

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
July 20, 2022**

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 Reed, and Secretary Allen

Board Members absent: 2nd Vice-President Schneller

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Minutes of the June 15, 2022, Public Meeting. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "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 \$281,599.24 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$58,161.96 as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE: No comments from audience.

PRIOR BUSINESS: No prior business.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Election of Officers:

The normal process for election of officers was out of sync due to the loss of a Board Member mid-term and another Member not wanting to take the role of President. Karen Schneller had been president for the past two years and under normal circumstances would serve as President again this year since this would be her last year as a Trustee. Karen decided to step down and Nina Bendsen volunteered to serve as president pending the agreement of the Board. After some discussion, the Board Members were in agreement and announced the new officers as below:

President – Nina Bendsen
1st Vice President - Dave Castor
2nd Vice President – Karen Schneller
Secretary - Mark Allen
Treasurer – Gussie Reed

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the slate of officers for July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 as presented above. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Appointment of 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. Gussie agreed to be the Foundation Liaison.

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

3. Appointment of IACD Liaison:

Annually the Board of Trustees appointments a liaison to the Illinois Association of Conservation Districts (IACD). Jerry Culp briefly explained that the IACD holds a yearly conference typically held at Starved Rock. It is a good learning tool. After some discussion, the Board decided to table the appointment for now. Trustee Allen did ask for some material be sent to him to learn more about the IACD and he would decide whether or not he wanted to volunteer to serve in that position. No decision was made at this meeting but will be discussed in a future meeting.

4. Approval of Special Event Application and Alcohol Permit:

Jerry Culp presented a special event application for approval for the first event to serve alcohol. The past few months the Board has gone through the process of amending the Conservation District Ordinance to permit alcohol at Rock Springs Conservation District area for special events approved by the Board of Trustees. Annually the Foundation holds its Prairie Pedal fundraising event raising funds for natural areas and wildlife in Macon County. The event has an average of about 200 participants. The idea is to issue wrists bands and allow a maximum of two drinks per individual. The event will be held on Sunday, September 25th. Jerry is working with an organization to serve the alcohol and donate alcohol at cost. He will be discussing alcohol liability insurance with the Foundation Board at tomorrow's meeting. Staff is asking for the Board to approve the special use permit application and alcohol permit for the Foundation's Prairie Pedal event.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Special Event Application and Alcohol Permit as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

5. Approval to apply for a Fort Daniel Habitat Grant Application:

The Board approved budgeted funds for the RTP (Recreational Trails Program) Grant for the newly acquired Fort Daniel Conservation Area Property to install trails and various amenities. Since this particular grant has not been announced, staff is asking the Board to approve the application for a Habitat Grant. This grant has been announced and will provide a 50% match. The plan includes the restoration of Pothole Prairies, Upland Prairies and Oak Savanna. Staff is estimating the project cost to be \$250,000.00 of which \$125,000.00 will be reimbursed through the grant. Staff need approval from the Board to apply for the grant.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve applying for the Fort Daniel Habitat Grant as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

6. Trustee Tour :

Every year normally in October, the District provides a Trustee tour of various sites to showcase the work of its staff. Last year, the Foundation Board members were also invited to attend along with the Trustees. After tossing around a few dates, the Board decided that Thursday, October 20th would work best. A few possible sites that were mentioned were the Fort Daniel Conservation Area, the new addition at the Friends Creek Conservation shop and electrical at the campground, Bois Du Sangamon and the shooting range with the tour starting at the Rock Springs Conservation Area. The Board Members also discussed eating at a restaurant in Argenta. An itinerary will be drafted and sent out to the Board.

7. Staff Reports

Jerry Culp gave an update on the Nature Center program and office space stating that the program room in the lower level had been completed as well as completing new Wi-Fi. The new Wi-Fi is password protected for the staff but he is still working on the public versus private access. The District secured Upland Design to complete the concept plan for the outdoor classroom proposed on the east side of the building. Jerry attended the yearly Izaak Walton League annual picnic where they presented him with a \$1,000.00 donation in honor of Sam Gibbons. He reported that staff are busy preparing for Prairie Pedal and announced next year's date for the Rock Springs 5K Ramble as May 20, 2023.

Pam Smith reported that her staff kept busy resolving software issues for most of the month. More training was received regarding the campground online registration software, which greatly benefit all staff involved. Pam reported that \$4,320.00 was received from the auction sale and received another large personal property replacement tax distribution, surpassing the budgeted amount. A certificate of deposit with the Scott State Bank was redeemed in the amount of \$439,885.68, which had been with that bank since 2009. The interest rate offered was too low and staff decided to redeem and wait to reinvest once we know more of what will happen with interest rates. The Illinois Funds has already earned more this fiscal year than it did the entire last fiscal year. Pam reported that the Foundation had received \$12,500.00 in Prairie Pedal sponsorships to date.

Alysia Callison reported that her staff have been super busy with summer programs. Just in the month of June, seventeen library programs were held and programs were held for the Mt. Zion and Niantic Park Districts as well as Decatur Public Schools and Macon County CASA. The Sunday evening concert series have been well attended. Brent Wielt and Abby, the Historic Intern, coordinated the Independence Day 1860 at the Homestead Prairie Farm on the June 25th. Unfortunately there were approximately 33 that attended the event due to rain. Preparation was under way for upcoming events such as the Prairie Pedal, Astronomy Jamboree and the Hummingbird Festival.

Jerry Culp highlighted operations projects in the absence of Shane Ravellette. The department has been focusing restoration efforts at the Griswold Conservation Area with some Ash tree removal. Restoration was also begun on the kame prairie and savannah. Several days were spent forestry mowing the honeysuckle at

Griswold. Sixty percent of the job was completed by the contractor on the hedge row removal at the Rock Springs Conservation Area.

8. Other Business:

Jerry Culp was excited to show off the new stickers created by the Program Services staff for both the Conservation District and Foundation. Just another way to market the Conservation District and Foundation. Alysia Callison gave most of the credit to Beth Lane for creating the stickers.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

Dave Castor was happy to report that the Richie Wolf Memorial Fountain donated by the Camera Club was dedicated with Richie's wife and daughter present for the dedication.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Trustee Reed MOVED to go into Executive Session at 6:28 p.m. for the purpose of

1. The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body. 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (5)

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

Trustee Castor MOVED to return to the Regular Public Meeting at 6:44 p.m. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Executive Session Minutes of July 20, 2022. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, "AYE"" Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

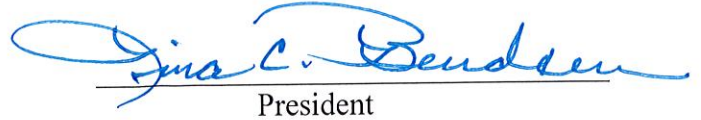
Adoption of resolution authorizing purchase of real property in Mt Zion Township.

As per executive session the Board were in agreement to adopt the resolution and authorize purchase.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the adoption of the resolution authorizing purchase of real property in Mt. Zion Township. Trustee Castor SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE".

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Allen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:46 p.m. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor "AYE". Motion carried.


President


Treasurer