

**Minutes**

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION

Thursday, August 27, 2020, 4:00 p.m.

*Meeting held by Virtual Zoom technology*

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**Members Present:** Judy Hunt, John Hemmer, Bob Franzen, Tom Erlandson, Marla Connelly, Steve Sandberg, Martha Anderson

**Members Absent:** Ainsley Smith

**Others Present:** Brad Bentley, Sam Zafuto, Jacob Bodway, Kathy Tampio

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The meeting was called to order by Judy Hunt at 4:15 p.m.

**Minutes Review and Acceptance**

*The minutes of the July 30, 2020 meeting were reviewed and approved as presented.*

**Acknowledgement of Guests and Topics Discussions**

Jacob Bodway: I'm just here to listen. I mean I have some, I don't know if you are able to share a screen, if I can share my screen? You have to give me access to share my screen whoever's in charge of the Zoom meeting.

Olivia Ames: You don't have a green button at the bottom that says share screen?

Jacob Bodway: Okay I do have access. I rode the overland on Thursday from point 8 Chautauqua Gorge all the way to 474. I just want to show you a couple of pictures that I took. This is from the (inaudible), it needs to be mowed a little bit. Here's the entrance to the overland, you can't even tell where the trail is. There is no trail, it's just a big tree smashed. This is the main concern, Wait Corners, Sherman/(inaudible) road and over by Bates road. It's in really bad shape. This is Titus road, the pond by Titus road. The trail is gone. It's under water. I don't know what the plan is for that, the planks. The trail literally ends, like you can see the planks right there (picture showed the planks underwater). I spoke with Keith (Carrow) and he said that they might do something over there but, something should be done at least with those sections of trail by (inaudible) and Titus road because it's impassable. As you can see it's just a big mud hole. It looks like a beaver built a dam and it just flooded out everything. These are the sections I'd like to address if we get the grant through Ralph Wilson but, I did see Bart on the trail. He was fixing some of the bridges which was awesome so I got to talk to him for about 45 minutes. The bridges were in bad shape but I rode part of it yesterday and on Saturday and he definitely fixed a majority of the bridges that were in bad shape. I also spoke with him about moving blow

downs and I've been out there removing a few blow downs and he took care of some of those on the private land but, the stuff at Titus road really really needs to be fixed. It's in bad shape. If you look at some of the sign in boxes, people are commenting about the Titus road parking lot that they can't even walk on the trails. There's a lot of negative feedback on the comments section. I think it just needs to be addressed. Whatever resources the county does have to address this one section, I think we should dump it into that section. Because it is on state forest lands, not on private land. That's my two cents. I'll try to get the grant and hopefully we can reroute that section but, for the time being something should be done with that section.

Martha Anderson: I agree, it looks like it needs work.

Judy Hunt: Yeah, those pictures were very illustrative, that's for sure.

Brad Bentley: Well Jacob, thank you for your comments here and we have had Bart out there to do what he can. He's got obviously not a lot of resources. There's not a lot of money. One of the things I'm doing on this, was also what I did on the roads and bridges. We were on furlough. There's a safety issue with that much concern, we'll post the trails closed so we can get it fixed. If they are in the bad of shape, I'm going to recommend that we actually close that section of the trail, and just post it closed.

Jacob Bodway: Yeah, from the first lean-to on the west side overland, the north lean-to, to the Titus road parking lot, that whole section really needs some TLC. I have more pictures, I just gave you the greatest hits so to speak.

Brad Bentley: There needs to be a long-term plan. We have to end up closing that section of trail for a lengthy part of time so we can get the money and the resources. That's where John comes in.

Judy Hunt: What's the time frame on your grant application Jacob?

