

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
February 21, 2024**

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

Board members present: 1st Vice President Castor, Treasurer Allen, Secretary Reed and 2nd Vice-President Sams
Board Members absent: President Nina Bendsen

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Minutes of the January 17, 2024 Public Meeting. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$157,171.92 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$14,214.59 as presented. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE: No comments.

PRIOR BUSINESS: No prior business discussed.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. FY2025 Tentative Budget & Appropriation Notice Approval:

There were no further comments or questions regarding the proposed FY2025 Budget and Appropriation Ordinance.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the FY 2025 Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance as presented. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sam's "AYE"; and Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Set hearing date for FY 2025 Budget & Appropriation Ordinance:

All Board members were in agreement to hold the FY2025 Budget and Appropriation Ordinance hearing at 5:25 p.m. on March 26th before the regularly scheduled meeting at 5:30 p.m.

3. Record Disposal Approval:

Pam Smith explained that periodically the District submits a records disposal certificate to the State for Disposal of records. The State provides guidelines for record disposal regarding which records require State approval and the timeframe when they can be legally disposed. The approval of the State document was shared with the Board. Once the Board approves the record disposal, staff will contact a shredding company to come onsite and provide a certificate of the shredding of documents. Staff proposes that the Board approve the record disposal as approved by the State.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the disposal of records presented and approved by the State of Illinois. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

4. Architectural Contract for PARC Grant Approval:

The District received a grant through the Illinois Park and Recreational Facility Construction Grant (PARC) for the construction of an Indoor/Outdoor Classroom at Rock Springs Nature Center. The District needs to hire an architect to complete the final drawings and prepare construction drawings for bidding and construction. The District has hired Melotte, Morse, Leonatti, Parker Architects (MMLP) to complete the concept plan in the amount of \$42,000.00. The reason the District contacted MMLP is that they have a long history with the District and have all the drawings of the Nature Center. Staff asks for a motion to approve the contract with MMLP in the amount of \$42,000.00 for the final design and preparing the construction drawings.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the architectural contract with MMLP in the amount of \$42,000.00 for the final design and preparing construction drawings for bidding and construction of the indoor/outdoor Classroom associated with the PARC Grant. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

5. Landscape Architectural Contract for PARC Grant Approval

In order to complete the construction of the new indoor/outdoor classroom, the District needs to hire a landscape architect to complete the final drawings and prepare construction drawings for bidding and construction of the indoor/outdoor classroom. During the planning of the project, the District hired Upland Design to complete the concept plan for the classroom. Upland Design submitted a proposal in the amount of \$48,900.00 to complete the final design and prepare the construction documents for bidding and construction of the indoor/outdoor space. Sufficient funds are included in the Capital Funds Projects account. Staff would ask for a motion to approve the Contract with Upland Design in the amount of \$48,900.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the landscape architectural contract with Upland Design in the amount of \$48,900.00 for the construction of the indoor/outdoor Classroom associated with the PARC Grant. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

6. Approval to apply for an RTP Grant for Scovill Connection:

The District is working with the Decatur Park District to make a connection to the trail system in the old Scovill Golf course. The proposed plan is to apply for a grant to connect the bike trail at Rock Springs Conservation Area to the trails in Scovill Park. Staff estimate that the project will cost approximately \$200,000.00 of which 80% will be reimbursed by the Grant. Staff asks for a motion to approve applying for the Recreational Trail Grant for the Rock Springs bike trail connection to Scovill.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the resolution applying for an RTP Grant for the Scovill connection. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

7. Approval to apply for a Bike Grant for the Bike Trail Restoration

The bike trail at the Rock Springs Conservation Area is over 20 years old and is in need of restoration. Staff is targeting the area along Stevens Creek where the erosion from the creek is starting to encroach on the trail edge. Staff proposes applying for the Bike Trail Grant to assist in the restoration of the bike trail and erosion issues along the Stevens Creek. The project to include trail restoration and stream bank stabilization is estimated to cost \$100,000.00 of which the District will be reimbursed 80% of the cost. Staff asks for a motion to approve applying for the Bike Trail Grant for the restoration of the trail and streambank stabilization. A resolution will be presented to the Board for approval within the next two months. The Grant is due in May.

