

BLAIR COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
THURSDAY, June 6, 2024, 8:30 A.M.
Valley View Park Pavilion #2

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

President Joe Keller called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

Members present:

- Joe Keller, President
- Phil Riccio, Member
- Frank Kopriva, Member
- Bill Sell, Member

Members absent:

- Chuck Gojmerac, Vice President
- Fred Miller, Member
- Michael Kessling, Member
- Commissioner Webster

Others present:

Chief Clerk Nicole Hemminger and Lori Guyer (Commissioners Office), Paul Shaffer (Public Works), and Adam Long (Keller Engineers, Inc.)

Public Comment: None

Election of Officers for 2023/2024:

Motion by Phil Riccio, seconded by Frank Kopriva and approved to reappoint Joseph Keller President.

Joe Keller abstained from the vote.

Motion by Joe Keller, seconded by Frank Kopriva and approved to reappoint Chuck Gojmerac Vice President.

Motion by Joe Keller, second by Phil Riccio and approved to appoint Frank Kopriva Secretary.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of April 4, 2024 (No Quorum May 2, 2024)

President Keller called for corrections or changes to the meeting minutes of April 4, 2024. There were no corrections or changes noted.

Motion by Frank Kopriva, seconded by Bill Sell, and approved to accept the minutes as prepared.

Approval of Financial Report for the months of April 2024 & May 2024

Review of the Year-to-Date Budget Report: 2024

Chief Clerk Hemminger presented the Year-to-Date Budget Report for 2024 as of 4/30/2024 and 6/3/2024.

Account Trial Balance for Fiscal Year 2024 as of 4/30/2024 and 6/5/2024

Chief Clerk Hemminger presented the Account Trial Balance for Fiscal Year 2024 as of 6/5/2024, which showed cash on hand of \$45,457.21.

Motion by Phil Riccio, seconded by Frank Kopriva, and approved to accept the financial reports as prepared.

OLD BUSINESS

DCNR Grant

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Recreation and Conservation Regional Advisor, Lindsay Baer, did her final inspection of the Valley View Amphitheater on Thursday, April 4th, at 10:00 a.m. and granted her approval of the completion of the project.

Chief Clerk Hemminger stated that this project is now closed.

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources authorized a final payment of \$28,196.00, disencumbered the grant remaining balance of \$754.00, and considered the project agreement closed as of April 29, 2024.

Chief Clerk Hemminger stated that this project is now closed.

Roadway Repair

Discussion concerning possible funding sources, grants, etc. for the estimated repair of \$320,000.00.

Chief Clerk Hemminger reminded the group that \$15,000.00 was approved to purchase materials to repair the roadway.

Paul Shaffer stated that he would be in contact with Lori Guyer regarding closing the road for a couple of weekdays while his county workers do the repairs.

Ms. Hemminger reminded Mr. Shaffer that Blair Recreation would be hosting its Summer Playground Program each weekday in the park from June 10, through July 3, 2024. Fifty children usually attend the program.

Mr. Shaffer said he will have to let Ms. Guyer know what days the work will be done, and she will have to contact Judy Rosser at Blair Recreation.

President Keller stated he would call Pennsylvania One Call before the work begins.

Motion lights

The two lights on the front of the amphitheater need to be changed to motion lights for security reasons.

Joe Keller stated he would speak with Ken Ressler regarding what exactly needs to be done to make the change.

Groundskeeper Hiring

Paul Shaffer confirmed that the assistant groundskeeper position is vacant and is being posted online for applicants.

Footbridge Replacement

With \$65,000.00 approved for the repairs of the footbridge, President Keller stated he would confer with Brian Wiser and Paul Shaffer regarding the feasibility of buying a prefab bridge and putting in abutments and if the county could schedule a work force for this year.

Status of the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program grant application

President Keller informed the group that a grant application was submitted for Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program grant application in the amount of \$250,000.00, with a 15% match. The Greenways Trails and Recreation Program grant can be used as a match for the DCNR grant that will be available in January. The grants will fund roadway and parking lot improvements, ADA compliant parking spots, pathways, picnic tables, bench pads, a wheelchair swing, and rain gardens.

President Keller stated that although there was Park and Recreation board approval for the Greenways, Trails and Recreation grant submission, many Park and Recreation members had concerns regarding budgeted money being allocated to Valley View Park instead of being made available by grants to the smaller area parks.

President Keller explained that the Board of Commissioners would not approve budgeted money disbursed to the various area parks until the necessary infrastructure improvements are complete at Valley View Park.

Frank Kopriva questioned the mission of the Blair County Park and Recreation Board.

President Keller stated that the Park and Recreation Advisory Board needs to look at the mission statement at a future meeting.

President Keller stated that the Board of Commissioners needs to approve Blair County Park and Recreation to be able to reach out to the business community for corporate sponsorship in order to purchase the wheelchair swing. This sponsorship will satisfy the 15% match required for the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Grant.

President Keller added that perhaps corporate sponsorships would allow us to do upgrades and recreation grants for the smaller area parks.

President Keller mentioned that he would be meeting with Jordan Sesame Wild from Ecotopian EarthCare regarding the rain gardens and Jordan's ideas for a possible bike path.

Samantha Rogers

Samantha Rogers requested approval for an AYSO/UK International Soccer Camp on July 15-19, 2024.

Chief Clerk Hemminger stated Ms. Rogers was unable to obtain the Certificates of Insurance (COI) from UK International.

Chief Clerk Hemminger added that without the specific Certificates of Insurance, the solicitor recommended that the county not pursue the matter.

Additionally, Chief Clerk Hemminger stated conversations regarding a 2025 camp should begin in January, so there is time to work through issues.

President Keller stated that without solicitor approval, the Park and Recreation Advisory Board supports not moving the AYSO/UK International Soccer Camp to the Board of Commissioners.

Disc Golf

Chief Clerk Hemminger questioned if there was any interest in the disc golf presentation from the March 7 meeting.

President Keller stated there is increasing disc golf interest in the community, and perhaps the board should investigate inexpensive improvements to the Valley View Park course that would also be easy to maintain.

President Keller said he would contact Tristan Socie and try to come up with some estimates and recommendations for improvements that are inexpensive and easy to maintain.

NEW BUSINESS

ADA GRAB BARS

ADA Grab Bars were installed in the restrooms at Valley View Park.

Summer Concert Series

Community inquiries are being received regarding a Summer Concert Series at Valley View Park. The concerts were popular at the park prior to COVID-19.

Chief Clerk Hemminger stated that Central Blair Recreation Commission organized the events in the past, but they are not planning anything this year.

President Keller stated he would reach out to Mike Hofer and see if Central Blair Recreation Commission would be interested in doing something again.

Groundkeeper Report

Head Groundskeeper Eric Espenlaub mentioned to the Commissioners Office that he needs tires for the trailer that he uses to transport equipment for Valley View Park and that park visitors have been asking for swings.

Paul Shaffer confirmed that the trailer now has new tires.

President Keller stated that he did not see a reason why there were no swings at Valley View Park.

Chief Clerk Hemminger stated that they were probably considered a safety hazard.

Frank Kopriva stated they have swings at the YMCA and never had an issue.

Since swings would require an open-level area of approximately 16', an area below Pavilion #1 was suggested as a location for swings.

Subcommittee Reports

Status of the \$7,000.00 funding from the BOC

President Keller informed the board that he, along with Phil Ricco and Chuck Gojmerac, were informed by the Board of Commissioners that they would not approve the Park and Recreation Advisory Board to fund \$7000.00 in community-based grants.

President Keller added that the commissioners wanted maintenance issues taken care of at Valley View before they would approve grants to the smaller parks.

Soccer Field Lease

The subcommittee of Fred Miller, Chuck Gojmerac, and Frank Kopriva will be conducting a meeting to discuss the new lease.

Open Discussion

Phil Riccio stated that he never knew the park was here. He suggested having a festival to promote the park and show people what the park has to offer - perhaps a summer "Kick Off." He suggested having vendors, which would benefit the county.

Mr. Riccio added that having food trucks at the concert series could benefit the county as well.

Mr. Riccio also suggested that Walt Frank from the Altoona Mirror do a story about Valley View Park in the Altoona Mirror.

ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss, President Keller called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Phil Riccio, seconded by Frank Kopriva, and approved adjourning the meeting.