

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
September 15, 2021**

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

Board members present: President Schneller, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Bendsen, Secretary Beckhart, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President Allen  
Board Members absent: Treasurer Castor

Trustee Beckhart MOVED to approve the Minutes of the August 25, 2021, Special Public Meeting. Trustee Bendsen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Beckhart MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$179,615.96 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$24,209.41 as presented. Trustee Bendsen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

**COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:**

Ron Copsy, 4355 Fort Daniel Road, Decatur, Illinois. Ron attended the meeting for updates on the Fort Daniel Conservation Area. First of all, he thanked the Board for signs that were posted regarding ATVs and dirt bikes as so far it has seemed to make a difference. He requested that pavilion reservations be posted as they were once done in the past. He stated that there were chalk drawings in the pavilion that had been there for a week and wondered why they had not been removed. He said the road lights were not working and the gate was not working properly. Since his property is next door to Fort Daniel property, he would like for the gate to be working. He was told that the gate is now working so he will check on the gate to see if it is working. President of the Board thanked him for attending the meeting, for acknowledging that the signs were working. She stated that the Board would discuss his recommendations and circle back with him as to what will be done. Shane Ravellette agreed to meet with Ron Copsy to go over other matters as Ron requested.

**PRIOR BUSINESS:**

**1. Appoint Foundation Liaison**

President Schneller explained to Trustee Allen, the newest Trustee on the Board, that the pattern in the past has been for the newest Trustee to serve as a liaison to the Foundation Board. She explained that this helps the newest Trustee to obtain a better overview of the Foundations involvement with the District. Trustee Allen agreed to accept the position.

Trustee Bendsen MOVED to approve Trustee Allen as the new liaison to the Macon County Foundation Board. Trustee Beckhart SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Motion carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **1. Approval of Annual Treasurer's Report:**

Pam Smith explained that the Annual Treasurer's Report was required by Statutes 65 ILCS and must be filed within six months after the end of the fiscal year. This report is due to be filed with the County Clerk by the end of September. She explained that the report mirrors the audit in that it lists a summary of revenues, expenditures and changes in fund balance that are all reconciled back to the audit. The main difference is that expenditures for any vendor that total more than \$2,500.00 are listed out separately on the report with any amount under \$2,500.00 being compiled as one dollar amount. Payroll is broken down by ranges and listing those employees that fall within that range. In lieu of placing the Treasurer's Report in a local newspaper, now the District can just post a notice in the paper that the audit has been performed and is available for review during normal business hours.

Trustee Bendsen MOVED to approve the Annual Treasurer's Report as presented. Trustee Beckhart SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Beckhart, "AYE". Motion carried.

### **2. Friends Creek Operation Office Buildout update:**

Shane Ravellette shared a 3D diagram and floor plan of the new addition to be added to the Friends Creek Conservation shop office. One of the main reasons for the addition is that the current space is not ADA compliant but the addition will meet the current ADA requirements. This space is used by two full-time staff and two part-time staff as well as Natural Resource staff (2 staff) spending approximately a quarter of their time at this site. The budgeted amount will control how far staff get on the addition. The plan for now is to build the exterior shell, pour the concrete floor, and install the radian loop. \$25,000 was budgeted for this year so pending how much is spent will determine how much more can be done this fiscal year. The remainder will be budgeted in the next fiscal year. The concrete floor will be outsourced while the staff will do much of the work in-house. Shane explained that every shop has a locker room and lockers to store their uniforms. The question was raised as to whether or not there would be a washer/dryer installed. Shane said currently there was not a plan to install them but could certainly look at the option. Some of the Trustees expressed concern over staff taking uniforms home to be washed. There is a washer/dryer installed at the Rock Springs Nature Center. Shane explained that the cost of uniforms had been reduced so they are more disposable than before. Staff will take into consideration the Trustee's concern.

### **3. Wolf Memorial Fountain Drawings:**

The Camera Club decided to donate a fountain in memory of Richie Wolf and a picture of the fountain was included in the packet. District staff will do most of the carpentry work with the rain chain being ordered online. Concern was expressed about the fountain being higher than six feet but Shane assumed the fountain would be lower than the eaves of the roof. Pam Smith pointed out that the metal tub in the picture would be in the ground to hold the water and not above ground as shown in the picture. The camera club will have some type of acknowledgement of Richie included on the fountain.

