

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

July 19, 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 Sams, Treasurer Reed and Secretary Allen.

Board Members absent: None

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Minutes of the June 21, 2023 Public Meeting. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Reed "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "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 \$231,747.49 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$33,074.90 as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; and Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

No comments.

PRIOR BUSINESS

No prior business.

NEW BUSINESS:

1) Election of officers:

Annually the Board must select a slate of officers and after some discussion the Board Members were in agreement with the following:

President – Nina Bendsen
1st Vice President – Dave Castor
Treasurer – Mark Allen
Secretary – Gussie Reed
2nd Vice President – Michael Sams

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the slate of Officers for July 2023 – June 2024 as presented above. Trustee Allen SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

2) Appoint the Foundation Liaison:

The normal process for appointing the Foundation Liaison has been to appoint the newest Trustee to allow them an opportunity to meet the Foundation Board members and learn about their mission. The Liaison will attend the Foundation Board meetings with one being held the next day at 7:30 a.m. at the Rock Springs Nature Center. Trustee Sams agreed to be the Foundation Liaison for this coming year.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve Michael Sams as the Foundation Liaison as discussed. Trustee Reed SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Sams "AYE"; and Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

3) Appoint IACD LIAISON (Illinois Association of Conservation Districts):

Trustee Allen has been the IACD Liaison this past year and enjoyed attending the annual Conference. He will review his calendar to see if his calendar is open for those dates. The Board decided to table a decision until next month after Trustee Allen is able to review his schedule.

4) Approval of Signatories Resolution :

Pam Smith explained that annually the Trustees must approve a new signatory resolution removing the Board member that just completed their term and adding the new Board Member. Pam did explain that this is not required for all Board members to be a signer but did explain that confidential information will be required from them such as social security number, birthdate, etc. The Board all agreed upon the following resolution:

**MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
SIGNATORIES RESOLUTION
July 19, 2023 – July 17, 2024**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Macon County Conservation District that Executive Director Gerald Culp, President Nina Bendsen, 1st Vice –President Dave Castor, Treasurer Mark Allen, Secretary Gussie Reed and 2nd Vice President Michael Sams be authorized to endorse all checks and depositories for the Macon County Conservation District for all the District funds at all applicable banks, effective July 19, 2023.

Approved this 19th Day of July 2023

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Signatories Resolution as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; and Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

5) Approval of sale or disposition of surplus property:

The District recently purchased a new 2023 Ford Transit for Program Services, and staff is asking the Board approval to declare the old 2008 Honda Odyssey Van as surplus and sell it. As per the District's legal counsel, the sale of the Honda requires a resolution to sale the vehicle, particularly in this case to a District Staff member so that here is complete transparency. The van will be sold for \$3,469, Kelly Blue book price. The employee purchasing the van agrees to sign an agreement including a release of liability and waiver of warranties.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the sale of the 2008 Honda Odyssey as surplus at the price of \$3,469.00. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Reed "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

6) Approval of the City Wetland Agreement/Grant

The Macon County Conservation District is a member of the “Heart of Sangamon Ecosystem Partnership”. This is a collection of local governmental units and organizations that work to protect and restore the Sangamon River, and adjacent land uses to prevent flooding and sediment run off into the Sangamon. The City of Decatur is providing grants to adjacent land owners to construct wetlands to help reduce the amount of sediment that enters the Sangamon River. The Conservation District was recently a recipient of a grant from the City of Decatur to construct two wetlands at the Friends Creek Conservation Area and one wetland at the Fort Daniel Conservation Area. The grant will cover 75% of the cost to construct the wetlands with an estimated cost of \$53,000.00. In addition to the grant, the partnership has also received a federal grant that will reimburse the District for the balance of the project costs. The District will expend the costs to complete the wetlands and be completely reimbursed by the City of Decatur and Federal Grant. The Board members were given the grant agreements in their packet for review. Staff recommends approving the grant agreements with the City of Decatur to construct two wetlands at Friends Creek and one at Fort Daniel.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the agreement between the District and the City of Decatur establishing wetlands at Friends Creek Conservation Area and Fort Daniel Conservation Area as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, “AYE”; Trustee Allen, “AYE”; Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”; Trustee Reed, “AYE”; and Trustee Sams, “AYE”. Motion carried.

7) Approval of Liability Insurance Payment

Pam Smith explained that annually the Board of Trustees must approve the payment of the District’s Liability Insurance through IPARKS (Illinois Parks Association Risk Services). The District has been with IPARKS for a number of years. Each year a 3% increase is built into the budget with an additional \$4,000.00 as per advice from IPARKS representative. The total cost of the insurance is \$75,357.00 which is below the \$78,698.00 budgeted for insurance in the special liability revenue fund account. Also budgeted in this account for this year was funds for some safety equipment, safety training and a small portion of the Director of Operations’ salary. Staff recommends renewing the liability insurance in the amount of \$75,357.00 for the year beginning July 10, 2023 and ending July 9, 2024.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the annual renewal of the District’s liability insurance in the amount of \$75,357.00 to IPARKS as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, “AYE”; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, “AYE”; Trustee Castor, “AYE”; and Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”. Motion carried.

8) Trustee Tour

Every year the District schedules a Trustee Tour to highlight different projects and conservation areas. Below is a proposed schedule for the tour:

2023 Board of Trustees Tour	
8:00 am	Meet at Nature Center
8:10	Rock Springs Window of Wildlife
8:30	Rock Springs Xander Property
9:20	Friends Creek Wetland Project
10:30	Bois du Sangamon Nature Preserve-Floyd Property

11:20 Fort Daniel Wetland Project and Penhallegon Home Stead
12:30 Lunch
1:45 pm Return to Rock Springs

Board can attend the complete tour or any part of it they wish to attend. The Board discussed setting a date for the tour and agreed upon Tuesday, October 3, 2023 beginning the tour at 8:00 a.m.

