

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION**  
**MAY 23, 2024 – 6:24PM**  
**PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE, ROD SIMMER - PRESIDING**

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

R. Brunk, L. Burns, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, B. Perkins, R. Simmer,  
J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL PRESENT 10**

D. Adams, E. Dewith, C. Enburg, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland,  
E. Sowards, K. Swanson, B. Vyncke

**TOTAL ABSENT 9**

Ms. Kinney stated, "We have a quorum."

2. President Pro Tempore, Simmer stated, "What do we need for a quorum?"

Ms. Kinney stated, "One half of the Board plus one...half of the Board plus one. We are good."

Ms. Oberbroeckling added, "We are good."

President Pro Tempore Simmer stated, "The next item on the Agenda is a presentation from Joel Vanderbush, Niabi Zoo Curator of Conservation & Education."

Mr. Joel Vanderbush stated, "Hello everyone. How is everyone doing tonight?"

(Group answers of 'good evening' and 'good')

Mr. Vanderbush stated, "I had the pleasure of going to an International Conservation Conference this past week. They were with Zoos and Aquariums of Conservation and that organization helps bring a few conservationists from all across the world together with zoos and aquariums to help locate support with conservation and ideas. The last time I went to the conference was in 2018. At that time, Niabi Zoo really didn't have much to say about conservation because we weren't really doing very much with conservation at that time. Kai just started in 2017 and I was brought on to help expand with those conservation projects. I had the opportunity to go back to not just attend the conference, but actually be a speaker at the conference and bring some of our conservation partners with me. It was a success being at this conservation conference. (Shows slide) So, you may notice on this slide that it's located in the Quad Cities area in Coal Valley, Illinois, near the cougar of Iowa. That's because being at this conservation conference, wearing my name tag...everyone is like, where is Niabi Zoo? Is that in Africa?"

And, I said that would be Nairobi and that is a couple of more letters...but we are in Illinois. And so, we felt the need to put this on the slide for everyone there. And so, when we talk about conservation, the first thing that many of these organizations have to deal with is a small do-little budget...to do little or anything in conservation. That was certainly the case for us. In 2018, was when we started to collect monies for conservation. And we were just sending a check off to some random, selected organizations that we were like, that sounds neat, let's support that. And so, the challenges, of course, is there is no relationship with them. When we came on board, we were like...who do we send this money to? Do we have an address? Do we have a contact number? And, they were like oh, yeah...we forgot who that was. We really needed a relationship with them. So, in 2016, you know...we started to do again some local conservation. We did some pollinator and some darken plantings. In 2017, I started to really question who, what and why they are getting money because we didn't have a ledger specifically for conservation activities. And so, we wanted to make sure that the money we collected from coins was going to an organization that was properly vetted and one we could properly build a relationship with and would have use of the skills and services that we might have to offer. We did start the Bi-State Conservation Action Effort. We were one of the founding Members of that organization. And that's by looking at local organizations. That was one of my first questions when I got here...who is doing conservation in the Quad Cities? Let's get together and do things together. And so, we did that. We had a pollinator conference and after that conference, we were like...hey, let's keep doing this. And so, to this day, we have been continuing to advocate for conservation activities throughout the Quad Cities area. And we will be doing a, um....a bio-blitz at the AMOWA Forest Preserve coming up on June 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> so, that will be really good. Now, in 2018, as I said...I attended that first conference. I met a lot of people and established a lot of good relationships there and a couple of which actually became conservation partners; which I will talk about in a moment. And, we are also starting our conversation speaker series at the zoo and I was there also looking for speakers to come. Because one of the things we understand at Niabi Zoo, is that conversation is our real purpose and the reason why is that it answers that question as to why we have animals and what are we doing...it's really for conservation. And so, to change the community conversation about what the zoo is for, I wanted to make sure that we started to make conservation things on a regular basis and we did exactly that. In 2018-2019, we brought 24 conservationists all over the world in 24 months, one conservationist every month for two straight years. I probably would have continued it into 2020, but I don't know...something happened. So, also in 2019, we did start to get a small budget to help accommodate those countries and speakers to assist with their travel and we should due to the work they are doing because that was the real point in them being able to come. We did post or participate in the first field trip for conservation, and that was they really just provided my salary as though I was working a regular day, I covered my own flight and that was to show off wheel to work with and we'll talk more about that in a moment. But this was the basics of

