

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
February 15, 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; 1st Vice-President Castor, 2nd Vice-President Schneller; Treasurer Reed, and Secretary Allen
Board Members absent: None

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the Minutes of the January 18, 2023, Regular Public Meeting Minutes with corrections as noted. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

Pam Smith noted two corrections that were made to the minutes after they were distributed to the Board: On page one, CASA was incorrectly spelled as COSA and on page two the date of the Budget Study Session was typed as February 16 and should have been February 15th.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$164,511.41 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$15,677.46 as presented. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

No comments from the audience.

PRIOR BUSINESS:

1. Richie Wolf Memorial Scholarship:

Trustee Schneller read a note received from Jolanta Wolf regarding Richie's Memorial Scholarship:

A note from Jolanta Wolf

Wow what a great job you and the rest of the team are doing. Richie would be so touched and happy to see all this. It's a wonderful idea to reach out to CASA and try to provide some joyful nature related opportunities for foster children. Excellent. Hopefully, the public and radio listeners will be touched by it and we'll get some appreciated donations. How many children do you have in mind to fund per camp season? Perhaps I could spread a word in some way to get some funds? It's comforting to hear that he isn't forgotten and your willingness to continue his Scholarship is rewarding and generous and kind.

2. Volunteer Sick Leave Donation Policy

Pam Smith discussed the change to the Volunteer Sick Leave Donation Policy to eliminate the cap on the amount of hours an employee can request for donated sick leave. During the research on the policy and in developing the policy forty hours seem like a reasonable amount to request. After having an employee with a medical situation request for leave, staff discovered that 40 hours was not enough to cover any major medical emergency. Staff would like to eliminate the wording “up to 40 hours per year of” changing the sentence to read: *“Employees are eligible to request donated sick time if they meet all of the following criteria....”*

There is no financial impact to the District by making this change. No other wording or criteria will be changed in the policy.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the revision of the Volunteer Sick Leave Donation Policy as stated above omitting the limit of hours an employee can ask for a sick leave donation. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, “AYE”; Trustee Castor, “AYE”; Trustee Allen, “AYE”; Trustee Schneller, “AYE”; and Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. FY2024 Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance Approval:

There were no further comments regarding the Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance reviewed in the budget study session.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve FY2024 Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”; Trustee Reed, “AYE”; Trustee Castor, “AYE”; Trustee Allen, “AYE”; and Trustee Schneller, “AYE”; Motion carried.

2. Set hearing date for FY2024 Budget & Appropriate Ordinance:

It was an overall consensus to hold the Budget Hearing on March 22, 2023, at 5:25 p.m. before the regular Public Meeting at 5:30 p.m.

3. Approval of the New Information Technology Agreement

Jerry Culp presented the technology agreement with Integrity Technology Services out of Bloomington, Illinois, which will be a month by month agreement. Staff met with several consultants and felt that Integrity was more suited to meet the District’s needs. The idea behind hiring an IT Consultant is to build a plan for improving the District’s technology by replacing a maintained server with the Cloud. The District needs a more pro-active consultant to keep up with the ever changing technology environment, ultimately making processes for staff more efficient. Trustee Reed suggested that staff continue to look for a local IT consultant. Jerry assured the Board that the agreement is month by month giving us the freedom to move from Integrity at any time. Integrity has assured staff that there would be no problems in moving from one consultant to another if the need arises. Staff will continue to look for a local consultant. The breakdown is a one-time transition fee of \$2,630.00 and a monthly fee of \$2,630 for a total yearly cost of \$34,190.00. Funds for this service are included in the proposed FY2024 Budget.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the agreement with Integrity Technology Solutions in the total amount of \$34,190.00. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

4. Adopt New Asset Policy:

The District has a significant investment in fixed assets such as land, buildings, fixed and moveable equipment which have been tracked and depreciated for years. However, the District has never had a formal Fixed Asset Policy in place and thus, the reason for creating a policy to adopt by the Board. The policy sets guidelines to follow for staff. Pam Smith explained that these procedures have always been followed and the fixed assets are included in the annual audit. Currently the dollar amount threshold hold for determining a fixed asset is set at \$1,500.00. Staff felt that this was too low and suggest raising the fixed asset dollar threshold to \$5,000.00. With a low threshold of \$1,500.00, a very small amount is depreciated over the life of the asset making very little impact on the yearly depreciation expense. It makes sense to increase the dollar threshold. Increasing the threshold to \$5,000.00 will also save staff valuable time in entering and tracking small assets. Pam confirmed with the auditor that there would be no issue in increasing the threshold to \$5,000.00. Staff recommends adopting the Fixed Asset Policy with the new threshold of \$5,000.00.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the new Fixed Asset Policy as presented. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and. Motion carried.

5. Staff Reports

Jerry Culp reported that Ashton Nunn, Alysia Callison, and Karen Schneller along with himself attended the IPRKA/IAPD Soaring to New Heights Conference in Chicago. He stated that this conference is beginning to focus more and more on Conservation Districts and offering more decisions in that area. Staff have continued the search for a new Director of Operations and hope to wrap up the interviewing in a few days. Staff connected with the Salvation Army who is interested in helping the District grow the summer camp programs with additional children from their organization. Staff continues to work with the Boys and Girls Club as well. The Rock Springs 5K Ramble is scheduled for May 20, 2023, and staff have been working with the Foundation in preparation for the event. There will be a 5K Run/Walk, a 1 Mile Run/Walk and a kids fun run and a challenge award if you complete both the 5K and 1 mile run. The Foundation will be working with the District staff to provide concessions at the Festival of Spring. Jerry attended the first meeting of the Joint Legislative Committee at the conference where they laid out plans for the year including legislative breakfasts and he will be attending to advocate for legislation that benefits the District. He stated it was a good meeting and encouraged the Board to attend some of the legislative breakfasts.

January was a busy month for Pam Smith working on finalizing the budget with Staff and preparing the Budget Study Session Binder. Pam worked on the budget with staff projecting what expenses would be at fiscal year-end. Early projections shows approximately \$965,000 revenue over expenses. The District saw a large increase in the Personal Property Replacement tax, far exceeding the budgeted amount. Pam worked with an employee already on FMLA leave to apply for disability with IMRF and that involves a lot of paperwork. The Annual Workers

Compensation Audit was conducted with no issues being cited. It will be a few months before the final report is sent to the District. Jerry Culp and Pam both met with the HR Consultant from Sikich and conducted interviews with four candidates for the Director of Operations position. Staff also met with IT Consultants and decided that Integrity Technology Solutions was the best fit for the District. The agreement was presented to the Board for approval. Pam attended a webinar presented by the Chamber on "Employer Law Updates." This is always helpful in staying on top of ever changing laws. New information was shared with the staff at the all-staff meeting which included the "Family Bereavement Leave Act" as well as the "Paid Leave for All Workers" (PLFAW) Act.

Alysia Callison and her staff had an eventful month filled with meetings, programs and a conference. They presented several programs to several groups including Maroa-Forsyth Preschool, Piatt County Nursing Home, Macon Resources and a large Cub Scout troop. Program Services created a schedule of programs for March, April and May. The newsletter was drafted and coordinated by Ashton Nunn. Ashton is the new Marketing Specialist and is settling into her new marketing role very well. Due to her posting on our Facebook page, we have gained 453 new followers from January 3rd to February 7th with Instagram page gaining 52 new followers. Jenny Garver held a volunteer quarterly meeting and also hosted a volunteer field trip to Springfield to visit the Lincoln Museum and State Capitol. Alysia reported that WAND interviewed staff twice about programs and winter weather. Alysia met with a marketing representative for the Sanitary District to discuss potential program partnership opportunities. Finally staff are preparing for the Festival of Spring being held in April.

Jerry Culp gave the department report for Operations. Staff were busy re-establishing the oak savanna next to the Pine Forest at Rock Springs. Forestry mowing was completed and staff will be working on cleaning up and burning debris over the next few weeks. The Xander house demolition has been completed but still there is a debris pile and grading and seeding the site remains to be done. Staff removed a barn and cleaned up the site at the north end of Friends Creek. All structures have been taken down and debris hauled off site. The only items remaining are the concrete debris piles, grading and site restoration. Staff is working on seeding the remaining 45 acres at the Fort Daniels Conservation addition. Millikin students helped seed 15 acres of the 45 and staff along with volunteers will work on getting the balance seeded in February. Staff is taking advantage of a few short cold spells to get out into the woods and complete forestry mowing. Staff is working on an Eagle Scout project to install stepping blocks across the creeks at Sand Creek. The District is heavily involved in the Illinois Association of Conservation Districts (IACD) and will be attending the conference on February 9th and 10th.

6. Other Business:

No other business discussed.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

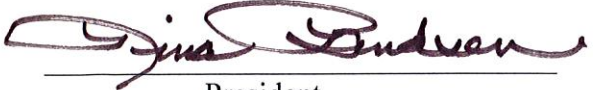
Trustee Schneller suggested that wording be included under the public comments section of the agenda informing the public that any issues brought to their attention would not be addressed at the meeting but would require further research and reporting on the findings at the next meeting. Trustee Reed also suggested sending a letter with the findings to the individual presenting the issue.

Trustee Schneller recommended that other Board Members attend the IPRA/IAPD Conference in Chicago. She said the sessions were well done and it's a


good opportunity for networking. Trustee Allen also commented on attending the IACD Conference and said it was well worth it and much better than he anticipated.

ADJOURNMENT:

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



President



Secretary