Jacob Bodway: It's due I think in November so I'm going to be working with the grant application office from October forward. Even that, it's still going to take quite a long time. Next year, we're not going to be able to get work done until next year because we're going to be testing reroutes more or less next summer if we get the grant. It's all contingent on getting the grant. So we have to get the grant money and then we have to assess where we want to do reroutes. Working with Keith Carrow, he's sending me a map that has all the future tree harvests on it and we're going to look at potential reroutes around those tree harvests. Rather than having the trail destroyed, we'll just reroute it around wet spots and then when the tree harvest is complete. But, this is going to be a long process. It could take probably a full year just to reroute it so 2022 will be the most likely time frame to get the mini excavator out there to do the work if we do get the grant.

John Hemmer: Well, thank you for bringing all that to our attention Jacob and it probably will be that we'll have to close that section of the trail. Our budget isn't there to throw a lot of manpower and money at the trails right at this time. We're cutting just about everywhere we can in the budget and I hate to tell you guys this, but as far as the department of Public Facilities budget, we're probably Parks is the lowest priority as determined by the Public

Facilities Committee when they did their evaluation to assist the department heads when they were working on their 2021 budget. What came out of that evaluation was the fact that Parks is probably the lowest priority in that department. Therefore if there's budget cuts they'll probably come, or some percentage will come. I think that what we have now is a time to do some planning and trying to figure out exactly how we want to approach trails and parks maintenance and repairs in the future so we can be ready when we do have some funding. As far as the Parks Commission, I think that at this time what we can do is to try to work on possible areas where we could apply for grants and also try to recruit volunteers. Try to find people who can work to some extent on these parks and trails. As you know we, as far as any work that is on the county land we can't take work away from county employees but as far as picking things up, cleaning up, that kind of stuff, picking up the trash, we can certainly keep the guest registers up to date – new copies of the guest registers and that type of thing. But, I'm just telling you that the money to actually to go ahead and attack some of these problems is not there right now. I guess that's my legislative report.

Tom Erlandson: Our lights have been flickering and there's a storm brewing so if you lose us it's not our fault.

Kathy Tampio: I also want to interject that we are seeing a little bit of fluctuation in electric at the county in Mayville. If everything goes off on this end I guess we'll just end the meeting early and you'll have to reschedule.

Judy Hunt: I suggest we move to the draft that the guys have been working on. The Operations/Maintenance Procedure. Do we want to look at that before we lose juice?

Tom Erlandson: As I indicated in an email, Steve Sandberg and I met a week or so ago and talked about this in general terms and Steve sent me an email with kind of a rough draft. I typed that up and sent it out and then Bob and I got together yesterday and fleshed it out a little bit more. It does need a whole lot of work to make it complete. You'll notice that we didn't say much about the trails. When I sent out the draft (inaudible) the parks, but, please consider this a draft in progress. Provide some guidance for what to do with all parks facilities in the future.

Marla Connelly: Well, I'm going to speak up for a moment in response if nobody else is. When I got this in the email I looked at it briefly and I have not discussed this with anybody at all but if I were in Brad's shoes, I'd be a little offended. Because I believe he's got most of this under control. There were a couple of errors this year because of the way things went together with COVID, had to have masks and other things, but, I think he's got all this written down in other places. I don't think we need to redo it for him.

Tom Erlandson: Well if it is written down perhaps he can give it to us. I've never seen it.

Marla Connelly: I'm sure it's in his work stated for his guy. Okay – we're going to need to get this done, and you know I don't think there's a single handbook.

Judy Hunt: Probably all in Mark's head.

Marla Connelly: I'm sure it is. Now that Mark's coming back from what I read, maybe that's the job that he can do. But I don't think that that is our function as a commission to make their operation handbook. I just don't see that as part of the scope of what we should be doing. I think we definitely need to get feedback if there's something that was overlooked or missed so that it could be added to their work but I don't think it's our function to create their handbook.

Martha Anderson: But I do think that we need to have a little input on it, especially for those problem areas at Erlandson. I know that it was a fluke this year because with the COVID and the workers and everything. That swale is very important and to have it mowed is really not good.

