



positions, refs, umpires, and diamond maintenance. The beginning of Feb. Jessica presented to a UIU Recreation Class on our Wellness Center and Rec programs. Out of this class we were able to schedule 3 people to complete volunteer hours with our programs in Feb and March. We had two water bottle filler/drinking fountain stations installed. These replace 19.5 yr. old drinking fountains. We were a host site for 5 weekend tournaments in Jan and Feb.

### **Aquatics Update**

Johnson explained to the board that Kim Lawless and Peggy Sherrets ran the aquatic center last season and did a great job. This year the same two managers will be returning to manage the pool again. At the end of the season, they talked with staff about the next season and handed out applications for guards to start thinking about committing to the following season. Johnson stated that they have received several applications for the upcoming season and met with the kids over Christmas break to get them thinking about the upcoming season and handed out more applications for the kids to hand out. Johnson stated that Eastern Iowa Surveillance came in to fix the camera at the pool that was hit by lightning a few months ago. Nate took his CEU class for his certified pool operator license in January. Johnson took the full CPO course this year, as every five years everyone is required to take the full course. Johnson has been working on paperwork for the aquatic center getting it updated and ready to go for this season. Johnson stated that contractors were in this past month at the pool this week as the mirrors have started to blacken over the years due to moisture and chemicals. Also at the pool, Carrico Aquatics was in to install the new autofill for the pool water level. The old float was rather primitive as the new sensor is digital that will hook up to the Wi-Fi compatible controller that Johnson can monitor on the phone app. Nate worked on installing new brackets at the pool to secure the fill line as the old brackets have reached their life expectancy. Johnson has updated the hiring paperwork into fillable PDF's for the pool kids to fill out this year and lining up the lifeguarding class for March and another in April. Johnson has also been working on getting pool paperwork up to date and ready for the upcoming season. The new seats arrived for the elevated guard stands at the pool that Nate and Johnson assembled. At the aquatic center, we started pulling gutter covers and cleaning out the channels. We have started pumping down the deep end to keep the standing water in the diving well to keep the dirty water isolated to that small area. Johnson has been working with pool managers Kim and Peggy getting trainings lined up for the upcoming season at the aquatic center. Johnson stated that they had many of the kids come in to complete their paperwork so that the kids can start taking their lifeguarding classes.

### **Trails Update**

- Segment 3
- Trail Counts

Johnson stated that he is continually working on future trail development with the next segments to be installed, future segments, and various grant proposals. Johnson completed and submitted the grant proposal to the Wellmark Foundation for matching funds for trail development for segment 3. Nate trimmed the trees along 4<sup>th</sup> street SW in preparation for the new trail segment this summer. The trail bridge at the complex had some boards replaced as snowmobiles crosses it late in the season and damaged it. Our big news is that our bill, HF2415 passed the house this past month unanimously. The bill was sent to the senate subcommittee, and then forwarded onto the full committee for passage. Rep. Chad Ingles and Steve Bradley have done a lot of work to get this bill passed so we can acquire a trail easement from Iowa Northern Railroad. Johnson explained to the board that years ago a Ragbrai rider was hurt and sued the county where they were injured. Counties announced that they were no longer going to participate in Ragbrai unless some protections for the counties were enabled. The General Assembly passed 461C.2, which gave counties and cities that protection. This bill will extend these liability protections to railroad companies that are trying to work with communities that are developing trails. Johnson explained that passing this bill would satisfy Iowa Northerns concerns to grant an easement to complete the last part of segment 1 from

2<sup>nd</sup> St. NW to the viaduct. Johnson stated that this will not only help this project but will help communities across the state developing trails.

This month the park department received a check from the Northeast Iowa Charitable Foundation for \$250,000 for their third annual trail donation. Nate and I have swept all the trails with the brush as sticks and debris accumulate over the winter months. Johnson downloaded the totals for the trails this past month, which total 13,596 for the past seven months. Johnson stated that is great information to have available for grant writing. Johnson showed the board detailed maps that he recently received from the engineer that were a part of the packet for the past council meeting where they held an open meeting for this trail segment. Johnson stated that he attended the Upper Explorerland meeting last week to talk about trail funding.