Trustee Sams MOVED to approve applying for The Bike Trail Grant for the restoration of the bike trail and streambank stabilization along Stevens Creek. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; and Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

8. Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Decatur

The Board members received a notice that a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Decatur and Macon County Conservation District would be presented at the February Board meeting. This agreement was changed at the last meeting to be an Intergovernmental Agreement instead of a memorandum of understanding. This agreement will formally allow employees, Trustees, volunteers and agents of the Macon County Conservation District from and against all claims, costs, losses, and damages arising from the burning of native grasses and other vegetation on all City Properties. Staff ask for a motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Decatur to assist them with their natural area management.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Decatur and the Macon County Conservation District for assistance with natural area management. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

9. Approval of Park District Hold Harmless Agreement:

The Macon County Conservation District assists the Decatur Park District yearly in managing their natural areas using prescribed fire to control invasive plants and create healthier natural areas. The Park District and Conservation District would like to enter into an agreement that will formally allow employees, Trustees, volunteers and agents of the Macon County Conservation District from and against all claims, costs, losses, and damages arising from the burning of native grasses and other vegetation on all Park District properties. Staff ask for a motion to approve this Hold Harmless Agreement with the Decatur Park District.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Hold Harmless Agreement between the Decatur Park District and the Macon County Conservation District. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

10. Staff Reports

Executive Director: The District received notice that the grant for the Fort Daniel Pothole Prairie/Season Wetland Restoration was approved. The total cost of the project is \$873,000 with a total reimbursement of \$600,000. The PARC Grant for the Rock Springs Nature Center indoor/outdoor classroom was approved. Staff is working with the architect and landscape architect on proposals for the final design and construction phase of the project. Staff worked with Millikin University on setting up an internship with the Criminal Justice Department. Two interns will be working with the District this spring. Staff attended the annual IPRA/IAPD Conference in Chicago attending sessions and networking. Staff is gearing up for the May 18th Rock Springs Ramble. Staff continue to work with Sikich in the recruitment of the Director of Finance and HR position. Staff drafted a report and is preparing to set the first meeting of the Local Government Efficiency Committee.

Director of Operations: The ice storm at the end of January was challenging for the operations staff and kept them busy spreading ice melt. Then the weather dropped several inches of snow so staff kept busy with snow removal. Operations staff had a chainsaw safety training day involving preventative maintenance on saws, common repair issues and actual hands on cutting of trees. Eight staff members and Trustee Allen attended the annual IACD Conference at Starved Rock State Park. Staff can gain new ideas, learn new techniques, learn about new tools and hear stories of failed projects. All operations staff attended the annual Pipeline Emergency Response and Damage Prevention training. Burn crews were able to burn 30 plus acres at Fort Daniel the second week of February as well as burning several acres at Friends Creek. The District was able to sell the trailer that was at Griswold for \$8,000.00 and the F250 for \$12,000.00.

Director of Finance and Human Resources: January is a month of housekeeping duties such as completing employee W-2s and mailing 1099s to vendors. The annual IPRF audit was completed in which they audit our payroll as well as ensuring we have certificates of insurance on all contractors. Normally it is a few months before we know the results but the auditor cited no issues. The annual notice to be filed with Center for Medicare Services was filed as well as providing eligible employees with the Creditable Coverage Disclosure Notice. Staff continue to work with Network Solutions gearing up for implementation of Office 365. The final version of the Employee Handbook was completed and distributed to employees at the all staff meeting on February 2nd. The budget was finalized for presentation at the Budget Study Session. Staff continues to work with the accounting software and implementing improvements to the system for more efficient and accurate methods. Pam Smith noted that several revenue streams had surpassed budgeted amounts such as the Campground, Personal Property Replacement tax, Pavilion Rental, Deer Herd Management Training, and donations.

Director of Program Services: January saw the return of the Eagle Trips to Starved Rock with two trips in January and one beginning in February. All three trips were well-attended with at least one eagle being spotted at each trip. Staff hosted a trivia night at the Nature Center where seven teams signed up to compete against each other. The evening was a fun evening raising several hundred dollars for education and programming. Program Services staff completed work on the Educator's Guide and are working on getting the guide printed. Several letters were mailed to local libraries and senior citizen centers and nursing homes to remind them of the various programs available the District offers. Since being mailed out, staff have kept busy with phone calls and booking programs. Other events included a Volunteer Quarterly meeting, attending a Mudpuppy Festival in Monticello, hunting expo at First Baptist Church and

presented a talk on prescribed fire. Two staff began their certified Interpretative Guide Training. Staff began to think about Summer Camps as well as spring and summer programming.

11. Other

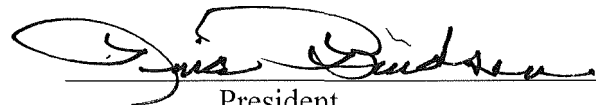
No other business.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

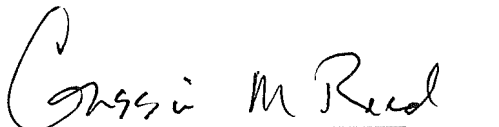
Trustee Allen commented on how much he enjoyed attending the IACD Conference at Starved Rock and encouraged other members to attend if they have the chance.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Allen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:09 p.m. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sam's "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.



President



Secretary