**Big Fish Lake Association November Board Meeting**

**November 24, 2020; 6:30 pm (Virtual Zoom Meeting)**

In attendance: Kit Ferber, Bill Unger, John Ronning, Matt Peters, Josh Hirschfeld (until 6:40), John Ronning (until 6:50), Hailey Wachlarowicz-Bayer, Allen Schmitz, and Paul Steil

1. Call to order (6:34 p.m.)

Meeting minutes from August approved and posted on the website.

2) Since John Ronning had to leave early in order to attend the Collegeville Township Supervisor’s meeting,

he gave us a list of brainstorming ideas that he was bringing up to them. We are grateful to have him on

the Board representing Big Fish Lake who provides a huge amount of revenue to the Township.

a. Hardwire or WIFI company to service area

\*Could be cheaper by $20 - $30 per month

\*Provide security systems with facial and license recognition which could be free to homeowners

b. Have a walking/running path around Big Fish Lake?

\*This was voted down since several homeowners do not want people walking in their yards. Other

routes would have to be established without trespassing on private property.

c. Do we want community septic & water systems?

\*Homeowners may not want to have the added expense on their taxes.

d. Put more ordinances in place for nuisances such as junk in the yards.

e. Continue to work on limiting parking at the lake access.

f. Work with Stearns Electric to put in solar lights in dark areas around the lake.

\*Would have to get permission from the property owners.

\*Need to be careful of causing “light” pollution with too many lights.

g. Work on putting striping on the roads to provide better visibility especially during foul weather.

h. Have the Township install AEDs in high volume areas.

\*This would have to be funded by the Township and not the BFLA.

i. Look into concrete versus bituminous roads. When John installed his driveway, it was not that much

more to put in the concrete.

j. Work with the Township to help decrease Aquatic Invasive Species.

k. Purchase Schramel’s property for future public works, operation and facilities area?

l. Continue to support the Big Fish Lake and Watab boat inspections, AIS prevention, etc.

1. Treasurer’s Report – Matt

Currently the BFLA account has $18,061.25. One correction was made regarding the Collegeville Township

grant of $3,500 which was placed as an expense vs. a deposit. All approved the report.

a. During our meeting in January, we will decide if we should move money to the Emergency Fund after

we see how the Fall Membership Drive goes.

1. Membership Drive Update – Kit
   1. Letters will go out by the end of the November. Our goal this year will be $30,000.
   2. Kit will send out separate envelopes to the 10 new owners on the lake. These envelopes will include a welcome letter, the Stearns County Shoreline Guideline, an AIS booklet and encouragement to work with the Stearns County Environmental Services before doing any landscaping whatsoever. Otherwise, huge penalties may be issued.
   3. Still waiting to hear from Neil Fandel regarding “License Plates” for members of BFLA.

1. Legacy Campaign – Kit
   1. The campaign continues to be put on hold due to the pandemic.
   2. Current totals are $99,403.00 in the BFLA Conservancy Fund and $106,102.83 in the BFLA Emergency Fund; both funds are managed by the Initiative Foundation.
   3. A feel-good story: Many of you may have driven by our new sign announcing our Legacy Fund drive. It was placed on Josh & Jocey Hirschfeld’s property along Hwy 50. Dave, the owner of Superior Vent & Duct Cleaning has been driving by the sign for several months now and when he came to do some work at the Hirschfeld’s he gave Josh a $50 donation towards our Legacy Fund! He doesn’t even live on the lake nor does he even boat on the lake anymore. Dave drives all around the area for work and he just thought it was a great way to bring attention to the lake issues. Thus, the sign is getting noticed. In appreciation of his generosity, we are going to putting a small ad in our newsletter to thank him.

5) Update on outlet – Allen

The lake outlet was be cleaned and the fee of $300 was covered by Collegeville Township. Cleaning the

outlet maintains lake water level neutrality. If the outlet is not periodically cleaned, water levels go up and

shorelines erode. A huge thank you to Steve Heinen who did the excavating and to Bernice Heinen for

providing a place to dump the old sand. Thank you notes were sent to all who were instrumental in

getting this done. Thank you to Allen for coordinating this project which needs to be done every two

years.

6) Request for Proposal – Kit

At the end of October, Kit applied to Stearns County for the Aquatic Invasive Species grant that is funded

by the DNR. It is distributed by the County AIS Committee that Kit serves on. We have requested 2,094

hours at a cost of $19 per hour for a total of $39,786. We will match half of that request for $19,893 for

boat inspections. The subcommittee meets on January 7th to vote whether or not to approve our request.

(Kit is also on this subcommittee.) There was a 40% increase in boat traffic in 2020 so we took that into

consideration when applying for the extra hours in 2021 for this grant.

7) Loon nests – Matt

All of the nests were taken off of the lake and stored for the winter.

8) Blue Water Science - Matt

Matt Peters performed a lake survey with Blue Water Science this fall to do a comprehensive search for AIS. He was happy to report that there were no more AIS found. We were particularly concerned about Starry Stonewort but none was found.

9) Request for Loon Crossing sign between Hermit Lake and Big Fish Lake on Hwy 50. Mark was unable to

attend the meeting so we did not get an update from him.

10) Paul Steil has approved that he will be listed as an advisor for the BFLA. He will send us a bio about himself

so that it can be posted on the website. The other advisors are: Jim Sand, Past President and Allen

Schmitz, previous BFLA Board member.

11) Boat inspections – Kit

a. Kit is waiting for a more detailed report from Stearns County to help guide us as to when we need

more inspections based on incoming and outgoing traffic.

b. The inspections ended early this year at the end of October due to the inclement weather. BFLA will

get a refund from the County.

c. The garbage container was removed after the inspections were completed.

d. Should I-LIDS be considered for use at the boat access? The Internet Landing Installed Device Sensor

(I-LIDS) is a self-contained, solar powered system installed at boat ramps to reduce risk of AIS through

video inspection of boats and audio education of boaters. Several other lakes have tried this system

and it is very costly to maintain and oversee the videos.

e. One of the signs at the access was hit and now we can have the DNR put up a new one. It was decided

that there are enough signs there already.

12) Future meetings: Since there are a couple of people that have conflicts on Tuesday evenings, we may

have to go back to Wednesday meetings or find another Tuesday that works for all. Kit will see what works

for all of us. The next meeting will be at the end of January if there is enough on the agenda.

13) Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm. Motion made by Matt and it was seconded by Bill. All were in favor.