

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

January 17, 2024

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

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Minutes of the December 20, 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 Castor MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$135,894.95 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$17,991.78 as presented. Trustee Reed 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 audience.

PRIOR BUSINESS: No prior business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Campground Report:

The District changed camping software to Firefly in the middle of the camping season but all went well. The transition made it much easier for staff as well as the campers. Camping season went well seeing a \$22,000.00 increase in revenues over the prior year as well as 151 occupancy increase over prior year. From the graph presented to the Board, expenses gradually increase every year due to the increase in utilities and the cost to maintain the campground. There are plans to oil and chip the campground for Fiscal Year 2025 and has been incorporated into next year's budget. Also, at the request from campers, three new "tent" sites will be added to the campground solely for the use of tents without electricity being available. The sites will have all the other amenities as electric sites with a gravel pad, fire pit, picnic table and use of the comfort station. There are no fee structure changes recommended for the new camping season.

2. Set Budget Study Session:

The Board normally schedules the Budget Study Session about an hour before the regularly scheduled meeting in February. After a brief discussion, the Board decided that an hour before the regular meeting would be ample time to discuss the proposed budget. The Budget Study Session is scheduled for February 21, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. This meeting is required to be posted in a local newspaper and on the District website.

3. Staff Reports:

Executive Director's Report: Staff submitted paperwork for the reimbursement for the balance of the OSLAD Grant for the purchase of the Floyd property. The PARC Grant for the Rock Spring Nature Center Outdoor Classroom was approved and staff is currently working with the architect and landscape architect on proposals for the final design. The District's HR Consulting Firm, Sikich, is updating staff job descriptions which have not been updated since 2015. Staff has been reviewing the MCCD Crisis Management Plan as well as the Local Government Efficiency Report. The Director of Finance and Human Resources position has been posted and interviews will begin the end of January into February. Staff is currently working with the Oglesby Board on renovating the kitchen. A meeting has been arranged with an architect to review the space and develop a concept plan. Staff is in the final stages of completing the budget for review. The transition to Network Solutions has been going smoothly with several improvements already made.

Director of Operations Report: Staff continue to work on the 2024-2025 budget. With the acquisition of the Floyd property finalized, comes assessing the house and outbuildings for future maintenance needs. The Deer Herd Management Program ended in December with 64 total deer being harvested (54 does and 10 bucks). Two deer were harvested from the disabled blinds. Each area was tasked with snow removal and salting with the first snowfall of the season. Barn Owl boxes were installed at Sand Creek and Fort Daniel. Staff continue to work on the janitorial bulk purchasing and setting up an area for storing the products.

Director of Program Services Report: The Geminid Meteor Shower viewing was held at Friends Creek, with approximately 90 in attendance. The Annual Holiday Volunteer Party was held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church with 97 volunteers in attendance. Staff participated in Trees on the Tees in two capacities: decorating a tree which came in third place, and volunteering together at the event. The final draft of the Educator's Guide is being reviewed. Much of December was spent with staff working on the department's budget. In December, Beth Lane, Taylor Buley, and Brock Rowland, all received their Interpretive Guide certification through the National Association for Interpretation. So far in 2023 at the time of this report, the total approximate attendance for programs, school groups, events, camps and Nature Center visits totaled 38,153 individuals.

Director of Finance and Human Resources: Much of December was filled with year-end activities such as updating payroll tax tables, reconciling W-2's in preparation for printing and fling, quarterly payroll reports completed and preparing 1099's. Work continued on reviewing and updating the budget for FY2025. Staff are pleased with the transition to Network Solutions. Employees received their new ID cards for the new insurance carrier, Blue Cross Blue Shield. Staff continued to work with Sikich on updating and completing the Employee Handbook with updates, and particularly the new Paid Leave Act for All Workers. The District already had a personal leave policy for Full-time employees for 24 hours, so an additional 16 hours was added to be in compliance with the new law. Also a Paid-time-off policy was already in place for the regular part-time staff. In order to be in compliance with new law, all part-time employees under 40 hours were added to the policy including seasonals and weekend staff. The Macon County Conservation Foundation had a successful year-end appeal bringing in \$48,635.00, the most that has ever been received for a year-end appeal. Staff continue to work on the bulk purchasing through Staples and will continue to be a work in progress as it gets established.

4. Other

No other business.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

No comments from the Trustees.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Allen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:03 p.m. Trustee Reed 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.

David A. Castor

Vice-President

Cassie M. Reed

Secretary