

Benton County IRVM Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 18, 2019 – 5: 30 p.m.
Benton County Secondary Roads Department

Committee Members Present:

Mark Droessler
John Frazier
Luke Hennings

Joan Lindberg
Wayne Siela
Becky Van Wey

Staff:

Ben Bonar – Benton County IRVM Roadside Manager

Meeting was called to order by Siela at 5:33, due to both the Chair and Vice-Chair being absent.

The minutes from both the 1/17/19 meeting and the 3/21/19 meeting were approved without any corrections or additions.

Bonar gave an update. Approval has been given to keep Gerold, the intern, on in a temporary full time position with no benefits. He is an excellent employee, and the plan is to keep him employed this way until Bruce Anderson, the spray truck driver, retires sometime before January. Duties include seed collection, brush control, cutting, chipping, and identifying thistle patches. He will also be a backup snowplow driver. He already has a Class A CDL, and Pesticide Applicators License.

Spraying is about 2 weeks behind this year, due to the weather. Bonar estimated that 2/3 to ¾ of the normal amount has been completed to date. There are about 1200 miles of ROW in the county, and they cover 35-37 miles per day on average. He is using existing chemical stores and will transition to the pre-blended chemicals. He would also like to rotate to avoid chemical resistance.

The NO SPRAY signs are now available. For a one-time fee of \$55, landowners can request signs, but they must agree to keep noxious weeds, trees, and brush controlled. If not, the county reserves the right to spray if needed. Siela questioned why the County employees were putting up the signs, and Bonar explained that he would have control of the placement, and could GPS the locations.

14 letters have been sent to landowners for noxious weeds. Only one complaint has come so far from the public.

The prairie tour that was intended for this meeting was put off until the October meeting due to the extreme heat.

Requests are being taken for prairie establishment in ROW by properties where people want it.

A presentation was made at an outdoor classroom for 5th graders.

There was some discussion on tree trimming in the ROW. The boom truck that the county has is not safe to use. They have been renting a chipper, but Bonar feels that it would be more economical to buy one. Siela suggested that we draft a letter of support to purchase a chipper and supporting equipment such as a mini-excavator, to be more efficient. Bonar will send some talking points to Van Wey so she can draft a letter to that effect.

It was suggested that perhaps an FFA class could assist with seed collection.

A motion was made by Droessler and 2nd by Lindberg to adjourn at 7:02

The next meeting will be the tour, October 17th.