

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL Monthly Meeting

Meeting Date: January 13, 2025

Meeting Location: Blue Mound Park Friends Shelter, Blue Mound, WI

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Dave Pearson, Vice President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Kevin Swenson, DNR; Brad Bates, DNR; Adam Maus; Bruce Paull

Jerry, Adam and Sarah meet at 5:20 to look over Zeffy. Adam worked to put a one source mailing list in Zeffy (combining Lydia, Sarah, Adam and Jerry's lists). Jerry will do a test by sending the draft agenda via Zeffy to the core group. If the test works for the core group he will use Zeffy to send the agenda to the entire mailing list.

Minutes

Bill motioned that the November 2024 minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Sarah. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

The financial report showed a balance of \$57,718.26 in the Farmer's Savings Bank as of December 31, 2024. This was a big month for trail pass money collection.

The Fidelity account showed an ending balance of \$39,479.87. Our Fidelity account made about \$6,587.95 this year.

Bill included another document in his email of 1/3/25 titled "2024 Friends of Military Ridge Checkbook Report of Income and Expenses".

The Zeffy account stayed at \$195.

Dave motioned to accept the financial report. The motion was seconded by Sarah and passed unanimously.

DNR Topics

The barrels were put up at the Ridgeway Depot.

MMSD is still working on the area adjacent to the trail.

DOT is set this spring to begin a project to extend the culverts on both sides of the overpasses near Epic and the high school. The hard line for completion is Memorial Day weekend. The trail will be rerouted by the DOT contractor. We will put a notification of the closure and possibly the reroute in the kiosks. The project will not address the water issues under the bridges.

The Riley/Kleevenville parking lot project is heading to DOA. Funds will then be released for bidding. The lots might be started in the fall of 2025.

The bridge package that DNR has been considering went from \$2.3 million to \$5 million. DNR engineers are taking a new approach to bridge repair. They are addressing costs associated with filling in areas where there is no running water and taking out the associated bridges completely. They hope this approach will minimize the number of bridges that need maintenance and lower costs. The plan is to initially repair/rebuild 4 bridges and do a cost analysis. Consideration is being given to weight ratings. The bridges will no longer need to support trains but must be built to, when needed, bear the weight of park and building equipment and vehicles. There are many legal issues associated with bridge repair and removal. In lots of areas landowners use the current bridges to move livestock, equipment, etc. from one side of the trail to the other. The bridge associated with Palmer's platform will not be one of the initial bridges included in the project.

Trail crew is still working on the trail when possible.

The chipper broken and will cost about \$6,000 to repair.

Snow mobile contracts are all signed.

Kevin would like to buy approximately 3 trail counters at about \$700 per counter. Friends in 2024 allocated \$2000 for counters. The Friends advised Kevin to go ahead and buy the counters and Friends would make the money available to him for anything over \$2,000.

MMSD

Adam reported a sewage smell near the trail and the MMSD project. The DNR will look into it.

Park Pass/Trail Pass

The trail passes and park passes currently run on different schedules. Park passes are good for 12 months from the date of the purchase. Trail passes are good for the annual calendar year no matter when they are purchased.

IRS 99 form

Kate will most likely complete the IRS 99 form. Jerry will contact her.

Ballot for February 2025 Nominations will be open thru February Annual Meeting

Currently running for FMRT offices are:

Adam, secretary

Jerry, president

Dave, vice president

Bill, treasurer

Hybrid Meeting

Kevin suggested a hybrid meeting since the Friends shelter has WI-Fi and people might be reluctant to drive in the winter. Dave will set up a zoom meeting for February and send the particulars to Sarah to include in the local paper advertisements. Adam suggested donating to Friends of Blue Mound State Park for using the Wi-Fi. Other members were opposed. The idea was not adopted.

Summer Reading Group

Bruce said that Carol Murphy would like to read 4 times this summer at the depot (not caboose due to the bees) this summer.

Caboose

Bruce's contact, named Levin, looked at the caboose. He determined that there are three layers of fiber board for siding, the floor under the siding is probably rotten, and some structural pieces may be rotten and need to be replaced. The bid of \$22,500 includes removing the siding, windows, doors, and roof, then replacement of them all. The bid doesn't include the cost of a dumpster to dispose of materials, or painting.

A tech ed guy at Barneveld school might be interest in working on this project.

The Ridgeway town board was disappointed that they had put money into the parking lot, etc and now we might take away the caboose. There are lots of changes in personnel in the Ridgeway government. Ridgeway is thinking about redoing the main street.

Jerry suggested that maybe a train group would be interested in funding the caboose restoration.

Dave motioned a campaign to raise money with the caveat that if not enough money was raised the money would go to repair the depot. It was proposed that we advertise the fundraising campaign on Zeffy, the Facebook page, and the website. Dave noted that a fundraising campaign would show that we are acting in good faith with the Ridgeway people to preserve the caboose. There was no second to the motion so we will take this up at the next meeting.

Budget for 2025

Bill will send out possible budget scenarios for 2025 budget and the 2025 budget will be discussed before the next meeting.

Girls On the Run

Bruce is asking for money for Girls on the Run. Coaches for this are volunteer. The girls would jog on the trail. We will talk about this at the next meeting. Each child pays \$25-\$75 to participate based on their family income. Girls on the Run in Ridgeway would run from

April 1 to the end of May. Bruce will put some numbers and information about the program together and send it out.

Little Library Note on appropriate books for the Library

Dave is proposing putting a written note in each little library about what genres of books are appropriate for the libraries. Kevin suggested that we look first at the little library agreement (as to what can be put in the library). Dave will send out the proposed note after he looks at the Little Library agreement. The new little library (donated by the DNR) will be installed this fall near the Dodgeville kiosk.

Webpage

Adam renewed the Weebly website hosting contract for 2 years. He donated the money paid for the renewal but will send the bill to Bill for bookkeeping purposes.

Facebook

The number of facebook viewers is creeping up.

Payment Approval

Bill wanted approval of payment for postage and sand. Dave proposed and Sarah seconded that the payments, totaling \$55.44, be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be 5:30, February 10, 2025 at the Blue Mounds Friends Center at Blue Mounds State Park, Blue Mounds, WI. The meeting will also be accessible via zoom. The annual meeting will be held from 5:30 to 6:00. The monthly meeting will start at 6:00. A budget meeting will also be held and will start at 5:00. Nominations and voting will take place to elect new FMRT officers.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary