

CARBON COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2020

The September 11, 2020 meeting of the Carbon County Parks and Recreation Commission was held at the Mauch Chunk Lake Park Office beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Board Members Present – Terry Warnagiris, Vice-Chairwoman; Darryl Brewster (via Conference Call), Secretary; Earl Henninger, Member.

Park Staff Present – David Horvath, Park Director.

Commissioner Chris L. Lukasevich was also in attendance.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – Mrs. Warnagiris called the meeting to order and led the group in pledging allegiance to the American flag.

HEARING OF VISITORS – There were no visitors present for the September meeting.

MINUTES – Motion made by Mr. Henninger to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2020 meeting of the Carbon County Parks & Recreation Commission as written, seconded by Mr. Brewster. All board members were in favor.

VOUCHERS/PURCHASE REQUISITIONS – Motion made by Mr. Brewster to recommend approval of vouchers and purchase requisitions submitted for the month of July totaling \$105,565.82 and for the month of August totaling \$58,083.67, seconded by Mr. Henninger. All board members were in favor. Mr. Horvath noted the 2nd Quarter Unemployment Expense, County Retirement Fund Contribution, Fringe Benefits payment and additional pay period during the month of July over August.

PARK OPERATIONS –

Military/Veteran Discount – Mr. Horvath provided a list of discounts for camping rentals, pavilion rentals, memberships, daily admission, and boat mooring that could be offered for active military and veterans. The discounts would be applied through the Campground Master reservation system if approved. Mr. Horvath reported that the park office has received inquiries about military discounts that have been mainly for camping reservations. Mr. Horvath stated that he believes the PA State Parks offers a 30% discount for tent campsites. Following discussion the park board recommended approval of the discounts to be applied to those showing proof of active military or veteran status. Mr. Horvath recommended that the individual receiving the discount be the occupant and responsible party for the reservation.

COVID-19 UPDATE – Mr. Horvath reported that the park received a Graco Ultra Airless Handheld Sprayer from the County for disinfecting high touch surface and common areas. Mr. Horvath stated he also received additional supplies from the County EMA such as disinfectant, masks, and rubber gloves. Mr. Horvath reported that Mrs. Miller is working on providing the County with a list of COVID related expenses which would be reimbursable. Mr. Horvath stated that the County Sheriff's Department continued to provide coverage on weekends and the Labor Day Holiday. Mr. Horvath reported that there were several weekends where all of the local state parks had reached capacity. Mr. Horvath reported that the beach/swim area remained County resident only and the camping area at 50% capacity. Commissioner Lukasevich suggested allowing more camping reservations with the thought that most campers are socially distanced and the off-season weekends will likely not reach 100% occupancy. Following discussion the board agreed to eliminate the 50% capacity restriction on the camping area.

Mr. Horvath reported that the park realized only 10% of the projected daily admission fees for the year. Mr. Horvath reported a loss of \$141,032 in daily admission fees when compared with last year. Mr. Horvath reported that the loss is likely higher because last season there was a significant amount of rainfall when compared with 2020. Mr. Horvath reported that camping and cabin rentals were not as greatly impacted due to the pandemic. Mr. Horvath noted that there has been an increase in weekday camping rentals when compared with previous years. Mr. Horvath stated that he believes other lodging facilities are witnessing the same. Mr. Horvath stated that the County Treasurer reported an increase of \$45,790.63 in hotel tax revenue over last year through the first half of 2020.

Park Maintenance – Mr. Horvath reported that blacktop was ordered and repairs were made to parking areas and roadways. Mr. Horvath reported that a few repairs are still needed at Boat Launch B which is scheduled for next week.

Mr. Horvath reported that repairs were made to the camping area roads twice during the camping season and material was ordered for work along the Switchback Trail below the PSU Extension Office. Mr. Henninger noted that repairs to the Switchback Trail leading to the Five Mile Tree have been completed and that many hikers and bikers have complimented on the improvements. The board suggested that Mr. Horvath budget for additional repairs for next year.

Mr. Henninger stated that he would also like to see work continue on the Shoreline Trail. Mr. Horvath stated that work on the next section of the Shoreline Trail would be scheduled for this off-season when the park closes.

Mr. Horvath reported that park maintenance have been working with Seitz Bros. on pest control issues with one of the cabins.

Mr. Henninger questioned the status of the pavilion roof. Mr. Horvath reported that he plans to have a discussion with the maintenance staff about starting the project beginning next week. Mr. Horvath reported that the seasonal staff will be assigned to the routine maintenance to allow the full-time staff the time to focus on the pavilion roof.

Park Security – Mr. Horvath reported that Mark Janner was approved for a Change of Status from a Seasonal Park Ranger II to Seasonal Park Ranger I. Mr. Horvath reported that Mr. Janner received firearms qualification training on August 21st and attended County Use of Force policy re-certification training on August 27th in coordination with the County Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Horvath reported that the swim area was swim at your own risk beginning on August 10th due to limited lifeguard staffing and availability. Mr. Horvath stated that the current lifeguard staff have expressed their interest in retuning next season. Mr. Horvath reported that there is a total of six positions to fill for next season. Mr. Horvath reported that he will be working on reimbursing the lifeguards for their clearances and training per the Lifeguard Incentive Policy over the next week.

Mr. Horvath reported that there have been several instances lately where campers left behind trash at campsites and in fire rings, as well as, cutting and damaging trees. Mr. Horvath reported citations were issued in each instance.

SPECIAL ACTIVITY REQUESTS – Mr. Horvath reported that the Pow-Wow festival scheduled for September 12th and 13th and the Half-Marathon scheduled for September 26th have been cancelled. There were no Special Activity Requests submitted for the September meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE – There was no correspondence for the September meeting.

Prior to adjournment Commissioner Lukasevich spoke of his plans to host a town hall meeting at the beach pavilion to gather public comments on the park. Commissioner Lukasevich welcomed the board members to attend.

Commissioner Lukasevich commented on the Work Release Program and stated that a request should be made to the County Prison Board.

Commissioner Lukasevich reported on Google Reviews relating to the park and the ability to update information by park staff through a g-mail account.

Commissioner Lukasevich reported that the County is moving forward with plans to accept credit card payments at the admissions booth for next season.

Commissioner Lukasevich reported that Mr. Horvath is currently working on a proposal for a grant to obtain a new boat for the park rangers through the PCoRP Loss Prevention Grant Program. Mr. Horvath reported that PCoRP members have from June 01, 2020 to May 31, 2021 to apply for a PCoRP Loss Prevention Grant.

Commissioner Lukasevich stated that he would like to see additional cabins at the park. The board members agreed and would like to see additional cabin sites in the future.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion made at 11:20 a.m. by Mr. Henninger to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Brewster. All board members were in favor.

Darryl Brewster, Secretary