the presentation that we presented to them was for smaller to mid-sized institutions who don't have much of a budget. How do you go about building a conservation program? Because we have been for all things and purposes very successful in the conservation projects we have supported and the partnerships that we have built. This presentation was very well received by that audience and spurred a lot of conversation with many different organizations from around the world that came and wanted to talk to me for the next three days. And so, it was really good. So, these are basically ways that we looked to give back. It isn't just monetary...because for a long time, it's been seen that zoos are like an ATM. You put in your request and you take out some money and you go do something with that money. And that sounds good. But, if you are a Houston zoo or the LA zoo you can do that to the sound of hundreds of thousands of dollars, but we can't do that. We don't have that kind of budget. So, we had to look at other ways to contribute and still try to raise money to support some of those projects but in a more effective way. (Shows slide) And so, as you see from the list there, we got everything from volunteerism to community organizations, our coin collection from our Kiosk that you see there, donations online and in-person, specifically, for conservation...doing some grass-roots fundraising year to year and, of course writing grants. I ran a non-for-profit organizations for ten years before coming here. So, I am pretty effective at writing grants and so, we were able to get a number of those. We also did a psalms for trickle show; which we'll mention again in just a moment. But the bigger question is, what and who do we want to support, you know? How do we make the choices of the conservation programs that we actually do? And typically, they are relevant to the species that we have and the habitats we are trying to support or particular passion projects that our team, ya know, already came to the table with. Jenny ? (inaudible) is recognized as one of the top team honored experts on this land. We do not have honors at our zoo, right? But that's...ya know, she's been able to go and see the conferences on that and continue on those passion projects. And, of course, it's important to research and learn about proper angeos. Not a lot of governmental organizations around the world do...but in some countries, it's considered a business to make money. And, you have to sift very carefully to make sure you choose the right ones that are in it for the real reason; which is conservation and not just to make money, as you'll just have a summer house somewhere, because we have come across those. We do not support those kinds of organizations. (Shows slide) This was one particular way that we had come up with was to do a little species scavenger hunt, do some trading cards. And, this was something with a gift of \$5.00 to our conservation fund, people would get this little booklet. If they found the four animals at the zoo, they actually got one of our conservationists' cards; which was very painted on research trust, one of our project partners. And now, continuing along that line, it's important to build relationships...at the top of that picture, you see (inaudible) starting from the left, you've got Wilton...he's from Zimbabwe, that fuzzy-faced man, that's me...and Miriam, she's from Guatemala and she is coming here on Wednesday and she's going to speak at the zoo because she's still in the country. We have one of our partners there, Raphael

Delahardt...he's also the guy down below in the other pictures on the Oceanaire and he's from Chihuahua wheel. We have Selsa Hoot from the Belize zoo and we also have Dave Thurnon and he's from a conservation support organization. And so, we think getting to know each other and building these kinds of relationships and finding out what the needs of those organizations are, both great and small. Ya know...it's like everybody wants a million bucks to go out and do whatever they want to do, but when a zoo doesn't have a million bucks to offer, then, what can we offer? So, that could be website design, software, equipment like you see here...(shows slide) the Dewalt drill that's in that picture, we got that through...or two drills, we got for Raphael to use being able to work under water. And that's a pretty special zoo and a special drill to be able to get. And, the satellite tags that you see in the hand there (shows slide) are what we track Whale Sharks with. We purchased three of those over the years. Each one costs \$2,000.00. I will tell you the zoo did not purchase them, but we raised the money to purchase them...so, that's what's important. And so, when you consider that small budget, what do you consider is the expertise of us? Like we are very talented people at Niabi Zoo. We have been able to institute a tremendous amount of change within a really short period of time. And that only happens because of talent, passion and heart. But, what kinds of skills can we offer to our conversation partners? So, we have to be able to match our skills with their needs. So, one example is Paid Research Trust. That got a website was made in 2012. Now, you may know that couldn't meet our needs and that doesn't function very well...so, we decided on a brand-new website. And so, that is one that people can see, it's active, they can make donations, you can learn all about them, and so, that's just one small example. We also have to understand that time is an asset. You know, if we are doing like local conservation projects with my three of my fantastic volunteers out at the zoo...they do a lot with the pollinator plant training and putting in gardens and putting in some more. Every year, we expand our pollinator plants and the different gardens that we use to help support local species such as the endangered Rusty Patch Bumble Bee, the Monarch Butterflies and so many of the other pollinators. And, of course it's so very important for us to share the story. When I was speaking at the environmental film series; which we had presented the documentary on the woman who loves Giraffes and that's Dr. Anne Innes Dagg and that's her story. That was a sellout crowd at the Figge. Literally, people were sitting on the stairs and standing across the back of the room. And so, after that documentary, I was getting the feedback on that presentation in that movie. And then afterwards, I was talking with one of my Giraffe Zookeepers because this movie was all about giraffes, of course...and I was like hey, I wanted to see if Anne would come to our zoo. So, I reached out and they agreed to come to the zoo. So, they are going to be coming to the zoo on June 18<sup>th</sup> but unfortunately, between that period of time and now, Anne Innes Dagg, who is one of the greatest conservation behaviorists known, she went into the African bush four years before Jane Goodall and doesn't get the press that Jane did because you know Jane was all over the National Geographic. But, unfortunately, at the age of 91, Anne passed away. Her daughter is still coming. So, this is going to be like the Ann

