

Lincoln County Forestry, Land and Parks Committee
Minutes of Monday, January 12, 2025 @ 8:00 A.M.
Lincoln County Service Center, Room 156
801 N. Sales St., Suite 106, Merrill, WI 54452 **715-539-1034**

Members Present: Nobert Ashbeck, William Bialecki, Greg Hartwig, Ken Wickham

Absent:

Members Excused: Andy Zelinski

Visitors: Lee Rahlf, Amy Krueger, Bill Groth, Renee Krueger

1. Call meeting to order. The Lincoln County Forestry, Land and Parks Committee met on Monday, January 12, 2026, in Conference Room 156, Lincoln County Service Center. The meeting was called to order by Chair Hartwig at 8:00 a.m.
2. Approve minutes of December 8, 2025. Motion by Ashbeck, second by Wickham to approve minutes of December 8, 2025 meeting as printed in the packet. All Ayes. Motion Carried.
3. Review year to date budget report. The Committee reviewed year to date budget report and placed on file.
4. Comments from members of the public or invited guests. None.
5. Open and Award Timber Sale Bids. Williams reported that two bids were received on the five remaining fall timber sales, with both bids submitted at the minimum amounts. Tract 27-25 received a bid from Heston Meier in the amount of \$40,277. Tract 28-25 received a bid from Johnson Brothers Forest Products in the amount of \$14,020. Three timber sales received no qualifying bids and will be re-advertised with the spring sales. Motion by Wickham, second by Bialecki, to approve awarding the sales to the highest bidder, pending verification of mathematical accuracy. All ayes. Motion carried.
6. Approve re-advertising to replace 2017 pick-up truck. The committee previously approved replacing the department's 2017 pickup truck at the November meeting. The vehicle has accumulated over 115,000 miles and has begun to experience maintenance issues, with more than \$6,900 spent on repairs in the past year. Although the department solicited bids, none were received. Williams consulted with corporate counsel and plans to reach out directly to local dealerships to increase awareness of the opportunity. Discussion followed. Motion by Wickham to re-advertise the request for bids and to contact local dealerships; second by Ashbeck. All ayes. Motion carried.
7. Approve and recruit and hire Limited Term Employees (LTE's) for 2026. Williams reported that the department would like to hire an LTE for 1,043 hours, which equates to approximately a six-month position. The ideal candidate would begin in April and work until the allotted hours are completed. If such a candidate cannot be found, the department will advertise for college students and attempt to hire two individuals to utilize the available hours. Williams noted that the department is somewhat behind on park maintenance due to the focus on ARPA projects over the past several years. Motion by Bialecki to approve; second by Wickham. All ayes. Motion carried.
8. ARPA project status update and discussion. Williams provided an update on the status of the ARPA-funded projects, noting progress at multiple sites:
New Wood Park
 - Expanded and electrified campsites
 - Installed a new vault toilet
 - Constructed a new bridge connecting the park to the campground

- Added a new kayak/canoe launch
- Increased parking near the playground
- Added a firewood shelter
 - Prairie River Dells*
- Constructed a new bridge across the Prairie River
- Work remains on establishing the bridge access trail and improving parking opportunities
 - Otter Lake*
- Installed two new wells
- Added a firewood shelter
 - Hiawatha Trail*
- Resurfaced the trail
- Approximately \$3,000 remains, likely to be used for grading
 - Gravel Crushing*
- Established a new gravel pit on Armstrong Creek Road
- A stockpile of gravel remains available for use on roads in the New Wood area
 - Tug Lake*
- Installed a new beach shower
 - Hay Meadow Wayside*
- Replaced vault toilets
- A new pavilion is still to be constructed and is currently under contract

9. Approve re-advertising for Papoose Creek replacement culvert, if required. Williams reported that no bids were received, noting that this issue had also been discussed with corporate counsel. He recommended re-advertising and improving outreach to ensure local vendors are aware that the county is soliciting bids. Motion by Wickham to re-advertise; second by Ashbeck. All ayes. Motion carried.
10. Approve committee member attendance, mileage and per diem for WCFA Spring Meeting in Rothschild, March 19-20, 2025. Williams reported that the WCFA Spring Meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn in Rothschild. The draft agenda has not yet been released, but he will forward it once it becomes available. Committee members interested in attending should notify him so he can complete the registration. Motion by Bialecki to approve attendance, mileage, and per diem; second by Ashbeck. All ayes. Motion carried.
11. WDNR Report. Bill Groth said they finished marking timber sale in the Underdown. They are working on winter inventory.
12. Review Administrator's written report. Discussion followed, and the report was placed on file. Williams noted that he is very impressed with how the program has been managed and with the county's overall operations. He shared that everyone he has interacted with thus far has been welcoming, helpful, and professional. He also stated that the Forestry Department deserves credit and appreciation for keeping the department running well during this transitional period.
13. Close Timber Sales. None.
14. Set next meeting date. The next Forestry, Land & Parks Committee meeting was set for Monday, February 9, 2026 at 8:00 a.m., LCSC Conference Room 156
15. Adjourn. Motion to adjourn meeting by Ashbeck, second by Wickham at 8:22 a.m. All Ayes. Motion Carried.