

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION**

**MAY 16, 2023 – 6:01PM**

**PRESIDENT KAI SWANSON - PRESIDING**

1. Karen Kinney, County Clerk, called the roll: (Record)

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, C. Enburg, T. Foster, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, B. Perkins, R. Simmer, K. Swanson, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL PRESENT 14**

E. Dewith, C. Layer, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, E. Sowards

**TOTAL ABSENT 5**

2. President Swanson stated, "Thank you very much. I am very pleased that we are going to kick things off tonight with a presentation by Lee Jackson, our Niabi Zoo Director. Mr. Jackson, if you would like to make your way forward, we would love to have you up here...if you care to be but, where ever you would like to be or if you want to be in the well, here. Aw, that would be great. As you know, Niabi Zoo is open and we are very excited by everything that is happening there. And, we've already done a few things related to this season regarding the New Exhibits that Mr. Jackson is going to be telling us about and the new concessionaire; which we are very pleased to have as well. So, when you bring friends and family out to the zoo, you can feed them as well. Mr. Jackson, whenever you are ready, the floor is yours."

Mr. Jackson stated, "Hello, everyone. I just want to take a little bit of your time to kind of tell you about some of the things that are happening out at the zoo. I have no control of the images you are gonna see, so, I am not...I am gonna have to wing it, as I talk about them. But, one of the first things I want to talk about is the construction. We have the Painted Dog Exhibit, you can see the conceptual plan there. It's coming along quite well...ah, thank you. In this picture here (slide show) is converted to the Prairie Dog Exhibit. It's another view of the Prairie Dog Exhibit. Why don't I just start talking about the Prairie Dog Exhibit. (Chuckles) Uh, the Prairie Dog Exhibits on schedule. The earthwork has pretty much been completed. The outline of the Exhibit that you see there has been laid out and the forms are being put in place this week, and the re-bar is taking place as well. And, so the concrete will start to be poured next week. This Exhibit is on track to open or be turned over to us August 3<sup>rd</sup>. We have already located the first group of animals that will be going into that Exhibit and we hope to have the final 20-25 prairie dogs in our possession in July. And these are some different views of that Exhibit. (Shows slide) There is an overlook, kind of a protected area so you can look into the Exhibit. One of the interesting things about this Exhibit, if you keep scrolling up (slides) that is the front of the Exhibit. The back of the Exhibit, is a complete run of glass for approximately 40 feet. So, you will be able to look at the animals as you ride through on the train. It's a very cool Exhibit. And, from what I can tell...and I have

been saying this, I researched it because I was saying this before I researched it...but, it turns out that it is true. This is probably going to be one of the nicer Prairie Dog Exhibits in North America and one of the largest. So, we are very proud of this and how the work is coming up. (Shows a slide) There is a Painted Dog. And, you can see some of the work...these pictures were taken today. (Shows slide) This is our second overlook for Painted Dogs...there are two overlooks. This is the old lion Exhibit. You can see some of the construction there and the water feature that is going in...in the back there. This is also on track to be finished end of June. And, I just got word today that the first three animals for this Exhibit have been arranged for us. So, we hope to get six (6), we've got three that are promised to us from two different institutions and we are just waiting on the word for the three other animals. (Shows slide) That's the den area...this space here. It had nothing in it when the lions were here. It's going to be a holding area for the dogs. They are a very social animal. And sometimes their society or their relationships break down and have to be separated. So, one of the new things we had to do for these animals was to provide a way for them to be separated...especially, when they have pups. (Shows slide) It's another view of the water feature going in. And, we are back to Prairie Dogs. Boy, they are cute. (Shows slide) That's the foundation for the holding building for Prairie Dogs. (Shows slides) And, these views are all different construction views for Prairie Dogs. And, again, these were taken today. The work is moving along quite well. (Shows slide) Those big mounds of soil that you see there, will actually stay there. We have company that will come in and basically, a group of artists will create a cliff mudbank and it will look like real mud out of concrete. (Shows slide) And, those are the forms that will be going up in the next day or two. I think that's it. And so, I will mention a couple of other things that we are working on. We are getting some conceptual plans pulled together for our Domestic Animal Exhibit. It's a favorite...domestic animals, yes. (Shows slides) (Group laughter) We are gonna redo the...the plan is to redo most of the barriers, but we want to expand it and actually, add a skywalk that will go over the service road where the animals can travel above the heads of the guests into another paddock on the other side. And, we just got word that our friends at the Niabi Zoo Foundation have agreed to fund a conceptual planning for a really exciting Exhibit we are going to be looking into right now...and one that people have been asking for since I have been here...and that's bears. So, we are going to do a conceptual planning...get running on that and once those conceptual plans are in place, we can start talking about the best ways to fundraise for that, and to pursue that. But, that's one of the things that the people of the Quad Cities have been wanting for a long time and certainly everyone at the zoo has been wanting to do for a long time. Are there any questions about anything?"

