



Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Big Falls Community Center
410 2nd Street NW, Big Falls, MN 56627

Minutes for September 28, 2022

APPROVED

Commissioners Present: Rick Anderson, Barry Wendorf, Bryan Pike, Jonathan Wolf, Jen Foley, Beth Pierce, Peg Furshong, Tom Stoa, Reid Huttunen (virtual), Tim Engrav.
Commissioners Absent: Tom Ryan, Brad Bonk

Consultants Present: Renee Mattson - Executive Director, Joe Czapiewski – System Plan Coordinator, and Tess Dandrea - Administrative Assistant (virtual).

1. Call to Order by Chair Anderson at 10:01 m

2. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance

Mayor Shawn Pritchard and City Clerk/Treasurer Veronica Bistodeau, Brandon Wagenfeld, Mark Lohmeier and Marla Yoho.

3. Welcome from Mayor Pritchard

Mayor Pritchard gave background on the campground, stating they had 500 campsite rentals and their income has tripled since the expansion. Labor Day through November is even busier than summer. This park is the primary economic driver in the community.

4. Approval of Agenda for September 28, 2022, Minutes from August 24, 2022, and Treasurer's Report through August 2022.

Motion by Engrav to accept the minutes from August 24, 2022. with the correction of attendance to add Engrav and remove Suss.

Second by Foley

Motion Approved

5. Executive Director's Report

Two grant projects will likely need extensions, we'll stay close to them after the election. GMRPTC is taking on grant status reporting that DNR had previously done.

6. System Plan Coordinator's Report

Nothing to add from the written report.

7. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission

Foley – nothing

Pierce - nothing

Engrav - nothing

Wendorf – great trip up here and doing a little grouse hunting.

Stoa – nothing

Wolf – bumper crop of wild rice this year.

Huttunen - nothing but will be at the Friday meeting with Joe and Renee in Crookston

Anderson – SWRDC-Master Planning for trails in Southwest call tomorrow with Mattson and Czapiewski

Pike - nothing

8 .Old Business:

8.1 Gull Lake Trail Funding Application discussion

Motion by Wendorf to bring the item back for discussion to reconsider the application

Second – Wolf

A robust conversation followed and included process, policy, funding, scoring and timelines that were issues of the application. A question was asked as to why the grant was rejected when the client admitted they made a mistake and has since corrected the language? Discussion included that the correction was not turned in by the deadline. Our policy is clear and allows for correction within a certain time frame and it was not met. The project had a score of 62 and was near the bottom of the pack. Another question was if we do not approve this grant will we have money left over? The answer was no, we have plenty of applications.

Motion approved

A roll call was taken to accept the application, and with 6 nays and 3 yays the motion failed to carry. Commissioner Furshong arrived after the vote

No further motion nor second needed as motion will stand as is.

8.2 Review of FY24 Funding Applications

Czapiewski reported all site visits complete and provided an overview of all projects, total requested, match, project scope.

9. New Business:

9.1 Designation Application 22-008D Hubbard County Deep Lake Park

Motion by Engrav to accept the Evaluation Team score of High

Second by Furshong

Motion Approved

9.2 Discussion of DMS Phase IV

Motion by Wendorff to accept proposal of \$34,620 to complete the work

Second by Foley

Motion Approved

10. Approval of September Expenses

Commission Expenses \$ 3,509.18

Consultant Expenses \$36,963.71

Total \$40,472.89

Motion by Engrav to approve the September 2022 expenses.

Second by Wendorf

Motion Approved

11. Next Meeting and Agenda Items

October 26 in Mankato at Mankato City Hall, 10 Civic Center Plaza,
Minnesota River Room

Meeting adjourned at 1:21.pm

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
Director's Report for September 2022**

Partner Meetings

- GMPT Newsletter Article
- GMPT Membership Committee
- GMPT Communications Committee
- PTLAC Liaison's Calls
- PTLAC Meeting at Sherburne County History Center
- StreetLight Research Call

Park/Trail Visits

- Hartley Nature Center on August 26 for a grant close out tour with DNR staff. The grant was for an addition to the nature center classroom space due to the popularity of the programs there. Additional work was done building better access.
- Cook County funding application tour on September 2.
- Gamehaven Park September 16 for grant closeout tour with DNR staff. This brand new park is looking spectacular!
- Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo, tour of the, in process, new build of the nature center and location of the campground move funding application on September 16.
- Austin Jay C. Hormel Nature Center September 16. Tour of funding application bridge replacement project and tour of the restored prairies.

Funding Application Calls

- Sibley County Henderson Trail
- Detroit Mountain Recreation Area
- Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo

The calls and email follow ups Joe and I conduct are all to further vet the funding applications and dig a little deeper into particular aspects of the requests.

Evaluation Team Meeting for Funding Application Review

Joe and I had a good conversation with the ETeam discussing the FY24 funding applications. As always, they had good perspectives to offer and asked good questions. It's a good process we follow to gain more input on our applications.