Innes Dagg legacy tour. So, we are going to be going to post that as well. So, it's very important for us to share the stories of those that were supportive. So, just real quick, I am not sure if you know all of the conservation programs that we participate in but our local ones here both the US Fish and Wildlife and Bi-State Action Effort were each supported by grants, events and the shared resource between those organizations is the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee project. So, you have to have restoration...we identified the first Rusty Patch Bumble Bee in the Quad Cities to get it back on the map and go hey, we really need to pay attention. Now, of course, all of our forest preserves have been doing habitat restoration for some time. You know, (Inaudible) Harsh has been doing some as well. And all of these active communities of Rusty Patch Bumble Bees; which makes the Quad Cities pretty special when it comes to that particular endangered species. And so, African Painted Dogs...we did Painted Dogs Research in Zimbabwe. Originally, I was supposed to come talk to you right after I got back from Africa, but unfortunately, I was sick and I was not able to be here for that presentation, we'll touch on it here in a little bit. But, our trip to Africa was supported by our coin collections as well as donations from the Niabi Zoo Foundation. And so, they needed help from the website, doing bushcamp curriculum developments, training their staff to do actual education in field. And of course, building a non-profit organization for them; which I have also been able to do. Now, Whale Sharks that show Off the Wheel, that means Blue Kingdom in the Mayan language. That's in Mexico and that was basically from coin collection and sponsorships. And so, we bought the equipment, we got the satellite tags and sponsored some trips. Now, Solar River Trust, that's our longest-term conservation partner. We've been sending money to them pretty much since the start in 2015. But, we've been able to do more than just sending them money. We were able to purchase zoo-based camera trap studies as well as fundraising events such as the Strive for Snow Leopards Event...not just participating but actually helping their international organization design that program so that other zoos can do it effectively as well. And of course, we will be launching the Paraguay diversity project. We will be going out with Lee Jackson and Tammy Schmidt will be going down to Paraguay later this year to...ya know, this is what we like to call the non-sexy conservation project because there are a number of species down there that are not even identified. They are new species as well as those known to be in the region but there are no data collection on that. So, it could be fish, mussels or (inaudible) or Tuco Tuco...is a tiny little rodent that people don't seem to care about but it's an endangered species and it's the base of the entire food chain there. The Maned Wolf...that one, people know about and the otters that are in the area, again, people know about these but there is no data on them. (Shows slide) This area is disappearing so quickly because of the Gran Chaco is being converted into agricultural land, specifically, for cow ranching. And so, this region is the second largest bio-diverse area in South America right behind the Amazon Rain Forest, and it's disappearing so fast that people don't even know it's there. So, this survey project is incredibly important. We are partnering up with the University of Dubuque and 12 other organizations that we are collaborating and bringing