#### 4. ECO Center Exhibit Design Update

Alysia Callison gave an update on the ECO Center remodel depicting six graphics out of 120 panels. She only selected a few instead of printing 120 pages. The final graphic design has been approved and she is very excited about the redesign. The five exhibits she shared were

- 1) A large graphic panel as you come into the ECO Center showing where you are and what the Conservation District has to offer.
- 2) The second graphic was of a wigwam where you walk into the display and sit on benches to experience what it may have been like in that time period. This will be along the large portion of the wall and part of the history panel. The History panel walks you through the life of the Native Americans, Settlers, Early 1900's and life today.
- 3) The third graphic will be displayed near the tree where the current taxidermy are found. This panel will educate the public about the Conservation District.
- 4) The Fourth graphic was on the reader rail educating the public about forests, prairies and rivers.
- 5) The next graphic that she shared will be found in the Conservation Hall of Fame or "Successes". It will display a bald eagle, turkey and otter.
- 6) Lastly she shared a graphic of a house called "*Charlie's House*". This panel will have flip-ups in the mural for people to make a choice whether or not what is happening in the house is a good thing to help conservation or if something different should be done.

#### 5. Staff Reports:

Jerry Culp reported that he was excited about experiencing the Prairie Pedal for the first time and that all was moving along. Not much work had been done on the Nature Center Office layout but are working on the logistics to make the move. This will not become top priority but will be completed as time permits. He has been working with the Foundation in forming a development committee to oversee and plan new member recruitment as well as developing a fundraising committee. He attended his first ever "Farm Progress Show" and reviewed many equipment options for the District. Jerry enjoyed the staff updates at his first all staff quarterly meeting. Hearing the updates helped him learn more about the District. He's also been working on researching the requirements for social media record keeping and will update the Board as he has more information.

Pam Smith reported that all the follow-up paper work had been completed after the audit, such as closing out the fiscal year in the accounting system, filing the District's annual financial report, filing both the federal and state Form 990 for the Foundation. She reported that her staff continues to keep busy making camping reservations and that the revenue will more than likely surpass the budgeted amount. In comparison to last August, the District has spent 28% of the budget as compared to 30% last year. Pam and her staff continue to work on the online registration conversion and the Foundation's donor database upgrade by watching videos and working in the test databases. The online registration migration has been moved to November 1, 2021. She gave an updated on the Prairie pedal with \$16,050.00 in sponsorship funds and 50 riders registered to date.

Shane Ravellette gave an update on Operations projects. The Friends Creek electrical loop has been completed and they already had the first person hit one of the lights but it has been fixed. He has reviewed the Campground loop final

engineering documents and are being sent to IDPH (Illinois Department of Public Health). Staff have ordered supplies for the Friends Creek shop addition. At Sand Creek, they have scouted for the new wetland location and hope to start work in the fall. It seems like work at the Oglesby Mansion is never ending but some issues were addressed regarding the exterior trim and porch rails and work on the east porch will start soon. Natural Resources conducted another growing season burn at the Homestead Prairie to tackle Lespedeza and other invasive species.

Alysia Callison reported that August was a transition month for Program Services after finishing summer camp and before the fall programs begin. A safety course was held through IDNR for the first time in a year and half. The Astro Jam brought in approximately 68 people in attendance and it was a clear evening. The Hummingbird Festival attracted 78 people and saw 11 birds captured with ten being banded and one was a recapture. Despite the storms all around, the event went off without a drop of rain. The staff just finished the "Exploring the Sangamon" exhibit in the exhibit hall. Trustee Schneller suggested displaying the "Bottling Plant" picture that was currently downstairs in the upper level of the Nature Center somewhere so the public could see it.

**6. Other:**

Jerry Culp reminded the Board of the upcoming Trustee tour on October 13, 2021 and will email the agenda out to everyone.

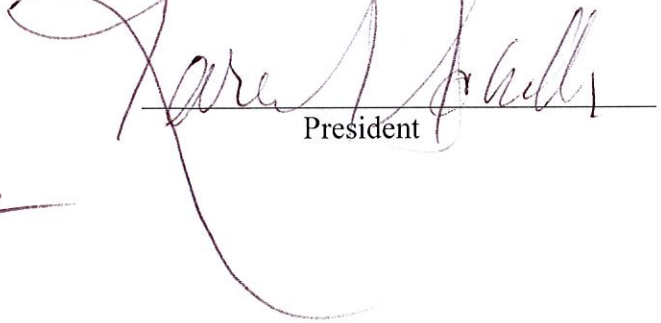
**COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:**

No further comments.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Trustee Beckhart MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:18 p.m. Trustee Bendsen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

  
Secretary

  
President