**Regular Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, August 6, 2020 – 7:00PM

**Location:** Masontown Trailhead Park

1. **Call to Order:** Approve previous Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by President Dale McVicker

**Preston County Parks & Recreation Commission members attending**

Dale McVicker Joshua Waugh Matthew Weaver

Carl Ervin Jennifer Kelly James Tasker

Devra Deems Sara Saurino Rachelle Thorne

Guests Attending: Mary Ann Sanders, Virginia Zetty, Lauren \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Motion to approve July 2020 Meeting Minutes:** Commissioner Deems

**Second:** Commissioner Tasker

**Motion Passed:** by Majority Voice Vote

1. **Treasurer's Report:** Pay bills, 2020 budget review

Beginning Balance = $29,969.56

Checks & Payments Cleared = $711.50

Deposits = $3,540.28 (Payment from Friends of Cheat = $175.00 / Hotel/Motel Tax deposited = $3,365.28)

Ending Balance = $32,798.34

**Motion to approve Treasurer’s Report:** Commissioner Kelly

**Second:** Commissioner Deems

**Motion Passed:** by Majority Voice Vote

**Motion to increase Kristy’s pay for secretarial support to $25/hour for 5 hours per month:** Commissioner Weaver

**Second:** Commissioner Deems

**Motion Passed:** by Majority Voice Vote

Bills to be paid:

Rachelle Thorne = $2.794.57 ($1840 Executive Director Pay / $263.32 mileage reimbursement / $691.25 FOC ARC TAP)

Valerie Dixon = $35 (bookkeeping)

Kristy Ridenour = $125 (secretarial support)

Holly Hartsell = $120 (Wellness in the Park)

Talia Goodwin = $100 (Wellness in the Park)

Credit Card = $204.44

**Motion to pay bills:**  Commissioner Waugh

**Second:** Commissioner Deems

**Motion Passed:** by Majority Voice Vote

1. **Committee Status Reports:**
   1. Executive
      1. Recreation Engagement Coordinator position

This was originally the AmeriCorps Vista position but when Director Thorne spoke to the coordinator person he seemed unsure if that would be available to us pending federal funding and would not know until September for that. Director Thorne would like to find a creative way to address the tasks needed from the position to free Thorne up to do other (numerous) tasks of her Executive Director position. The Recreation Engagement Coordinator would handle Wellness in the Park, fundraising and the recreation bash raffle with the goal to pay minimum wage ($8.75) and free housing (provided by Wesley UM Church) for the person hired. Thorne calculated that $1400 per month would be needed to pay for 40 hours per week. If the AmeriCorps Vista position doesn’t come through, $16,800 per year would be needed plus $500 for the raffle license, prize and tickets. Thirty thousand dollars would need to be made from the raffle to recoup the cost involved and that is doable.

Director Thorne recommended Lauren \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (in attendance) as a possible candidate for the position. Lauren is currently the state AmeriCorps worker for Arthurdale Heritage, Incorporated. Thorne is confident in Lauren’s skills; she is interested in the job and she is a “good fit”. Favorable discussion followed and Commissioner (Treasurer) Weaver advised finances are in the budget for the rest of the year (through January 2021) including matching funds for this position. Lauren indicated her work with Arthurdale Heritage would conclude at the end of August and she would be free to take the position by mid-September. The offer was made to Lauren for acceptance of the position if she decides to do so.

**Motion to move forward to hire Lauren for the Recreation Engagement Coordinator position if she accepts:** Commissioner Deems

**Second:** Commissioner Kelly

**Motion Passed:** by Majority Voice Vote

* + 1. Vote on Kristy’s Work Agreement adjustments- $25/hr and 5 hrs/mo

(Previously discussed and approved.)

* 1. Strategic Land Projects
     1. WVNRT- Kingwood construction; Tunnelton property survey

Commissioner Ervin reported that things are moving along well on the Northern. He attended the second meeting with Alpha, Stone Paving and the State. They have final surfaces from the Civic Center to Sisler Street now and it is an excellent surface They had some trouble finding a solid base (for retaining wall) in one area but this project should be done by the time school starts (early September). Commissioner Ervin also asked Stone Paving if they would be interested in mowing the Hossler Property and Shops area with their brush hog, and they agreed to do so without a separate bill.

Commissioner Ervin noted that the Irish Ridge Road (Howesville) area DEP project (to correct an open mine shaft under the trail) is done. They moved in, cleaned up and sealed it off.

Ervin talked with Mr. Shultz, and the survey of the Hossler Property is surveyed and most of the pins are set. However, the plat is not done. The cost for the plat is roughly $500.

**Motion to move forward with contract with the company Shultz works for to complete the survey of 5 acres:** Commissioner Ervin

**Second:** Commissioner Deems

**Motion Passed:** by Majority Voice Vote

Commissioner Ervin reported that the first bill from Stone Paving was somewhat confusing because PCPaRC has to approve the application to the state on our letterhead. Because PCPaRC is not approved in the Oasis system it will be put on Friends of Cheat letterhead, which will be approved for payment and submitted.