Marla Connelly: I think that even with (inaudible) it would have happened anyway. I don't think this piece of paper would have made a difference to what happened there. Because it was a sub and he didn't get right information. I don't think this would have changed the outcome this year.

Judy Hunt: But we did ask that it not be mowed years ago. The guys were very responsive and they did it correctly every year after that.

### *Crosstalk*

Marla Connelly: This COVID thing and subs moving around everywhere it screwed up a lot of things this year. That just happened, one of the accidents that occurred, we had a lot of things in our parks too that didn't go right. This is a weird year. I guess I just feel like this is just beyond our scope of what we should do. Yes, we should definitely get input but I really think that this kind of thing is their project.

Tom Erlandson: Well, we considered this input.

Marla Connelly: Okay. Anyway that was my two cents.

Judy Hunt: Most of those were done I would think Brad, right?

Brad Bentley: Yes, when I had the people. We get done what we can get done with the resources and money as John alluded to. It's a difficult year all the way around for all the county groups now, not just Parks.

Judy Hunt: Sure. Could we discuss our next meeting in case we get shut off? What is the likelihood that we might be able to meet at one of the parks, Brad? Do you have any feel from the county? Is the 25 gathering a limiting factor?

Brad Bentley: I'm taking my cue from the legislative meeting. As long as they are meeting by Zoom, I'll defer to John and Bob Franzen about their concerns. But, I will tell you I feel uncomfortable meeting in person and with today's announcement of the number of COVID cases. If you don't have to my opinion is why do it if you don't have to.

John Hemmer: These Zoom meetings work. We had some problems starting this one out but, we got it going and it is working. It's true that as far as the legislature meetings, committee meetings and full legislature it's all been Zoom. I think this is the normal for right now, rather than what we had in the past.

Judy Hunt: Well I guess if anything changes Brad then you'll let us know where we can meet if we can. Otherwise we'll Zoom on the twenty-fourth of September. I don't know about you but it looks like Laura's in my backyard.

Kathy Tampio: Mr. Hemmer, Chairman Chagnon today talked with me about having the legislature committee meetings and legislature meeting in our Chambers in Mayville next month. However, they'll be a hybrid option – some people that may not feel comfortable about coming in person and they will be given the option of joining the meeting by a Zoom means and still be using a camera in Chambers to be on Facebook. It's not easy because we have to have a special TV brought in to show the people who are Zooming in addition to those people in Chambers. That's the status of what the legislature's doing next month.

Martha Anderson: I like the option of either or. I think that's good for all people who want to take that choice.

John Hemmer: It would be a little hard for us unless ...

Judy Hunt: I don't think we can do that at one of the parks so I think we'll be Zooming next month.

John Hemmer: If we followed that procedure it would probably have to be at the county office building. I guess that we'll have to see how that works out next month before we make a decision where it's going to be. I don't know. It sounds like it's not all set up yet, right Kathy?

Kathy Tampio: Yes, it's not all set up and the IT people will be able to do it for our legislature meetings but I'm no sure I can guarantee the IT participation at extra meetings like this one. So I would think it would be better for you guys if you still stay with Zoom.

Judy Hunt: I think you're right.

John Hemmer: Okay, so then I guess what we should plan on is a Zoom meeting at least at this time for next month.

Judy Hunt: Okay. Brad, do you want to do operations?

## **Operations**

Brad Bentley: We kind of went through some of it already. Jacob's report. Bart has been out trying to address some of the problem issues on the trails that can be remedied fairly quickly. I think he's doing a pretty good job and I'll note that as my email, as everybody's noted, Bart is back. He's chosen to come back to the road construction supervisor I position that's for the parks. He's been going there since August. We've gotten some comments on the

condition of the trails. Much like Jacob's pictures which are not unique to him, I've seen some other ones where we'll know where they're at to get out to get there. As Jacob noted there's been some progress. Where we can't get to them, I've instructed Mike and Bart to post the trails closed. Sam, do we have any ones posted right now?