Commissioner Mielke was recognized.

Mr. Mielke stated, "Could we call the fundraising 'Grin and Bear it'?"

(Group laughter)

President Swanson stated, "Ohhhhh." (Chuckles)

Mr. Jackson stated, "Oh yeah, I am gonna write that down."

Mr. Mielke stated, "Write that down and scratch it off as fast as you can."

President Swanson stated, "I withdraw your recognition, Mr. Mielke."

(Group Laughter)

President Swanson added, "I actually...while you are thinking of your questions, friends, I have one. Part of the Prairie Dog Exhibit, you have to basically make a swimming pool, right? Otherwise, they will be able to dig out?"

Mr. Jackson answered, "Correct, but don't do a solid bottom. People who have done that and it's turned into a swimming pool; which is not..."

President Swanson interrupted, "Yeah...you can't do that."

Mr. Jackson explained, "It's not up there, but where you see the space between the woodwork and where the forms are going to be, chain-link will be laid down there so they won't be able to dig through and out...because they absolutely will."

President Swanson asked, "Are there any other questions for Mr. Jackson? Anything related to the zoo, we are very fortunate to have him here tonight. Alright, well...Mr. Jackson you've got a great team and we are grateful for everything you do and on behalf of the Commission, I would just like to say, thank you for your time."

(Group Applause)

Mr. Jackson stated, "Thank you. And, if anyone thinks of any questions or has any thoughts about the Zoo, please reach out to us at any time."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you for bringing the good news to us, we really appreciate that."

President Swanson stated, "Alright, at this time, I would entertain a motion to approve the April Commission minutes."

3. Commissioner Burns moved to approve the April 18, 2023, Commission Minutes, as presented. Commissioner Adams seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS (NONE)** (Three calls were made for Public Comment.)

5. **PRESIDENTS COMMENTS:**

President Swanson asked, "A couple of items under the President's Comments, to do a quick follow-up around the District. At Illiniwek, the project has been affected by flooding and so, we are probably not looking at opening up until the week of June 5<sup>th</sup>. As you know, the low-lying campgrounds there are...part of the draw is being that close to the river. And so, we are going to have to hold off for a little bit on that. Staff are hoping to get the Campgrounds open as soon as possible. The AMÔWA Parking Areas are nearly completed. The exception being that we are going to hopefully install some solar lighting to be completed in the mid to later part of June. Indian Bluff and Loud Thunder got off to strong starts in terms of volume of turnout for the season. Hiring continues to be an operational concern for the District as well as for many other employers around the region. Seasonal staffing has been a bigger than normal challenge than what we've had in the past. And, the only other thing that I would like to point out to my fellow Commissioners is...this is Bike to Work Week. We have great biking facilities even if you are not biking to work. If you just want to go for a ride, we have a great partnership with FORC (Friends of Off-Road Cycling). They are helping at AMÔWA...they are helping at Dorrance...they've helped at Illiniwek, at Loud Thunder and all of our facilities. And, they are a fantastic partner. If you get a chance, get on a bike. And, if you are driving and see me, don't hit me. And so, thank you very much for that. Well, at least make it look like an accident, Rod...ya know. Any other questions for me? You'll have questions for staff a little bit later...if there is nothing for me, we'll move on."

6. Commissioner Perkins moved to approve the Forest Preserve Claims and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$576,195.07, as presented. Commissioner Woods seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, C. Enburg, T. Foster, P. McNeil, D. Mielke,  
L. Moreno, R. Simmer, K. Swanson, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 13**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

President Swanson asked, "Does anyone have any objection to taking the next four items together? If you want to take any of them separately, you can."

7. Commissioner Simmer moved to waive the reading and approve the Transfers of Appropriation, to waive the reading and approve the Resolution regarding General Fund Loan to Niabi Zoo, and to waive the reading and approve the Resolution regarding Niabi Zoo Fund Appropriations Amendments, and to waive the reading and approve the Resolution regarding Niabi Zoo Fund Prairie Dog Grant Appropriations, as presented. Commissioner Vyncke seconded.

(The Resolutions are in .pdf format and begin on the next page.)

**RESOLUTION**

RE: Niabi Zoo Fund

**WHEREAS**, additional funds are required in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 for the necessary expenses incurred in the 2023 Fiscal Year, and

**WHEREAS**, funds are available from unappropriated funds within the Forest Preserve General Fund #130 to loan to the Niabi Zoo Fund #131, and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. An amount of \$200,000 be loaned from the Forest Preserve General Fund #130 to the Niabi Zoo Fund #131.

SECTION 3. The above amount to be repaid to the Forest Preserve General Fund #130 as funds become available.

SECTION 4. This Resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2023.

  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

**RESOLUTION**

FY 23 Appropriation Amendment – Addressing overspent general ledgers within the Niabi Zoo Fund

**WHEREAS**, additional funds are required in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 for the necessary expenses incurred for the 2023 Fiscal Year, and

**WHEREAS**, funds are available from unappropriated funds within the Niabi Zoo Fund #131, and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:


SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. An amount of \$20,000.00 be transferred from unappropriated funds in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$15,000.00	131-32-08 522	Operating Supplies
\$5,000.00	131-32-08 631	Professional Services

SECTION 3. This Resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2023.

  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

Commissioner Burns moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Enburg seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, C. Enburg, T. Foster, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, R. Simmer, K. Swanson, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES            13**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

8. Commissioner Adams moved to waive the reading and approve the Resolution regarding Forming a Committee on Local Government Efficiency, as presented. Commissioner Simmer seconded.

(Note\*\* The Resolution is in .pdf format and begins on the next page)



## **RESOLUTION**

### **A RESOLUTION FORMING A COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY**

#### **ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT, ROCK ISLAND COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**WHEREAS**, the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District ("District") is required to form a Committee on Local Government Efficiency ("Efficiency Committee") pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1 *et seq.* (the Act); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Act, the Efficiency Committee shall: (1) study the District's governing statutes, ordinances, rules, procedures, powers, jurisdiction, shared services, intergovernmental agreements, and interrelationships with other governmental units and the State of Illinois, (2) collect data, research, and analysis as necessary to prepare a written report that includes recommendations with respect to increased accountability and efficiency, and (3) provide a written report to the administrative office of each county board of the county in which the governmental unit is located; and

**WHEREAS**, the Efficiency Committee shall consist of the elected or appointed members of the Board of Commissioners of the District, at least two residents from the district appointed by the President of the Board of Commissioners and approved by the Board of Commissioners, and the chief executive officer or other officer of the District, if any; and

**WHEREAS**, The President desires to appoint Karen Dahlstrom of Moline, Illinois and Holly Sparkman of Rock Island, Illinois as the two resident members of the Efficiency Committee, with the advice and consent of the Board of Commissioners; and

**WHEREAS**, the Efficiency Committee shall meet at least three times and shall operate as a public body pursuant to the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act; and

**WHEREAS**, the Efficiency Committee shall provide a written report to the administrative office of the Rock Island County Board no later than eighteen months after the day of the Efficiency Committee's formation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Efficiency Committee will be dissolved after it has made a written report to the Rock Island County Board and all other statutory requirements have been satisfied;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT, ROCK ISLAND COUNTY, ILLINOIS** as follows:

**SECTION 1:** That the Board of Commissioners hereby forms its Committee on Local Government Efficiency consisting of the following individuals:

- President of the Forest Preserve Commission Kai Swanson

- Commissioner Rich Morthland
- Commissioner Melissa Moreno-Baker
- Commissioner Larry Burns
- Commissioner Luis S. Moreno
- Commissioner Brian D. Vyncke
- Commissioner Porter McNeil
- Commissioner Carla Enburg
- Commissioner Drue Mielke
- Commissioner David Adams
- Commissioner Richard H. "Quijas" Brunk
- Commissioner Timothy A. Foster
- Commissioner Edna Sowards
- Commissioner Bob Perkins
- Commissioner Enyo Dewith
- Commissioner Rodney K. Simmer
- Commissioner Johnnie M. Woods
- Commissioner Chuck Layer
- Commissioner J. Robert Westpfahl
- Resident Member Karen Dahlstrom
- Resident Member Holly Sparkman
- District Director Jeffrey Craver

