

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
May 15, 2024 5:30PM**

PURSUANT to written notice given all members of the Board, the above meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by President Bendsen

Board members present: President Bendsen, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Castor, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Sams, Treasurer Allen, and Secretary Reed  
Board Members absent: None

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Minutes of the April 20, 2024 Regular Public Meeting. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE", Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$162,645.16 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$13,839.79 as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE", Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

**COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:**

No comments.

**PRIOR BUSINESS:**

**1. Bike Trail Grant Resolution**

Executive Director Jerry Culp reminded the Board that Staff completed and submitted a grant to complete a trail connection between the Rock Springs bike trail and Scovill Park earlier this year. This Friday another bike trail grant through IDNR will be submitted for repairs to the Stephen's Creek bike trail. This \$100,000 grant reimburses 80% so they would like the proposed resolution passed and attached to the grant for a submission this Friday.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve Rock Springs Stevens Creek Bike Trail Renovation Resolution as presented. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE", Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. MCCD Board Member Approval:**

The Board is waiting for Macon County Board approval for the submitted application for new Board member, Karen Schneller. The MCCD Board did not take any action, and no comments or objections were made.

**2. Shelby Electric Easement Approval:**

Operations Director Phil Julius discussed that Shelby Electric is asking for a larger easement to accommodate their larger equipment. No major trees and no pruning has been discussed as an impact to MCCD property. It is in Willow Branch 1.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the new Shelby Electric Easement as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE",. Motion carried.

**3. iParks Insurance Renewal:**

Executive Director Culp presented the annual iParks insurance contract for approval that goes into effect July 1, 2024, for \$89,459. This quote did increase, but not significantly.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the iParks Renewal Contract as presented. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE". Motion carried.

#### **4. Staff Reports:**

##### **Jerry Culp, Executive Director:**

The Outdoor Classroom team is having the 50% review meeting tomorrow. It is still on schedule to be done 5/25. Construction drawings are due in June with construction to start in August. The Fort Daniels Grant is waiting on state contracts but can move forward with reimbursable contract work such as engineering. The Parks Day/Legislative Conference in Springfield was a great day. A lot of legislation presented impacts the districts, and lobbyists have done a lot of work to make improvements. It is a lot of legislation and interesting to see. MCCD does this to get its logo out and get its name out there for marketing and networking. The Rock Springs Ramble is this weekend, and volunteers are needed. After this event, work on Prairie Pedal will begin. The Stephen's Creek Bike Trail IDNR grant application is due 5/17/24. MCCD Administration is waiting for IL Labor Relations Board documents and information to set up a collective bargaining negotiation meeting. Staff attended the Conservation Day at the Capitol. There were a lot of DNR departments to network with and identify as possible partners for activities like fishing programs or grants. Many great contacts were made.

##### **Phil Julius, Director of Operations**

Operations Director Julius is working on his first grant through IDNR, a Stephen's Creek Bike Trail grant. A Public Meeting is tomorrow night 5/16/24 and the grant application will be submitted on Friday. Mitch Lovgren is re-hired as the Natural Resources Manager. He has a lot of knowledge and skills and will start 5/20/24. Ethan Spain, a seasonal employee, was promoted to Friends Creek. He just graduated from Millikin and starts in this new position 5/20/24. Craig Culp, a former Board Member, passed away and MCCD staff are planting a memorial oak tree with a plaque with funds from memorials and the Macon County Conservation Foundation. Seasonal Staff have started with turf care, the water is turned on, and camping started at Friend's Creek Campground.

##### **Alysia Callison, Director of Programs**

There were many events and programs in April. 250 attended the Eclipse Party. Animal Care Specialist Taylor Buley led a van trip to SIU for the Eclipse festival and saw totality – 10 registered for the trip, which was the max. Programs were provided at Decatur and Moweaqua Libraries. The Festival of Spring was a success especially because the weather was ideal. 600-700 people attended this great event. Volunteer Coordinator Jenny Garver hosted a volunteer recognition dinner which was well-attended by 112 people. MCCD partnered with Heritage Behavioral Health Center for the "Gallery of Hope" in April where school children created art in many different medias and displayed them during an afternoon. 800+ pieces of art were displayed. Approximately 200 people attended the event. Heritage wants to do it again next year. The Summer Sign-up event for Decatur Public School students is underway. Last year DPS paid unlimited registrations in-full. This year there is a \$350 limit with a voucher system. Admin Assistant Joy Potter has been doing a great job managing this process. Dr. Juanita Morris has 1-3 interns from the Dawson Civic Leadership Institute that will be helping this season. May 17th was the

Legislative Day at the Capitol. Ashton attended and her table was a hit, and she is sharing about that day.

**Ashton Nunn, Marketing Specialist:**

The theme was “Parks and Rec in Nature Improves Quality of Life”, and MCCD shared a table with the Decatur Park District. MCCD wanted an interactive display, so participants just took a tag and used a prompt card and wrote about what nature meant to them. They then hung the tag on the tree. It started as an empty tree and at the end of the day represented the importance of nature in our lives. The finished tree was presented to display the final product to the MCCD Board.

**Nicky Besser, Director of Finance & HR**

Finance and HR Director Besser has been working on getting familiar with everything and getting signed up in all systems. She is implementing a new system of requesting and reporting Staff time off via SAGE HR, which was a recommendation from former Director of Finance and HR Pam Smith. The Audit is next month.

**COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:**

1. After Executive Director Jerry Culp’s Report:
  - a. Trustee Reed asked if the Union was local and whether any other organizations are involved. Alysia noted she thinks the Park District is. Trustee Bendsen asked how many were covered. Jerry responded that 21 would be covered under collective bargaining whether or not they join the Union. Trustee Reed re-confirmed they have the option to opt out. A discussion was had about the difference between due-paying and non-due-paying members. Staff will learn as the process continues.
2. After Director of Programs Alysia Callison’s Report:
  - a. Trustee Reed congratulated Ashton on her creativity. Trustee Bendsen mentioned she really enjoyed being able to follow all of the events and happenings on Facebook. She commented that the marketing has really taken off and improved since Ashton and Alysia have been working on it.

Trustee Sams MOVED to approve the staff reports. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, “AYE”; and Trustee Allen, “AYE”; Trustee Reed, “AYE”; Trustee Sams, “AYE”; Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”. Motion carried.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

1. Trustee Allen MOVED to go into Executive Session at 6:02p.m. for the purpose of:
  - a. **The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1)**
    - i. **They will discuss Jerry Culp’s annual evaluation and pay increase.**

Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, “AYE”; Trustee Sams, “AYE”; Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”; and Trustee Castor, “AYE”; Trustee Allen, “AYE”. Motion carried.

Trustee Sams MOVED to return to the Regular Public Meeting at 6:16 p.m. Trustee Benden SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Executive Session Minutes of May 15, 2024. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE";. Motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Trustee Allen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:33 p.m. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed "AYE"; Trustee Sams "AYE". Motion carried.

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President

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Secretary