Ervin spoke with Scott McClanahan about the change to design-only grants. The deadline will be August 18. An ITA needs submitted for $150,000 maximum grant to finish the trail design.

Ervin reported that the committee discussed ways of spending the $1500 left in the AARP grant for the Elkins Building. They support buying two trash receptacles and possibly a bike rack for the restrooms area. Director Thorne indicated her discussions with AARP people would ok those purchases/uses of funds.

**Motion to proceed in shopping for trash cans and bike rack for the Elkins Building and Trailhead:**  Commissioner Ervin

**Second:** Commissioner Saurino

**Motion Passed:** by Majority Voice Vote

Director Thorne checked on the status of the Tunnelton survey, and the survey company is not sure when it will be completed – maybe 2 weeks. This is due to other projects which they are involved in currently, but it will be completed. This is a survey of the trail corridor on the Tunnelton end.

Virginia Zetty noted the benches are complete (for the Marion curve area).

* + 1. ATV Trail Network- Phase I- Questionnaire for Community Leaders and OHV Trail Network/Parks & Rec survey for residents initial results; next steps contact Mayors who have not yet responded, reach out to EDA & COC

Commissioner Deems reported the ATV trail questionnaires were given to mayors in the county and approval from the Preston County Commission was given. She noted that the response was not great. Director Thorne noted that no response was received from Reedsville, Masontown and Tunnelton. Commissioner Deems advised she will check with Aurora folks also.

Director Thorne noted that responses to Phase 1 of the survey for community leaders and residents indicated 85% in favor so far.

* + 1. PCPaRC Trail Crew- WVNRT Trail Conditions Recon, Tunnelton Volunteers

Director Thorne noted she and some other commissioners scouted the trail to coordinate trail crew efforts and took photos. Lots of areas need urgent attention. There are washouts in several areas and manual labor will be needed for that.

Director Thorne reported that Tunnelton volunteers have done some trail maintenance which is appreciated.

* 1. Community Outreach
     1. Summer community programming- Wellness in the Park (updates are on website calendar and FB), Preston Rambles (Cannon Hill Sun 8/9 @ 1:30PM, WVNRT Sun 9/13 @ 1:30PM), Preston Spins (TBD)

Director Thorne noted that Wellness in the Park is going well with good crowds overall. It is being held Mondays and Fridays at Bruceton Mills and every day at the Masontown Trailhead. Thorne also reported that responses to the PCPaRC surveys consistently shows that fitness classes and yoga are wanted as well as guided hikes, bike rides and corn hole. Availability favors weekday evenings, Saturday mornings and afternoons and afternoons and evenings on Sundays. Thorne noted this will allow matching programming to availability.

Commissioner Deems invited those present to participate in the Preston Ramble hike up Cannon Hill in Rowlesburg on Sunday at 1:30. She noted it is a moderate 2-1/2 mile hike that follows a dirt road. The president of the historical society will provide information. Participants will meet at Rowlesburg Park. Dogs on a leash are welcome. The next Preston Rambles event will be on September 13.

Director Thorne updates the PCPaRC website calendar and it has details of all activities. She advised Preston Spins will be for guided bike rides. Two people will be needed to be leaders for these events.

* 1. Grant Writing
     1. Grant updates for AARP (alternative use of funds approved), TryThis WV/WV Bureau for Public Health (waiting on survey), AML Pilot (brief recap on submission), WVDOH TA/RTP (ITA closes 5pm Aug 18th, Application closes 5pm Sept 8th, 80/20 match), and LWCF/WVDO (October, 50/50 match)

Commissioner Saurino reported that the AML grant paperwork was submitted as of last Friday. Director Thorne noted that $999,993 was requested and Commissioner Saurino passed around visual aids to illustrate the plans. One shows the initial plan for the Sisler Street property which includes a pavilion, parking area and activity lawn. There is a fitness circuit and 5K fitness trail with equipment which will stay outdoors all year. The overall map shows the Hossler property with the pump track layout. The Depot property has an 18 hole, two-stroke putt-putt mini golf area which is ADA accessible. It would have a garden surrounding it so it could be walked as a trail in the off-season. At the water tower (end) there would be a depot-inspired building to house the putt-putt equipment, bike rentals and trail map(s). Two overview maps depict a city map and shows possible future expansion. Director Thorne noted that it is unknown when the results of the grant application will be known. She thanked Commissioner Saurino for her time and effort on the illustrations.

Director Thorne gave an update on the Try This WV and said the completion of Tunnelton survey is still needed to put the fitness stations in, do the gravel layer and ATV barrier work.

**Motion to pursue a design-only grant through DOT for trail design for the remainder of the trail:** Commissioner Saurino

**Second:** Commissioner Tasker

**Motion Passed:** by Majority Voice Vote

Director Thorne reported that she talked to the coordinator of the Land Water Conservation Fund grant and they are not sure when it will be announced – possibly October. Thorne noted it takes a lot of work and it is needed to match the $9000 Try This Grant received for the Tunnelton end.

