information on the subject to discuss and consider at the next meeting.

K. Norem mentioned there are still people that are interested in purchasing bricks for the Veteran's Memorial. She and K. Swihart will work together to revive the program.

K. Norem and T. Busch will meet with T. Williams next week to assist in preparing the Park Board budget for the 2025 season and be prepared to present it to the board at the next meeting.

T. Busch made a motion to adjourn, second by K. Norem and passed 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM.