

**Friends of Whitefish Dunes, Inc.**  
**3275 Clark Lake Rd., Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235**

**Minutes of Friends Board Meeting 1/24/24**

**Present:** John Swanson, Dick Weidman, Julia Stoneman, Susan Cubar, Liz Story, Rich Dirks, Adele Douglass, Jim Perry, Don Gustafson, Max Martin, Corey Meyer, Sarah Stepanik, and Erin Brown Stender

**Absent:** Doug Otopalik, Lynn Zawojski

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 4:00.

**Agenda:** Motion to approve the Agenda: Adele; second, Max. All in favor.

**Minutes:** Motion to approve the Minutes of 12-8-23: Susan; second, Julia. All in favor.

**Treasurer's Reports (Julia):**

Julia gave both the November and December Treasurer's reports.

November:

Income: \$12,645.66

- Book sales
- Clothing sales
- Bench order

Expenses: \$10,140.00

- Clothing orders
- Snowmobile maintenance
- Picnic Shelter project
- Event expenses

Motion to approve November 2023 Treasurer's Report: Susan; second, Dick. All in favor.

December:

Income: \$1,162

- Sales in Nature Center have slowed
- Dues are beginning to come in
- We received \$300 in donations

Expenses: \$257.38

- Event supplies
- Membership mailing supplies

Motion to approve December 2023 Treasurer's Report: Dick; second, Rich. All in favor.

**Park Report (Sarah):**

- December saw 4,284 visitors, which is 745 more than 2022, and 1,816 above average. The December average is 2,468 visitors.

- 2023 Yearly Attendance: 209,653 visitors, which is 9,442 more than 2022, 17,491 above average, and was the 6th highest annual attendance.

Seasonal Changes:

- Ski trails have been groomed and 2nd beach access has been closed for the winter.
- So far there have been no snow shoe rentals.

Park Manager Projects:

- Sarah has asked Split Rock Studio for concept drawings for the Native Village/Indoor Museum renovations.
- No update on 1st Beach Access construction, which is still projected for Spring 2024.

### Knowles-Nelson Projects:

- Brachiopod Trail Signs: Closeout paperwork submitted 1/5/24..
- Picnic Shelter Repairs: Closeout paperwork sent 1/5/24. Chimney repair will be funded separately. We have not heard back from Door County Masonry at this time. Sarah will follow up with them in spring.
- Old Baldy: Final plans have been received from Stantec. Mike Laaksonen has requested more details, which we are waiting on.
- Cave Point Trail: A grant application was submitted for \$40,000 (50/50 match). Awards are typically announced in February.

### 2023 Enhancement Grant:

- Sarah is working on the purchase of a new entrance gate and new trail directional signs.

### Beach Warning Flag Pilot Program:

- No update. Sarah will continue working with DNR to get a pilot program in place for the 2024 season.

### **Membership/Clothing (Susan):**

- Membership renewals will go out in April.
- Clothing order will wait until May since we are currently experiencing lower sales.

### **Trail Report (Rich):**

- We finally have snow! Sarah, Dick, and Doug had their hands full with the deep snow and downed trees, and it was apparent we needed more help. We recruited Joe Polacheck as a new volunteer groomer. Rich plans to train Sarah, Curtis, and John Bagnall so they could also be available to help if needed.
- Our equipment carrier is being worked on and hopefully we will have that soon.

### **Events:**

- 1st Day Hike: We had about 145 attendees. Doug and Jim led a guided hike this year. Max made new medallions for 2024 and they were very popular with attendees.
- Candlelight Event 1/27: The event will run from 5-8. We have a good volunteer pool. We plan to set up the same loop as last year. Now that we're experiencing quite a bit of melt, it will be difficult to ski and there may be icy conditions. We will reassess Friday.

### **Online Dues Payment (Corey):**

- Corey looked into setting up an online dues/membership payment option on our website. He recommended Square, as it's secure and they will take care of the setup at no charge. They also have a low per transaction fee, and we are able to cancel at any time.

Motion to have Corey set up Square: Adele; second, Dick. All in favor.

### **Great Lakes Mobile Exhibit:**

Susan shared information about a traveling exhibit sponsored by the Wisconsin Historical Society, entitled "Great Lakes Small Streams: How Water Shapes Wisconsin". This exhibit is made up of portable panels and would be set up in the auditorium. The rental cost is \$75, but we don't know what shipping costs are at this point. Susan will get more information.

Motion to approve up to \$125 for Great Lakes exhibit: Don; second, Dick. All in favor.

### **Naturalist Position:**

We discussed the hiring of a Naturalist for the summer season. A higher wage is being offered for the less experienced Naturalist position. Since the Park's budget is no longer able to support hiring a VSA, we considered the possibility of having the Naturalist taking on some of the VSA tasks—perhaps splitting the position into a part-time Naturalist and part-time VSA. The Friends are not in favor of funding a VSA position.

Motion to fund a full-time Naturalist at \$16/hour: Susan; second, Dick. All in favor.

**Talking Trail Renewal:**

- The cost for renewing the Talking Trail app is \$1,200. We decided to renew it another year in order to assess its usage. The company is better able to provide data on this going forward.  
Motion to approve \$1,200 for Talking Trail: Don; second, Adele. All in favor.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn: Don; second, Dick. All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30.

The next meeting is on Wednesday, February 28.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Story

Secretary