9) Staff Reports

Jerry Culp attended the annual Izaak Walton League Picnic and received a \$1,500.00 donation with \$500 designated for Program Services and \$1,000.00 designated for Natural Resources. In an effort to be more environmentally friendly, the District purchased IPADs for each of the Board members and staff that regularly attend the meetings. The Board packet will be emailed to the Board and uploaded to a Google Drive for easy access. This will eliminate the need to print and deliver paper copies of the Board packet. Staff attended a webinar on the Local Efficiency Act held by IAPD focusing on the process and requirements for completing the act. IAPD supplies a draft report for agencies to modify and send back to the County. Preparation is underway for this year 2023 Prairie Pedal Fundraising Event being held on September 24, 2023. Staff worked on the Oglesby Mansion east porch. The initial plan was to install railings but it was determined the railings were not historically accurate so staff recommend installing temporary benches on the porch to protect patrons from the edge of the porch. The District is also proceeding with the grant process to purchase the Floyd Property.

Phil Julius highlighted various projects of the Operations Staff for the month of June. All locations participated in storm damage cleanup using 93 man hours as well as 12 hours using a skid steer or utility tractor. Operations staff met at the newly acquired Penhallegon property and developed a plan to tackle the overgrown landscape. Trees were pruned along the drive. The asphalt driveway at the Xander Property was repaired where heavy equipment had damaged it during demolition. Flat screen TVs were installed above the Window of Life for bird identification. The island at the Miller Wetland was forestry mowed and a second handicap blind was installed at Sand Creek. Turf mowing and picnic table repairs were completed at Griswold Conservation Area. Trail pruning at Sand Creek is an ongoing project along with invasive species spraying. In the absence of the Friends Creek Campground Host, full-time staff have been covering the campground duties. New pit toilet doors were delivered at Friends Creek. The first berm and control structure has been installed for the wetlands at Friends Creek.

Pam Smith gave a department update saying that her staff had been super busy answering phone calls for camping reservation cancellations and changes as well as answering calls regarding Summer Camp. Paperwork was completed on a new short-term disability case where the employee had been out on FMLA. Pam commended the staff for their generosity when over \$600 was collected to give to this employee to help with additional expenses that occurred during his illness. The District's insurance broker, First Mid Insurance, scheduled a meeting with Pam to meet the new representative assigned to the District. A few ideas were tossed around as to what to offer to employees that may be a cost savings for the District, such as offering a second plan with a higher deductible but lower cost to both the employee and District. As it gets closer to the end of October, Pam will meet with them again to discuss options once the new rates for 2024 are available. Staff attended a one day seminar provided free of charge from the auditor, MCK CPAs & Advisors. The seminar gave updates being mandated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

Staff continue to work through issues with the new IT Consultant. The District also just received their first tax levy distribution for the fiscal year. Pam reported that money market interest rates continue to increase. Farm rent from the Penhallegon farm property was received in the amount of \$33,000.00.

Alysia Callison reported that summer camp kicked off giving “kudos” to Brock Rowland and his counselors for the work they are doing. All camps have been well attended. Most camps end at the end of July with Earth Adventures ending after the first week in August. Staff were super busy with library programs even going as far as Newman Public Library. The local Boy Scout Council held a Cub Scout Camp at Friends Creek Conservation Area for four days in a row at the end of June. Staff also held programs on-site for the Stephen Decatur Middle School Life Skills program. With Prairie Pedal coming up in September, staff have been hard at work preparing for the event. Alysia and Ashton Nunn, the Marketing Specialist, have been working with a marketing firm to generate recommendations for marketing and advertising goals. One recommendation was to rework the District’s website as it is not optimized for current search engines. Staff also designed a new ad that was placed on the back of a city bus advertising the District. The advertisement includes a panel that can be changed for various events. New televisions were donated by the Camera Club to be hung at the “Window of Life” as well as funds to update the art gallery hanging system.

10) Other

No other business.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

No comments from the Trustees.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Trustee Castor MOVED to go into Executive Session at 6:12 p.m. for the purpose of

- 1. The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1)**

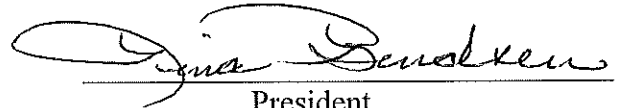
Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, “AYE”; Trustee Sams, “AYE”; Trustee Reed, “AYE”; Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”; and Trustee Allen, “AYE”. Motion carried.

Trustee Reed MOVED to return to the Regular Public Meeting at 7:11 p.m. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, “AYE”; Trustee Allen, “AYE”; Trustee Reed “AYE”; Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”; and Trustee Castor, “AYE”. Motion carried.

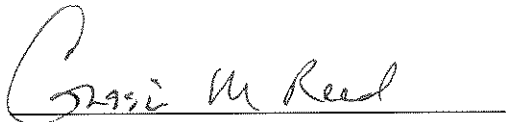
Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Executive Session Minutes of July 19, 2023. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”; Trustee Castor, “AYE”; Trustee Allen, “AYE”; Trustee Reed “AYE”; and Trustee Sams, “AYE”. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Allen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 7:12 p.m. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor "AYE". Motion carried.



President



Secretary