The monthly meeting of the Rusk County Forestry Committee was called to order at 8:30 A.M., Monday, September 10, 2012. Present from the committee were: Phil Schneider, Tony Hauser, Pete Boss, Bob Nawrocki and Jerry Biller. Also present were: Paul Teska – County Forest Administrator; Randy Tatur – Rusk County Board Chairman, Denise Wetzel – County Clerk

From the public: Don Mansky, George Sihsman, Bob Grunseth, Doug Fisher, Jerry Carow

Motion by Hauser /Biller to approve the August 13, 2012 minutes of the previous meeting. Motion carried.

Boss objected to the second to the last sentence in the second paragraph of last month’s minutes.

Motion by Nawrocki / Biller to adjust the agenda as necessary. Motion carried.

Forestry Committee Minutes:
Discussion held on how to process the Forestry Minutes: Schneider discussed the minutes from the August meeting with Rich Summerfield. Rusk County Clerk Denise Wetzel has concerns with the minutes and the way they are written due to the liability of the Forestry Committee. Teska would like the minutes to reflect on what was said at the meetings and will continue doing minutes the way they have been done. Nawrocki and Hauser stated that the minutes should reflect on facts and what transpires at a monthly meeting.

Public Comment:
None

ATV Trails:
Maintenance Issues on the New Trail and the rock ruts that have developed. Highway Department suggestion is to wait until we get significant moisture so that it can be reworked with a grader and then packed with a compactor. The estimate to do this work is $5,500.00 from Kozak lane to Bucks lake road by the Rusk County Highway Department. Bob Grunseth stated that it is also a snowmobile trail and the trail consists of more gravel than clay and only certain sections need to be reworked. Teska informed the Committee that there is approx. $11,000.00 of money in the ATV budget for maintenance.

Boss/Nawrocki made the motion to have this maintenance work on the ATV Trail done by the Rusk County Highway Department. Motion carried.

Rusk County Parks and Forest Ordinance Chapter 16.02 (27) (A) 4 Tree Stands:
Doug Fisher has approached Teska to change the Ordinance on Tree Stands in the County Forest. Doug would like to keep the stands in overnight instead of removal every day for the gun deer season. Teska stated that he is afraid of hunters claiming the area as their own personal place to hunt and shooting lanes developing. Doug Fisher stated that it should be only 10 days and there is damage to the forest with bear hunters and other hunters now and suggested permits for the stands to be in County Forest. The Committee discussed the stands, permits and the state law and what they allow.

Hauser/Biller made the motion to post pone changing the Ordinance on Tree Stands in the County Forest, until the Committee has more information. Motion carried.
ATV Trail:
Spring Closure Dates Policy:
Discussion was held last month on this issue and moving the opening dates to the Friday before Memorial Day. George Sihsman would like to move the date due to increasing the tourist season. Teska would like to keep the dates we have now. We would become less restrictive if we change and that would increase damage to the rest of the County Forest. Boss would like to open only the ATV trails and limit the activity on the rest of the logging roads. Bob Grunseth would like to have signs on the trails that state “stay on the Trail”. Teska purposed the County Forest, not the ATV trails stay closed until July 1 of each year to become more restrictive which would help protect the County Forest from further damage. Bob Grunseth and George Sihsman were not in favor of this.

Biller/Boss made the motion to change the ATV Ordinance to open only ATV trails one week earlier to the Friday before Memorial Day weekend. Motion carried. Teska to bring this change back to the committee in the form of an Ordinance change/resolution for the next meeting.

Skinner Creek County Forest Road Improvement Project:
The State through the Flambeau Forest has come up with the 90% funding for the project. The County will have to come up with 10% match to the project. Total cost of the project would be $91,072.00. This estimate is based on Highway Dept. estimates from last fall. State grant would cover $81,965.00 and he purposed that the 10% due from the County ($9,107.00) be taken out of 2012 stumpage revenue. Hauser/Biller have questions about the job being bid out. Teska asked the committee about the process of getting specifications on the road if the job is bid out so the County is not taken advantage of. Nawrocki would like the Rusk County Highway Commissioner, Phil Montwill, to come up with the bidding specs on the road. Boss suggested hiring an engineer to come up with the bidding specs.

Biller/Hauser made the motion to take $9,107.00 out of the stumpage revenue to improve the Skinner Creek County Forest Road Improvement Project, put the job out on bids and have Phil Montwill the Rusk County Highway Commissioner give the specs on the road.