**SECTION 2:** That Kai Swanson shall serve as the chairperson of the Efficiency Committee; and

**SECTION 3:** That the District's Board Secretary, Open Meetings Act Officer, and Freedom of Information Act Officer shall serve the Efficiency Committee in those respective roles; and

**SECTION 4:** That the Efficiency Committee shall perform its duties in accordance with 50 ILCS 70/1 *et seq.*; and

**SECTION 5:** That the Board of Commissioners shall provide a written report to the Rock Island County Board no later than November 16 2024, which is eighteen months after the day of the Efficiency Committee's formation.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of May 2023.

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT**

[SEAL]

By:

  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

ATTEST:

  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

President Swanson explained, "I don't think this requires a roll call vote because there is no expenditure of funds, however, I did want to let you know this is something we talked about a couple of months ago due to a new Statute in the State of Illinois. I invited any Member of the Commissioners to send me nominations of neighbors...uh, I did not hear any. So, what I did...I decided to pick people who did not live too far away, one from Rock Island and one from Moline. They have to attend three (3) meetings. And, this way we can call them, Jeff or I can call on them when the meeting is ending and so they don't have to stay for an entire County Board meeting. And, with that strategy in mind, the first person we approached was Mrs. Karen Dahlstrom of Moline, Illinois. The second is Mrs. Holly Sparkman of Rock Island, Illinois. If I can answer any questions about them, they both have been approached to be in public service. Again, what they will do is attend three (3) meeting with us and if they have any suggestions of how we might do things more efficiently, we'll have little presentations at each one that I think will help us as Commissioners as well as for the public about why we do what we do. And then, they will present a report, and all this is required by State Statute. Are there any questions on this motion? Hearing none."

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

9. Commissioner Burns moved to approve the next three expenditures by omnibus vote, to waive the reading and approve the proposal from Hutchinson Engineering for services related to projects at Indian Bluff Golf Course at \$36,697.00, to approve the Agreement with Klingner & Associates, PC in the amount of \$26,300.00 for services related to the projects at Niabi Zoo and to approve the purchase of a John Deere 331G Compact Track Loader in the amount of \$118,042.76, as presented. Commissioner Simmer seconded.

Commissioner Westpfahl was recognized.

Mr. Westpfahl asked, "Do you have anyone trained who knows how to run the loader?"

President Swanson stated, "I will defer to Mr. Craver."

Mr. Craver stated, "It's a skid-steer."

President Swanson reiterated, "It's a skid-steer."

(Mr. Craver's comments are difficult to hear as he did not use a microphone.)

Mr. Craver added, "We have one at Loud Thunder and one at the zoo. It's transported back and forth thanks to the Highway Department. This one will be at Illiniwek."

President Swanson asked, "And so, to Mr. Westpfahl's question...we do have staff trained in operation of it, Mr. Craver?"

Mr. Craver answered, "Yes, we do."

President Swanson stated, "Great. Are there any other questions?"

Commissioner Foster moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Adams seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, C. Enburg, T. Foster, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, R. Simmer, K. Swanson, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 13**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

10. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to approve the proposal for audit services from Sikich for FY23 at \$30,000.00 FY24 at \$31,500.00 and FY25 at \$33,075.00, as presented. Commissioners Perkins and Brunk seconded.

Commissioner Burns moved to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Foster seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, C. Enburg, T. Foster, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, R. Simmer, K. Swanson, B. Vyncke, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 13**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

11. **Comments from Commissioners: (None)**

12. Commissioner McNeil moved to approve all Routine Reports from the Director and Departments Heads of the Forest Preserve Commission, as presented. Commissioner Woods seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

The next meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission is Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at 5:30pm, immediately following the meeting of the Rock Island County Board.

President Swanson declared the Forest Preserve Meeting adjourned at 6:20pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Kinney", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

KAREN KINNEY  
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY  
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

KK:rw