Sam Zafuto: No, we don't have any posted at this time. Well actually he was rerouting some trails yesterday. We didn't give you any notification yet.

Brad Bentley: So, we're trying to get to it but again he's a one man show with a helper. In between that he's trying to mow. I think with the bathrooms being closed and limited gatherings, it's helped do some of the maintenance but trying to get the trash picked up the best we can, it's always helpful for people to take, they bring stuff in, to take it back out to extent possible. But it has been a very tough road for all things involved here so from a money position ....

Judy Hunt: He have summer help to work with him? What's the status of that?

Brad Bentley: No, all the summer help was cut from the budget.

Judy Hunt: Oh, that never returned. Okay.

Brad Bentley: They never were here.

Judy Hunt: Right, the money didn't. Right.

Brad Bentley: The money was cut from the budget early on. It's not unique to the Parks either. I was not able hire any seasonals for the highway, landfill or airports. We had no seasonal help whatsoever, that's what we're in in the highway right now. From a budget standpoint, again we're, got some money left, we have to pay the salaries but it's very thin. So we are doing the most urgent needs first and trying to take care of what we can. For the 2021 budget I've been informed that the 3% Occupancy Tax has been reduced. We normally get \$150,000 from the 3% occupancy. That was reduced by \$15,600 so we are going to have to ask for that money as a local share. So I have asked for that as local share but again that's up to the county executive and legislative approval whether that comes back. That would be a significant hit to our operating budget ...

Judy Hunt: You said 15% Brad?

Brad Bentley: \$15,000.

Judy Hunt: Oh, \$15,000. Okay.

Brad Bentley: Our operating budget, not including salaries, is only like \$30,000. So that would be half of our working money. So we'll see where this all plays out at. In addition, the capital plans have been put on hold and anything if it does not meet safety or security. So that means the bathroom up at Luensman, I've been told to put that project on hold until they have more clarification on the capital plans – what they want to do. In large part, even if I had the

money I'm not sure I'd have the people to do the work. Kind of aligns anyways, we're just trying... if you notice in my background I'm getting a hurricane. See the trees waving.

Judy Hunt: Well, why don't we wrap this up and get off before we get ... that's my suggestion. What do you think Bob?

Brad Bentley: I think we lost him.

Judy Hunt: I think we did. Kath, I think you'll have less to type. This will be the shortest meeting we've ever had.

Martha Anderson: Is there anything else pressing on the agenda though right, that we really need to decide or do... or, that I remember?

Judy Hunt: Nothing that I can see. Is the Wegman's passport thing... I didn't go to see but...

Martha Anderson: I haven't been there yet but I plan on doing it this week.

Judy Hunt: I'm going to make that note now on my notes.

Brad Bentley: Yeah, I've been hesitant to put that passport thing out too far because of the condition of the trails.

Judy Hunt: Oh yeah.

Martha Anderson: Good idea.

Brad Bentley: What's the point of having it out there trying to promote it if ...

Judy Hunt: Somebody picks one of the trails that's really bad and has a bad experience. Yeah, I think you're right Brad.

Judy Hunt: Oh, this too will pass, I hope.

Brad Bentley: So I've been a little hesitant there but I need to check to see how Bart's doing with getting those posts up – getting them out there. The trail markers are going to be at the trail heads so you don't have to go too far to go get the stencil, but it's meant to go from one end to the other so unless you drive it, it's not really the point. I just want to make sure we're not setting someone up to have a bad experience.

Judy Hunt: That's wise. I agree. We'll wait for that too then. Good question there Martha. Shall we adjourn?

**Next Meeting: September 24, 2020, 4:00 pm – by Zoom**

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m. (*Meeting adjourned early due to storm threats*)

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Tampio  
Clerk, Chautauqua County Legislature