together, just like we brought together conservation organizations in the Quad Cities, we are also bringing together multiple international organizations to join in on this and we are the spearhead for that project...so, that's pretty exciting. And, of course, being a founding Member of Painted Dog Research USA, and the Bi-State Contribution Effort is a pretty good feather in our cap too. (Shows slide) So, super quick here, I just want to point out this is the time line for that habitat restoration project for the Rusty Patch Bumble Bee...being able to work with US Fish and Wildlife to congregate us to that (inaudible) when they are the most prevalent. They are at the zoo and they will support that by a lot. Of course, with the Snow Leopard Trust...we have been giving to them for a long time...ya know, total it's about \$40,307.00, and I know it sounds like a lot, but that's ever since 2015, and so, that's divided up over the years. Of course, in doing those projects, as we mentioned the zoo-based camera traps...we were one of only 37 zoos in the world to assist them in that camera traps project. So, that's kind of important. And of course, the Rides for Snow Leopards; which is really great. (Shows slide) Here is our Whale Shark project in 2019, that is the first year it went down. We invited Raphael Delahardt to come up and be a conservation speaker in our series. He had been featured on National Geographic and we said hey, we would love for you to come down and do some work with you. So, we bought some equipment, we tagged one Whale Shark when we were there. In 2022, we went back but this time, we brought a group of people with us, in fact, we brought nine Boston's with us who sponsored this trip. They paid for the boat...the boat is like \$1,000.00 a day and these satellite tags are \$2,000.00 and the satellite tracking for a year is another \$1,000.00 and between all them, they were able to pay for that to support it and it was really good. So, we tagged two sharks on that trip...one of which, is actually called QC Kindred. The group that went down called themselves 'The Kindred' but they are from the Quad Cities. So, if you look anywhere on the satellite map of Whale Sharks and you find QC Kindred, that's our Whale Shark. (Shows slide) This is the data that gives us. It is very important that we look at this kind of data because real conservation is all about data. And, what does that data tell us? Giant ships, whether they be cruise ships or container ships are sailing right through these particular areas where all of these Whale Sharks are. Whether they were coming in from the East or whether they are coming from our ports to go down to the Panama Canal, they are going directly through this region; which is the largest aggregation of Whale Sharks on the planet. They currently have a little bit of protection but not enough to stop them from going through. (Shows slide) But, when you look at this little circle here, you can see that is the hot head. Over 400 Whale Sharks gather there every single summer. It's the largest fish in the ocean, it's an endangered species and it's dying out quickly because they keep getting hit by ships. Now, one of the organizations, like I said called Off the Wheel. This literally, we are the first people to see this. We got the preliminary article that's being released right now. (Shows slide) This particular diagram that's in it are just the steps that's being taken to mitigate some of the killing of these Whale Sharks. And, this comes from 50 research sites across the planet. It's every Whale Shark scientist in the world coming together to write this important article to propose it to

the shipping industry and some of the maritime trading industry people. (Shows slide) So, of course, this real fast...in Zimbabwe, this is a trip funded by the Sioux Foundation. One of the great things we can do for them is, we can provide graphics for them. (Shows slide) We provided this graphic for our own Exhibit. But, this works really well for them. But, they can help teach people about the species that's right in our own backyard. (Shows slide) So, these are just some of the quick images of the bushcamp development that we did. So, therapy with the kids, training and new staff members. We hired four educators there. (Shows slide) Those are Niabi Zoo shirts on those educators because they don't have uniform shirts. And, they were so proud to wear those and receive a certificate. Really, this button that says Conservation Educator on it...we just made it on a button machine, but they wore it just like the old sheriff badge. They were walking out with their chests out...it was a powerful moment. What was more powerful was working with the children. We created the first bushcamp ever for them. And, we didn't just do it the time I was there, we built it to last. So, they have been running this...I have been collaborating with them back and forth running this bushcamp two times per month every single month since I left. It's been supported by the Jane Goodall Institute. And so, it's been really great to get that kind of funding for them to do that kind of work. It's really changing the lives of kids in that area. So, the big thing we have to remember is relationships are about people. No matter where we are in the world, it still comes down to people. People and these projects have needs. And, while there is a cost for conservation projects and their variable needs, costs can be mitigated through creative fundraising, events, grant writing and others. And, that's what comes from the specialist's staff, we understand. We would love for you guys to give us a \$3 million conservation budget. We know that's not going to happen and so, we know we have to find creative ways to fundraise to make conservation happen because that's what we are all about. If we can do this much with as little that we have, imagine what we could do with a little bit more. You and staff actually do it. Keep those things in mind for the future because Niabi Zoo is now on the conservation map. And, we were like the Belle of the Ball. We were like the little engine that could that nobody even knew was coming. And so, we were mentioned four different times throughout that conservation conference. And, people were following me around like puppy dogs...it was just...and not saying like they needed much from us, it was like how did you do this? Because we came out of nowhere...we had nothing. So, that's what we do and we have to be creative. And so, thank you for your support in the work that we've been doing. Thank you for the time for listening. And, if you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them."