* 1. Fundraising (Josh)
     1. Rec Bash online raffles- Sept 1st launch goal

Director Thorne is trying again for the Rec Bash raffle, set for 9/01/20 launch goal.

* + 1. Gravel Race- date approved by Rowlesburg for June 5th-6th, 2021

Director Thorne noted the approval for 6/05 and 6/06/21 dates for the event at Rowlesburg.

* + 1. WVNRT Walk/Run Events
       1. Buckwheat Festival Run?- Sun 9/27?
       2. Halloween Fun Run?- Sun 10/25 or Sat 10/31?
       3. Turkey Trot?- Thurs 11/26 or Sat 11/28?

The ideas (above) were discussed. A possible Buckwheat Festival Mile was mentioned. Commissioner Saurino will contact Paul Martin about that possibility. Director Thorne noted timing help would not be available in the fall, but this event would not have to be competitive and could use an alternate route (on the trail) since the Festival is cancelled this year.

1. **Executive Director:**
   1. Masontown Trailhead
      1. Elkins Building- update on restrooms

Director Thorne reported the part came in for repair of the restroom yesterday and it was fixed. It was just a battery that had to be replaced. Janet will be here tomorrow to mop. Thorne thanked President McVicker for helping clean the restroom also. The restroom should reopen after Janet does that final cleaning tomorrow morning.

There is a leak around one of the women’s toilets that will need attention. Director Thorne noted that Ella said Randy can look at that. Discussion followed that the wax ring may need replaced. President McVicker noted that some present might look at that this evening.

* + 1. Trailhead Park- Girl Scout project

Director Thorne met with Troop Leader and her daughter about the Silver Award project for this (Masontown) location. This would be a picnic table and Thorne suggested it might be good to locate it somewhere across the bridge to better connect the areas and be nearer the restrooms. Commissioner Saurino inquired if funds from the AARP grant be used for restroom sign(s) in the bridge area if there is money left over. Director Thorne said that can be done if money is left over.

* 1. Community Partnerships
     1. MRTC Partnership- Imagination Running Wild Challenge, RTC Hall of Fame voting campaign, Jamie Lester to begin painting Trailside Shelter

Director Thorne suggested that PCPaRC support by word of mouth or participation of the Imagination Running Wild (online) and MRTC nomination for the Railtrail Conservancy Hall of Fame (voting campaign on line). The MRTC website has a link to vote. Thorne noted Jamie Lester is still supposed to paint the (Masontown) shelter at some point.

* + 1. FOC Partnership- Preston County Master Trail Plan released, Preston County Trail User Survey open Aug 1-31st, Recreation Tourism Career Training Questionnaire sent out Aug 5th, working on: Career Explorations, MTNA Press Release, MTNA for economic growth presentation

Director Thorne reported the FOC Master Trail Plan was released. It is available on the website and on Facebook. It was a huge accomplishment to get that done.

The Preston County Trail User Survey for August is open. That information will be used for the Mountaineer Trail Network as well.

Thorne is doing a focus group on Recreation and Tourism Career Training (questionnaire) through the end of the month for the Preston County workforce. Results will be put into a report. She noted there are other website tasks to complete with FOC and they are listed (above) on this agenda.

Thorne is working with Preston Trail Towns (part of FOC) with Kelly and she (Kelly) is working with the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area, assisting with their management plan for this area. It will be helpful for PCPaRC and the WV Northern. Kelly took a representative to the Sisler Street property and discussed the WV Northern. That is important because it falls under the National Park Service, who just got additional funds recently which will trickle down and into the Appalachian Forest National Heritage area (which benefits PCPaRC and others) in the form of grants.

* + 1. Additional Partnerships- WVICL/NICA presentation Friday Aug 21st 6pm

Director Thorne reported PCPaRC is working with the WV Interscholastic Cycling League (part of NICA) to try to get a Preston County team started. The executive director will be here on 8/21 at 6 p.m. for a presentation on what it takes to form a team.

Director Thorne spoke with Main Street Kingwood today to support their master plan and efforts; making sure we are supporting each other; working on finding grants for the Heritage Garden Art, should that come through; other art projects and recreation spaces. She is also working with WVU Outdoor Economy Collaborative Events for Mountaineer area Council Boy Scout events for Preston County. She is also collaborating with Arthurdale Heritage on their Arthurdale Heritage Playground efforts. Lauren reported the first planning and design was held. This is in the beginning stages and looking at funding sources to open a historically-themed (natural play area) park at the trailhead,

1. **Comments by Commission Members:**

Commissioner Kelly passed around a card of appreciation for Janet for signatures and donations.

1. **Adjournment:**

**Motion to adjourn:** Commissioner Deems

**Second:** Commissioner Kelly

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Kristy Ridenour

President – signature Secretary - signature