### **Parks/Cemetery Update**

This last month in the park department: Nate, Chris and I have been working on snow removal on all City properties, trails and cemeteries. Johnson has been ordering CIP items and other supplies in bulk for all the departments so it will be ready to go for the season. We have a full burial for Jamison Schmitz that the employees are preparing as they have run into a lot of frost with the extremely cold weather we had last week.

This past month in the park department: Nate, Chris and Willie had a burial for Wednesday that they prepared this week. Nate and Chris took off the gates to the 20' trailer as the extruded steel was starting to give way. The new steel was ordered from Alpha HD trailers and welded on as we are now waiting for the new barrel hinges to be delivered. Once we have it all welded back together, we touched it up with some black paint and they are ready for the season. Two sets of bleachers were put together this past month as well that will be taken to the sports complex this spring. Nate passed the core test for his applicator license in early March and will be taking two more tests to complete his certification. Nate installed a new door to the office at the shop this week. Nate has been going through snow removal equipment getting it ready for the possibility of snow tonight as I am updating the list of city houses as seven more properties have been acquired.

This past week in the park department Nate has been busy working on his certifications and completing his tractor/backhoe certification. Four goal setter basketball hoops were delivered to the shop that are a CIP item. The new shed for the campground was delivered recently as well. This shed is a CIP item that will house split wood, kayaks/paddleboards and the mower/trimmer for the campground host. Johnson stated that Carolyn Rohrick would be returning to take care of the campground once again this year.

With the warm weather, the north end gravel roads of Woodlawn were barricaded off, as they are very soft to prevent traffic from damaging the roads. Johnson has been talking with the AmeriCorps director about lining up a couple of teams to come to Oelwein to complete some projects this fall. Projects include trimming trees at City Park & trails, painting shelters/picnic tables, and helping with the Branching Out – Trees Forever planting in October. Another project Johnson would like them to complete is completing a tree survey of all the trees in the parks and cemeteries. Johnson talked with Emma Hannigan with the DNR forestry department about using a couple of their GPS units once again as the City did in 2018 when the parks department completed the street tree survey.

This past week in the park department, we started out the week with a couple of inches of snow so we had a few employees come in and clear all sidewalks, trails and cemetery. Nate has been working on his pesticide applicator license this week. Nate and Chris worked on the second trailer this week removing the expanded steel mesh on the gate and replacing it.

This past week in the park department, we took advantage of the warm weather to start cleaning some facilities from the winter months. On Monday, we had a full burial at Woodlawn for the Buehner funeral home and a cremation burial on Tuesday for Jamison Schmitz. Nate swept the sand away around the gas pumps; he started the sweeping the parking lots at the pool and around the fire department. Nate wrapped

up the trailer gate project applying some paint to the new grating. I ordered new safety vests for the employees for the upcoming season. We have advertised in the paper on Facebook, and hand dozens of applications out just talking with individuals for park and cemetery positions with no applications coming in. Nate and I took the bucket truck and dropped at hanging branch at Platt Park that was hanging over the roadway where walkers pass through. Nate and I also dropped two infected small ash trees and one bigger ash tree along the west trail that needed to come down before it became a safety issue. Nate is preparing to take his next pesticide applicator test that he did pass. I have been working on getting pricing on playground mulch for this spring that will be part of the United Way day of caring project. I have been working on the AmeriCorps concept form to be sent out and the community forestry grant proposal as well as a trail grant that recently came up.

#### **Tree Board**

The City found out this month that it was awarded the full amount of \$5,000 from the Tree's Forever Branching Out program once again. This grant pays for all the trees that the park department and tree board plant in the street boulevards each fall. Johnson stated that he is applying to the DNR Community Forestry Grant that is a 1 for 1 matching grant for acquiring funding for planting more trees. Johnson stated they could get up to \$5,000 for a tree planting at Woodlawn Cemetery. Johnson stated that all the trees planted there are currently one species, ash. Johnson stated that this would be a spring planting and would like to complete this planting during the United Way Day of Caring the first Friday of May. Johnson stated that the Tree Board was awarded the Tree City designation once again for the 2021 season. Johnson provided the board a list of daily activities, progress on projects and future projects in the department.

**Board Member Updates:** None

**Adjournment:** 6:50pm

**Next Meeting:** April 18<sup>th</sup>