President Pro Tempore Simmer stated, "Thank you, Joel. You are busy as ever and your knowledge is awesome. Does anyone have any questions for Joel? Richard?"

Commissioner Brunk was recognized.

Mr. Brunk asked, "Yeah, Joel; I actually have been meaning to reach out to you. My grandsons are involved in Cub Scouts. We actually thought about you when it comes to conversations, initiatives and reaching out to you to find out if you have established programs where a Cub Scout pack could sign up or make an appointment or whatever to come out and learn about conservation. Obviously, they could fund for each youth, but do you have programs like that?"

Mr. Vanderbush answered, "Of course. We have our conservation education departments and we just hired on our summer staff. We just brought on three additional interns to help with that too. Ironically enough just before I left for this conference, I met with the head of the Illowa Council...I'm not sure how to pronounce that when you slam two states together, but yeah...they want to work with us more directly in creating...because obviously, there has been a reshuffling of that organization and they want us to work in a partnership with them to develop more programs for that. So, we are looking very forward to meeting with them about that. And we just might end up with some more programs again soon."

Commissioner Brunk stated, "Great. Well, I should be in touch here soon."

Mr. Vanderbush answered, "Great."

President Pro Tempore Simmer asked, "Are there any other questions?"

Commissioner Layer asked, "In like the bio-diversity studies...when you go to somewhere like Paraguay, do you get any participation from the local government?"

Mr. Vanderbush answered, "Yeah, we do. We are working closely with the local governments there and some of the local conservation organizations that are there don't have the resources to spearhead something kind of like this. And again, it's not like we are...yes, we are spearheading it, but we've written grants, we've gotten grants, um, Brothers in Cortization called ZCOG; which is a zoo conservation outreach group. So, it's zoos that have this fund that you can apply for to get the funding through that and also the Zoological Association of America...we were able to get some support from them to help collaborate to do this project. But yes, local involvement is key to every conservation project that we do. We are not the great white knight...we don't just blaze into an area say I'm here to save this. That's not what we do. The real goal is to empower the local people there and getting the Indigenous people who are the most knowledgeable people involved in these projects. They need help with organization...they need help to lay it all out. If you can help them create that structure and give them the power to run that...we can't be there all the time, right? That's one of the things that we have learned about conservation from failures and facts, is that we can't go there and put my flag or name on this like it's



ours and we are going to own it and that's it...that's not effective. You have to get the people in order to do the work to get it done."

President Pro Tempore Simmer asked, "Anybody else? Joel, is there um...any chance like online that we have a presentation similar to this?"

Mr. Vanderbush answered, "I will be putting some more things like this...we do have a conservation page. And so, if you go to niabizoo.com all the way to the right it says conservation. It has our initiatives and our partners and we will be spending some more time expanding that out there based on what we've got here and our partners who did presentations. I did happen to record those and I also recorded my presentation I did there at the conference. And so, we will be able to put some of those videos on YouTube and put those online as well."

Mr. Layer stated, "Thank you."

President Pro Tempore Simmer stated, "Thank you."

Mr. Vanderbush stated, "Thank you very much."

(Group applause)

3. Commissioner Woods moved to approve the April 16, 2024, Commission Minutes, as presented. Commissioner Layer seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS - (NONE)** (Three calls were made.)

5. **PRESIDENTS COMMENTS:**

President Pro Tempore Simmer stated, "For President's Comments, just in summary. The Committee had the monthly meeting at Living Lands & Waters new floating classroom. It's a very nice facility. It's tough to find, right, Ms. Woods? It's way at the end of the road. It's way at the end and there was nothing there at the time. They have been a great partner with us in the past, and the District looks forward to working with them in the future. The preserves are getting busier as it's gotten warmer with the temperatures coming up. The new Prairie Dog Exhibit at Niabi is very well received. The folks that I have talked to have loved it. Construction has kept Illiniwek from fully opening, but they are partially open. So, help yourself. Once the lift station is brought on-line, the remainder of the facilities will be opened. Hopefully, the first half of June they will be open. The frequent rains have

caused delays in finishing seeding for the Bluff storm water improvements.  
Anybody else have any comments on that?"

6. Commissioner Mielke moved to approve the Forest Preserve Claims and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$213,901.50, as presented. Commissioner Brunk seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, B. Perkins, R. Simmer,  
J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES            10**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner Brunk moved to waive the reading and approve the Transfers of Appropriations as enumerated in your packets. Commissioner Perkins seconded.

Commissioner Mielke moves to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Layer seconded.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, B. Perkins, R. Simmer,  
J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES            10**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

8. Commissioner Layer moved to waive the reading and approve the Resolution RE: Niabi Zoo Fund Prairie Dog & ARPA Grant Appropriations, as presented. Commissioner Mielke seconded.

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

## RESOLUTION

FY 2024 Niabi Zoo Fund Prairie Dog & ARPA Grant Appropriations

**WHEREAS**, Niabi Zoo was awarded \$436,100.00 from the Illinois Public Museum Grant program to construct a new Prairie Dog exhibit, and

**WHEREAS**, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources allocated an additional \$174,440 in grant funding to the District bringing the total grant award to \$610,540, which now has been expended in full with remaining expenses to be reimbursed from Rock Island County ARPA granted funds, and

**WHEREAS**, the Illinois Public Museum Grant program is a reimbursable grant, and

**WHEREAS**, construction on the project has been performed and completed, 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. Expenditures in the amount of \$2,500.00 shall be increased from grant revenue to be received to provide the necessary funds to complete the project in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$2,500.00	131-32-35 631 MCPD24	Professional Services

SECTION 3. Revenues in the amount of \$2,500.00 shall be increased from Rock Island County ARPA funds granted to the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$2,500.00	131-32-35 331.10 ARPA	Federal Grants-General Govt.

SECTION 4. This resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 21<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2024.

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Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

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Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

Commissioner Westpfahl asked, "I gotta question on this Prairie Dog thing. Just how much money are we going to spend on this exhibit? It seems like every couple of months we are wanting money for it."

President Pro Tempore Simmer answered, "This is the same, we are just finishing it off for..."

Mr. Westpfahl interrupted, "How long does it take to bill something?"

President Pro Tempore Simmer asked, "Mr. Craver, please?"

Mr. Craver stated, "This should be the last claim. I believe the Resolution is for \$2,500 per the grant. There is an agreed upon set of procedures that we have to follow. So, we had syncage due to an audit of the grant expenditures and ensured that we follow all other terms of the grant agreement. This should be the last one. And, folks, as you see next month there will be more resolutions for the Recreation Trail program grant and other grants. When we receive these things, it's the recommendation from the Auditor's Office that we appropriate the expenditures as they come in and with any matching revenues. So, that's why you see so many, but this should conclude the Prairie Dog Exhibit and Illinois Public Museum Grant where we are waiting our reimbursement. The final report was successfully submitted early in the month."

President Pro Tempore asked, "We have a motion and a second, correct?"

Mrs. Oberbroeckling answered, "Yes, sir."

Commissioner Foster moves to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Mielke seconded.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, B. Perkins, R. Simmer, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES            10**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

9. Commissioner Layer moved to lay on display for thirty days the 2025 Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinances for the General Fund, Niabi Zoological Preserve Fund, IMRF Retirement Fund, Liability Fund, FISSA Fund, Audit Fund, and Development of Forest and Construction of Improvements Fund, as presented. Commissioner Burns seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

10. Commissioner Woods moved to approve the amendment to the District's Fund Balance Reporting, Use & Reserves Policy, as presented. Commissioner Burns seconded.

Commissioner Brunk moves to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Perkins seconded.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, B. Perkins, R. Simmer, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 10**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

11. Commissioner Mielke moved to approve the low bid and construction manager fees for Bid Package G for the Niabi Zoo Big Cat Exhibits, Eagle Enclosure, Rhino Roof and snow damage repairs in the amount of \$592,921.00, as presented. Commissioner Burns seconded.

President Pro Tempore Simmer asked, "Jeff, this is just the difference of the insurance, is that what it is?"