Boss/Schneider moved to make an amendment to the motion to hire an engineer to spec the Skinner Creek County Forest Road Improvement Project. Motion on the amendment defeated. Biller – no, Hauser – no, Nawrocki – no, Boss –yes, Schneider – yes,

Original motion passed. Biller – yes, Hauser – yes, Nawrocki – yes, Boss – no, Schneider – no,

Community Park Development Project:
Jerry Carow gave the Committee a map on the Community Park and explained the further developments he would like to see. Discussion was held with the Wildlife Restoration Association Board and they would also contribute money towards the project. Jerry Carow commented that the project would also qualify for Park Aid Funds as well as help from the WRA Board. Hauser would like to know if there is going to be a time table and Jerry Carow stated that is should take at least 3 years. Teska would like the Committee to look at the proposal on the 20th of September when they go on their Committee Tour.

Rusk County Camping Rates:
The Forestry Department/Committee has based the rates on other surrounding Counties. Nawrocki would like to change the rates on the without electricity sites and would like to see a
cheaper rate during the week. Schneider suggested maybe having a free night stay on a Tuesday. Discussion was also held on reservations during the previous hunting seasons.

Nawrocki/Boss motion to raise the non-electricity camping from $16.00 to $18.00 per night. Nawrocki – yes, Schneider – no, Boss – no, Biller – no, Hauser – no, Motion defeated.

Deputy Phil Grassman informed the Committee that the State Law on State Forest land is the same as the County Ordinance on tree stands in the Rusk County Forest. The law states that all deer stands have to be put up and taken down on a daily basis. He has issued tickets for damage to trees on Rusk County Forest Land.

Phil Montwill, Rusk County Highway Commissioner came to talk to the Committee. Teska brought Phil up to date on what the Forestry Committee passed to put the Skinner Creek road project out on bids. Phil Montwill informed the board that the work is being done with the County’s own equipment. Phil’s issue is that the County has the equipment to do the work and to keep the work within the County. The Highway Department will lose $44,000.00 if they do not get this job and his crew can do the job as well as any other contractor. Nawrocki stated the public would like the opportunity to bid to get the job done as cheap as possible. Phil Montwill drew graph on the board to explain the intention of the infrastructure of the County and how it lowers the levy.

Rusk County Tourism/Camping Prizes:
Boss suggested that the Committee use a Tuesday and Wednesday to incorporate a week stay. Andy Albarado, Rusk County Economic Development Coordinator is suggesting 6-2 day passes to a campground for a campsite in the County. The Committee would like to keep it away from a weekend or a holiday weekend.

Hauser/Biller made the motion to give 6 - 2 day passes prize any 2 days, Sunday thru Thursday night by reservation excluding Holidays. Motion passed

2013 .50/Ac State Aid Forestry Variable Loan Resolution :
Hauser/Biller made the motion to recommend to the County Board the 2013 .50/Ac State Aid Forestry Variable Loan Resolution. Motion passed.

2013 Rusk County Forestry Work Plan:
Boss/Schneider recommended to the County Board the 2013 Rusk County Forestry work plan. Motion carried.

County Forest certification should be put on next month’s agenda

2012-2013 Forestry Department Budgets:
Discussion held on the changes made by Finance Committee.

County/Personal Cell Phone use:
Teska needs approval for employees to be reimbursed for their personal cell phones. Teska read the procedure from the County Handbook on being reimbursed for a personal cell phone. Teska is also looking into using smart phones for data recording for timber scaling purposes and will bring this back to the committee next month.
Nawrocki/Hauser recommends to property committee to reimburse Josh Waukau $13.00 per month on his personal cell phone. Motion carried.

Timber Sale Fall Advertisement:
Hauser/Biller motion to advertise Timber Sales as presented and open bids at the October 8 Forestry Committee meeting. Motion carried

Josie Creek Park Timber Sale/Tax Deed Land
Discussion on the Josie Creek Park Timber Sale, Tract # 25-12. Paul informed the Committee on the meetings he had with the archery club and the added restrictions on this sale.

Boss/Hauser motion to sell the Josie Creek Park Timber Sale, Tract #25-12 with the tax deed land and with the added restrictions. Motion carried

Access Permit:
Discussion held on location and purpose of permit.

Hauser/Biller motion to give Eric and Petra Smith temporary access permit in Section 17, Town of Atlanta off the fire lane for logging purposes. Motion carried

Timber Sales Contracts, closeouts and Renewals:

Nawrocki/Hauser motion to close out Contract #2318 Sappi Corp. and return the cash bond in the amount of $18,179.00. Motion carried

Hauser/Nawrocki motion to close out Contract # 2323 Hartwig Logging and return the cash bond in the amount of $13,910.87. Motion carried

Hauser/Biller motion to close out Contract # 2358 Chris Hershey and cancel letter of credit. Motion carried

Committee will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Forestry Shop on Thursday September 20, 2012 for the Committee tour.

Motion by Hauser/Biller to approve bills. Motion carried.

Motion by Hauser/Biller to adjourn at 12:40 p.m. Motion carried