Action Manufacturing – Track Chairs

I've spoken with Matt Bottelberghe at Action Manufacturing about what we have for a budget maximum from the CPO funds for the track chair CPO grant. He's promised to work out a plan that will come close to our \$14,280 max, as well as a long term plan for chairs in parks in the

FY25 grant application. Before this opportunity goes out to our facilities, I would like to have a better idea of the top line cost. Expect that report at our meeting on September 28.

Data Management System Phase VI

Upgrades to our DMS system continue into 2022/2023. Joe has been the rockstar facilitator between the Commission and Full Circle Group. Kudos to his work and attention to detail as we continue to make significant progress in attaining a user friendly customer experience as well as measured improvements to the back end reporting we so need. This phase will see us gaining the ability to take over the grant status reports that DNR has traditionally handed for us. We noted several months ago that the DNR report doesn't really alert us to potential delays and project progress as much as it should. To address this shortcoming we've developed a survey tool that we plan to send out twice a year, rather than the one time annual that DNR does. We also have more pointed questions that will tell us when we need to step in if a project looks as though it needs more time. A reminder that we can't initiate legislation to extend a Legacy grant, but we can provide the language and monitor the bill during the session.

The first status report request went out in August, with a follow up in September. It wasn't without flaws, but they have been resolved and it's proving helpful as we've already been alerted to a potential project delay with the Nisswa portion of the Gull Lake Trail.

The Phase VI enhancement will further refine the survey tool, update our user interface, update the reporting and analytic tools, create a newsletter capacity and implement an enhanced CRM capability. The CRM is particularly important as we have significant shortfalls in this area.

We'll be discussing and voting on moving forward with the Full Circle Group proposal for Phase VI costs at the September meeting.

Streetlight Research Project

The liaisons had an update from Raven McKnight about the refinements made to the parks research after the latest Streetlight algorithm update. Raven and the research team at Met Council feel confident that the update is providing better picture of park user numbers and demographics. The liaisons want to involve more outside partners in the project to "truth" the numbers and are identifying individuals within our organizations to participate. Commissioner Pierce has agreed to be part of the group as we move forward to and end to the project. We await more information from Met Council, but hope to start the larger group meetings before the end of the year.

Raven will be presenting the update to the Commission at our October meeting.

GMRPTC
System Plan Coordinators Report
September 2022

FY24 Funding Application

This last month has been busy completing site visits, many of them virtual, and working with applicants to update any application information that is in error. There are still a handful of applicants who are figuring out how to re-work their budgets to remove ineligible items, typically contingency budget items or ineligible matches. Per Commission direction, you have allowed us to be flexible on those items in the spirit of providing support to smaller applicants who have limited grant writing capacity.

Renee and I have completed our scoring, which will be included in this month's report. The ETeam has also completed a review of the applications and provided us with their insights. While there is a wide range of scoring, we are both comfortable with the scores. They are consistent with where we both typically score applications and reflect the priorities in your scoring system.

Additional site visits were completed this past month, mostly on-line.

Austin Hormel Nature Center – District 6 (in-person)

Redwood County Plum Creek Park – District 5 (in-person)

Detroit Lakes Detroit Mountain Recreation Area – District 3 (virtual)

Frazee Wannigan Park – District 3 (phone)

Olmsted County Oxbow Park – District 6 (virtual)

Sibley County Henderson Trail – District 5 (virtual)

Last month the Commission disqualified applicant Fairview Township for an incomplete application, based on a lack of a qualified resolution. That applicant has pleaded their case and requested reconsideration. Per the Chair's direction, we will discuss that request at the meeting.

Reviews and Technical Assistance

Most of our technical assistance time this past month has been in support of funding applicants. Additional Master Plans and Designation Applications are in the works, with regional partners checking in regularly. The process is definitely more broadly engaged than it has been the past couple of years.

A site visit has been completed for Hubbard County Deep Lake Park (D2), in conjunction with their Designation Application. We don't always do a visit for an application, preferring to review the property with the full Master Plan. In this case, they will be moving ahead with the MP quickly and it made sense to at least conduct a preliminary visit before snow flies. The ETeam has completed their ranking review for your consideration at this meeting.

District Outreach

I attended the first in-person MN Chapter of the American Planning Association conference since 2019! It was a great opportunity to meet and visit with many of our regional planning partners and consultants who are so supportive of our regional partner's work.

It was clear to me, both from our partner's feedback as well as observing the breakout sessions, that we should be more involved in the future at this and other conferences. Two opportunities jumped to mind:

- A couple of people said we should hold a breakout session telling the GMRPTC's story, as we've come a long way in just a few years.
- We have a couple of great stories that could add to the "Equity" track of the conference, particularly Big Elk Lake Park or Red Wing He Mni Can Park.

I will apply for these and maybe other sessions as a part of next year's conference when the time comes.