Mr. Craver stated, "This is Bid Package G from the initial bids that were sent out a couple of months ago. Last month, you approved most of the bid packages...unfortunately, we did not receive any bids for the netting portion of the projects. And so, it was rebid and these were the bids that were received. This should conclude the bids. Insurance...by the way, since you mentioned that, are still waiting on insurance adjusters to finalize the numbers as this construction has been very, very helpful in providing them the data that they need so we can get the most accurate picture on how much damage was exactly done at the zoo. Obviously, in the last couple of pages of my report, there is a breakdown of the expenditures and some additional expenditures of all the snow damage as well as the proposed Big Cat and Eagle Exhibit renovations. Obviously, we were not going to receive that sizeable of an insurance number. We are not putting back what was damaged at the Eagle Exhibit or at the Cat house. The previous, what was there was either infuriating with regards to the Eagle netting and at the Big Cat house, that did not meet the zoological design. So, what was destroyed does not mean put it back and we are hoping to address that through various donations. I believe I have passed that along to you. The Niabi Zoo Foundation is conducting another auction. If you've been out to the zoo, there is signage to get donations. Currently, the Foundation has generated about \$70,000.00 from community

donations; but, obviously, if you take a look at my report...again, at the end of the packet, we need a significant amount of more dollars to come in. Staff are looking at grants and other options. Are there any further questions regarding the net bidding?"

Mr. Layer asked, "So, Jeff, did you say all the bids are in for work that'll be done?"

Mr. Craver answered, "Yes, this is the last bid for the bid package. Not all of the work has been bid. We still need to address the Carousel Top; which was damaged and the perimeter fence. There was either a hundred or a thousand-foot section of the fence damaged. It's a pretty sizeable section. The snow was obviously on the fence, stuck to the fence and a good portion of the fence does not have a top bar on there and so, when the snow and ice stuck to it, some of the pole got bent and the fence is down."

President Pro Tempore Simmer asked, "Are there any more questions? We have a motion and a second on that, correct?"

Mrs. Oberbroeckling answered, "Yes, sir."

(Ms. Sowards is present)

President Pro Tempore Simmer stated, "We have to do another roll call because Ms. Sowards is here now."

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, B. Perkins,  
E. Sowards, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES            10**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

12. Commissioner Burns moved to approve the purchase of two John Deere 7500A Hybrid Diesel Units in the amount of \$85,000.00, as presented. Commissioner Foster seconded.

Commissioner Brunk asked, "How big are these units? Are they considered ground-care equipment or are they larger than that?"

Mr. Craver answered, "They are two fairway mowers. Deere Run has a lease program I believe runs every three years. So, they cycle out their equipment. In the past, we've gotten the equipment from them through dealers. Typically, we try to buy new equipment. But, in this instance, we know where they are coming

from and are extremely well-maintained. So, our previous machines are nearing the end of their life. So, I believe a new fairway mower will run about \$85,000. So, we are getting two for half of what it would cost. It is a significant savings. And, again, knowing that we are getting them from a reputable...obviously, we are getting them from the dealer, but we know who was using them and maintaining them. We keep our eyes out with our inventory, looking to see what we can possibly get in good deals. And, then we are blessed to have an excellent mechanic at the golf course as well. And so, we keep things running a long time, but eventually, you need to cycle those things out."

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

R. Brunk, L. Burns, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, B. Perkins,  
E. Sowards, J.R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES                10**

**TOTAL NO                0**

Motion carried.

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

President Pro Tempore Simmer asked, "Any comments from Commissioners? Ms. Palmer, do you have anything to say?"

Ms. Palmer answered, "No, thank you."

**14.    Commissioner Foster moved to approve all Routine Reports from the Director and Departments Heads of the Forest Preserve Commission, as presented. Commissioner Woods seconded. (Record)**

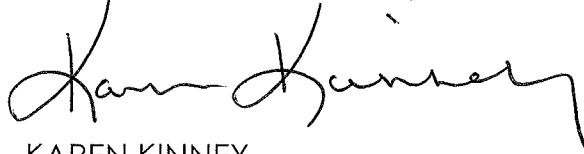
A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

President Pro Tempore Simmer stated, "The next meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission will be Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 5:30pm, following the meeting of the Rock Island County Board in the Rock Island County Office Building, 1504 Third Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois in these Chambers. We are in adjourned. Thank you for your patience."

President Pro Tempore Simmer declared the Forest Preserve Meeting adjourned at 7:03pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Kinney", written in a cursive style.

KAREN KINNEY  
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY  
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

KK:ro