

Minutes of the Warren County Conservation Board

The Warren County Conservation Board held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, October 9, 2024. The meeting was held in person at the Anette Nature Center.

Meeting called to order by President Mark Kickbush at 5:00 p.m.

Those present:

Ace Hendricks, Vice President

Sue Boll

Angie Croll

Comprising a quorum of the board

Absent:

Mark Kickbush, President

Joe Schettler, Secretary

Also present:

Luke Nelson, Norwalk City Manager

Mark Wilson, Director

Tyler Seuferer, Natural Resource Specialist

Mallory Wells, Office Manager

Mankato Stonebrook, Cons. Tech

Zach Hall, Director

Nathan Reinke, Cons. Tech

Hannah Hernandez, Naturalist

Monty Freeman, FWCC Treasurer

- i. Convene
 - a. Agenda deletions
 - i. None
- ii. Reading of the Minutes
 - a. Angie Croll made a motion to approve the September 2024 minutes as written. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.
- iii. Staff Reports
 - a. Director - Wilson
 - i. Director Wilson has been working with staff to place a gate at the south entrance of the Eckoff property. They have also been working on creating a parking lot for the area.
 - b. Director – Hall
 - i. Director Hall met with Dave Richmond, to discuss the butterfly sculpture. They revisited the agreement to make sure the sculpture was within the guidelines of the agreement and Mr. Richmond will secure the funding for the installation and building of the piece.
 - c. Natural Resource Specialist – Seuferer
 - i. There are 3 signs that need to be put out. All the signs that we've designed are all up. We haven't done Hickory Hills, Bank Swallow, Eckoff property.

- ii. The Norwalk 6th graders harvested Indian grass. Tyler made it a competition and the classes filled two big bags full.
- d. Conservation Technician – Stonebrook
 - i. Stonebrook is working on a power point for the 50th Anniversary Open House.
- e. Conservation Technician - Reinke
 - i. He rented a smaller skid loader to get in the areas of Grant Natureland trails that the normal skid loader wouldn't fit or get to. This allowed them to work along the trail to improve the water run-off areas.
- f. Naturalist – Hernandez
 - i. She enjoyed the Norwalk Middle schools. She spent the day teaching the kids how to canoe.
 - ii. She also did a night hike with the Norwalk Library. There were a few issues, but the program was a success.
- g. Office Manager – Wells
 - i. WCCB has participated in the Hartford Hometown Pride as a public outreach opportunity. This year Office Manager Wells created a monster sasquatch to be placed for two weeks.
- iv. Friends of Warren County Conservation
 - i. Prairie Picnic went well, and they used the picnic to reveal their new logo. This year they are going to provide Halloween Hike attendees with a bag that has the new logo printed on it.
- v. Business Agenda
 - a. New Business
 - i. Gilbert Addition REAP Grant
 - 1. Director Hall shared the scoring of the REAP Grant was held on Tuesday October 1st with Warren County Conservation being the top scorer. There are some logistics needing to be worked out and this is not official yet. Director Hall will keep the board updated.
 - ii. Land use agreement between City of Norwalk and Warren County Conservation Board - Tabled until further notice
 - 1. Luke Nelson, City Manager of Norwalk, presented the newest annexation of Norwalk. The annexation includes North River Greenbelt: Swamp White Oak Tract and Blue Flag Marsh.
 - 2. The Warren County Conservation Board would like to enter a 28E Agreement with the city of Norwalk, regarding the land use in Blue Flag Marsh.
 - a. The purpose of the agreement is to establish the framework for collaborative management of the Blue Flag Marsh within the North River Greenbelt. It sets forth the terms under which

hunting and other land use are allowed, subject to applicable laws and regulations.

3. The board decided to table signing the agreement until all board members can be present.
- iii. Trail access fee for City of Cumming connection to Great Western Trail
 1. Director Wilson had Rita Conner, City of Cumming Administrator, reach out with a contractor that had extra asphalt that she thought could be used to redo the parking lot entrance at the Great Western Trail Head in Cumming. The contractor met Mark, Tyler, and Rita at the trailhead parking lot to discuss the use of the asphalt. After meeting they decided to move forward with the repair. The Contractor prepped and laid the asphalt and Rita Conner agreed that the City of Cumming would pay for the driveway repair.
 2. The city is doing a trail connection to the south of the Cumming Trailhead and Director Wilson would like to have the board waive the trail access fee since the city covered the cost of the new asphalt in the parking lot.
 3. Sue Boll made a motion to waive the trail access fee. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.
- iv. Fiscal '26 Budget Proposal
 1. Director Hall met with the Budget Director, Meghan, and she encouraged him to include the cost of a new vehicle on top of the 8% being requested. With this addition Director Hall will be asking for a 13% increase for the fiscal year 25 budget.
 2. Sue Boll makes a motion to approve the budget proposal. Angie Croll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried

b. Discussion Items

- i. State Recreational Trails Grant
 1. WCCB did not receive the State Rec. Trails Grant. Director Wilson was disappointed that Warren County was not chosen. The winners were new trails and bridges. WCCB scored 15 out of 30.
 2. The Grant process takes too long and makes it difficult to get your trial updated.
- ii. Nature Playscape update
 1. No update currently.

c. Approval of Bills

- i. Angie Croll made a motion to approve the claims. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

d. Financial Report

- i. Angie Croll made a motion to approve the financial report. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

e. Upcoming Events

- i. ICYF Trunk or Treat, Severe Weather Hike, Indianola Parks & Rec Costume Party.
- ii. Staff are gearing up for the 50th Anniversary to be held November 14th.

f. Adjournment

- i. Angie Croll made a motion to adjourn at 6:28 pm. Sue Boll seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.