

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
December 20, 2023**

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, Treasurer Allen, Secretary Reed and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President Sams  
Board Members absent: None

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Minutes of the November 15, 2023 Public Meeting. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$138,686.14 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$10,139.65 as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

**COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:** No comments.

**PRIOR BUSINESS:** No prior business

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Health Insurance Premium Renewal:**

Pam Smith explained that annually around October – November, the District receives the current year's insurance renewal. This year, United Healthcare (UHC) was late in sending us the renewal but when it was received it had increased 27% over current year. The insurance broker, First Mid Insurance, went out to bid soliciting Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) and Health Alliance. Health Alliance came in at a 21% increase while Blue Cross Blue Shield came in at a 6% increase over the current UHC premium. The current UHC plan is a grandfathered plan so staff asked the broker to see what an ACA (Affordable Care Act) plan would cost the District, but it came back with even a larger increase of 38%. To ensure staff looked at all avenues for saving on health insurance costs, we asked the broker to reach out to the Chamber of Commerce. Since we were a member, we could potentially be a part of their insurance. When a census was submitted to Health Alliance as part of the Chamber, they denied the District due to health of the employees. Staff felt at this time, that the only choice that would work for both employees and the District was to choose BCBS. The drawback with the BCBS plan is that Springfield Clinic has not signed a contract as of yet with BCBS so employees using Springfield Clinic would see out of network costs. A broker with Gallagher approached the District and provided some very helpful insight so the District switched over to Gallagher as the insurance broker for healthcare. The agent looked into offering a \$250 deductible as well as a \$500 deductible to help with the Springfield Clinic issue but there was not enough difference between the two; and staff decided that the \$500 deductible plan offered a 90/10 coinsurance that staff has not had in the past.

Staff proposed to the Board that they approve the \$500 deductible plan with BCBS for the 2024 Benefit year.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve renewing employee health insurance with Blue Cross Blue Shield's \$500 deductible plan for calendar year 2024. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

## **2. Approval of sale or disposition of surplus property:**

Phil Julius explained that the Board had previously approved a 2011 Ford F-150 truck as surplus that had been in the fleet for almost ten years. An employee of the District became interested in purchasing this truck at Kelly Blue Book Value of \$6,298.00. As per the District's attorney, it is a legal act to sell assets to an employee. Staff asked the Board for approval to sell the vehicle to an employee which includes the Board approving a resolution and agreement to sell the vehicle. A few questions were asked about the liability of selling to an employee and staff assured the Board that the employee signs an agreement stating that they are purchasing the vehicle as is and there is no liability on the District if something goes wrong with the vehicle after the sale.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the sale of the 2011 Ford F-150 as surplus at the price of \$6,298.00 to an employee of the District. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

## **3. Staff Reports:**

Jerry Culp reported that the District acquired the Floyd property on December 11<sup>th</sup> at an acquisition cost of \$600,000.00, but \$300,000.00 will be reimbursed from an OSLAD Grant. The District received notice that the Illinois Park and Recreation Facility Construction Grant (PARC) had been approved to remodel the lower level of the Nature Center and construct an outdoor classroom. The project cost is approximately \$1,200,000.00 with the grant reimbursing a minimum of 75% of the cost to complete the project. Jerry was happy to report that the District received a grant in the amount of \$4,000.00 from the Community Foundation's wish list to provide a new smart board to be used by Program Services. Staff are beginning to prepare for the Foundation's 5K Ramble fundraising event on May 18<sup>th</sup>. With the Director of Finance and Human Resources retiring by May 1<sup>st</sup>, staff have been working with Sikich in assisting with recruitment process. Hopefully a new staff person will be on board in April for a month of training. Staff are still researching a work order-labor tracking system. All staff have been finalizing their budgets and submitting them for review.

The operations staff were busy at the end of November and beginning of December obtaining quotes and pricing for putting together their 2024/2025 proposed budget. Phil Julius reported that staff had asked the Foundation to support several projects for the next budget year and they approved the following: two Natural Resource projects, 50% of the cost to purchase a new skid steer, 50% of the cost to purchase a shuttle cart for the Nature Center and 50% scholarship funding for Summer Camp. Phil gave a huge thank you to the Foundation for their support. Outside of Operations staff working on regular maintenance of the buildings and land, staff conducted some research on blue prints for a timber frame pavilion at the group camp, which currently does not have any structures. Operations staff along with other District staff volunteered one night at the "Trees on the Tees" fundraising event for the Decatur Park District.

Pam Smith reported that November into early December was busy not only working toward finalizing a plan for employee health insurance renewal but also working on the transition from Integrity IT Consultants to Network Solutions. The District received several notices of rates for the calendar year 2024 with IMRF rate increasing from 1.5% to 2.8%, and worker's compensation insurance increasing approximately 11% over current year. On a good note, the District's unemployment insurance rate remained the same at .85%. Final disbursement of the tax levy for current year was received for a total of \$2,002,184.00, 100% of what was asked in the tax levy ordinance. Staff have been researching the new Illinois law that becomes effective on January 1, 2024 called the "Illinois Paid Leave for all Workers Act". This new law requires employers to offer 40 hours paid leave to all employees no matter what classification. The law's requirement is to earn one hour for every 40 hours worked for up to 40 hours per year. Staff will continue to work with the HR Consultant and attend webinars to get more details about the upcoming law.

Program Services staff kept busy meeting and working on an update to the Educator's Guide that has not been updated since 2018. In addition to the Educator Guide, staff held a brainstorming session to clean up and improve the District's website. With changes and updates to the website, staff hope to make the website easier to browse and more user friendly. Alysia Callison reported that 82 guests attended the Candlelight Tour on November 18<sup>th</sup>, which is more than they have seen in attendance for years. The Homestead Prairie Farm in 2023 had over 589 visitors for tours and events. Additionally, 185 pounds of produce was harvested from the Heirloom Garden and donated to community organizations including the Northeast Community Fund, God's Shelter of Love, the Good Samaritan Inn and the Salvation Army.


#### 4. Other


Staff reminded the Board members that the January and February meetings are being held as usual on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday night of the month but the March meeting will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday to accommodate the Tentative Budget being on display for 30 days from the February approval.

**COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:** No comments

#### ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Allen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:00 p.m. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Sam's "AYE"; and Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

  
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President

  
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Secretary