

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

June 15, 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 Schneller

Board members present: President Schneller, 1st Vice-President Bendsen, Treasurer Castor, Secretary Beckhart and 2nd Vice-President Allen

Board Members absent: None

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Minutes of the May 18, 2022, Public Meeting. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Bendsen MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$142,217.30 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$10,749.31 as presented. Trustee Beckhart SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE: None

PRIOR BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Introduction of New Board Member:

Gussie Reed was introduced as the new Trustee to the Board effective in July 2022. Farewell was also said to Trustee Beckhart with this being his last month to serve on the Board. The President of the Board and fellow Trustees thanked him for his service and for stepping in and fulfilling the rest of a term by a Trustee that had resigned. Trustee Beckhart stressed that he had learned a lot since serving on the Board and was pleased with how well the District was run and complimented the staff on a good job. Gussie briefly introduced herself as a retiree who had been employed by Ameren for 42 years and was serving on several other Boards such as the Decatur Memorial Hospital Board and CASA. All warmly welcomed Gussie as the new Trustee.

2. Approval of the Special Event Policy:

Jerry Culp briefly reviewed the Special Event Policy that now permitted the use of alcohol at the Rock Springs Conservation Area. Jerry emphasized that he kept the beginning of the sentence....."*alcohol is not permitted on any properties of the Conservation District*" but added "*except at Rock Springs Conservation Area with an approved special use permit*". Some discussion followed concerning if weddings could use the special permit and also why was Rock Springs the only location allowing alcohol. Jerry explained that the Decatur Township is the only township at the county level allowing for a liquor license. He also pointed out the change in the fee from **\$200/day to \$400/day**. The Board of Trustees sets policy so the Special Event Policy

requires Board approval. Staff will develop the application and share with the Board in the near future. Each special use permit will be brought to the Board for approval.

Trustee Bendsen MOVED to approve the Special Event Policy as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "Aye"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Beckhart, "AYE". Motion carried.

3. Approval of the Liability Insurance Renewal:

Pam Smith briefly reviewed the liability insurance renewal. Each year the renewal is presented to the Board for approval. Approximately a 3% increase is budgeted each year, which has been the average increase for years. The District has used IPARKS (Illinois Parks Association Risk Services) for many years. The renewal premium will be \$69,275.00 and will be expensed out of the Liability Special Revenue Fund account with sufficient funds available for payment. Staff recommends that the Board approve the renewal with IPARKS.

Trustee Beckhart MOVED to approve the annual renewal of the District's liability insurance in the amount of \$69,275.00 to IPARKS as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

4. Approval of Hedge Row Removal Quote:

The District solicited quotes from three land management contractors including Eric Vieback & Son Excavating & Trucking, JRH Service, Inc., and Hutchins Excavating for the removal of ½ miles of hedgerow at Rock Springs Conservation Area. "Hedge" trees are Osage orange which were planted as a pre-barbed wire option. The species is native to the United States but not the Midwest. Shane Ravellette referred to these trees as an "ice age" tree because nothing will eat them. They are considered invasive and tear up chain saws, are resistant to fire, and the limbs and roots are sharp and last for decades. For this reason, we contract to have them removed with heavy equipment. Eric Vieback & Son came in at the lowest bid and we have used this company for several other projects. We specifically budgeted for this project. Staff recommends hiring Eric Vieback & Son Excavating & Trucking for this job. It is also pre-approved by the Foundation for reimbursement at the end of the fiscal year.

Trustee Castor MOVED to award the hedge row removal to Eric Vieback & Son Excavating and Trucking for \$24,876.00. Trustee Bendsen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

5. Staff Reports:

Jerry Culp, Executive Director, continues to work on adding additional program space for the summer camp. The conference room in the basement has been made into a space for the campers and we will keep expanding the downstairs over several years. The District was invited to be a part of developing a scholarship through the Empowerment and Opportunity Center (EOC). Jerry reported that the State announced that the funding for the OSLAD grant is higher than in past years but have not announced the deadline to apply for grants. Staff is working on several ideas in preparation of the announcement. Jerry updated the Special Event Policy to reflect changes in the ordinance allowing alcohol as special events approved by the board and suggested updates to the fee schedule. The District received a \$4000.00 donation from the Pondelick Endowment Fund. Preparation for Prairie Pedal is underway. Jerry announced the tentative date for the Rock Springs Ramble is May 13, 2023.

Shane Ravellette, Director of Operations, reported that his department has been focusing on invasive control and restoration with two targets being crown vetch and sweet clover. At Rock Springs, the work has been focused on the newly acquired 17 acres addition along Dipper Lane. Staff have treated the invasive lespedeza, honeysuckle and autumn olive. Sites around the house and two outbuildings have been cleared and are ready for demolition. The campground electrical project is finally 100% complete. Shane hosted the first of the summer long campground programs. His program was a question and answer coffee talk with guests and interested individuals. The program series is scheduled for every Saturday at 10:00 a.m. except for the two remaining holidays. A large white oak was taken down at the campground that had died. Shane reported that they only had two individuals show up for the public meeting at Griswold Conservation Area.

Jerry Culp reported on Program Services in Alysia Callison's absence. Program Services staff were busy with school programs, and other public programs. He stated that Alysia was happy with the partnership with the Boys and Girls club. She was looking forward to all the library programs scheduled in June. She is excited for the department to once again be busy.

Susie Ryan, Marketing Specialist, reported that social media presence was increasing and she reported that in the past month there had been approximately 20,000 interactions on social media. She will be running a booth at School Zoo this summer.

Pam Smith, Director of Finance and Human Resources, reported that May was still a month for prepping for the audit. Auditors were on site beginning June 6 and ending June 8th. At the time they left, they had not reported any findings or any issues with the audit. The auditors will continue working on the audit through July and will report on the audit at the August Board meeting. Pam found that the month of May seemed to be a month of nothing but technology issues. Staff worked with Vermont Systems to resolve an issue with installment billing, which is used for Earth Adventures Camp.

6. Other Business:

No other business.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

Trustee Allen informed the Board that his wife had written a book on historical buildings and included in the book was the Bethel School House at the Friends Creek Conservation Area. He was going to see if he could get two copies of the book with one be placed at Bethel School and the other at the Rock Springs Nature Center Library.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Trustee Castor MOVED to go into Executive Session at 6:15 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)**

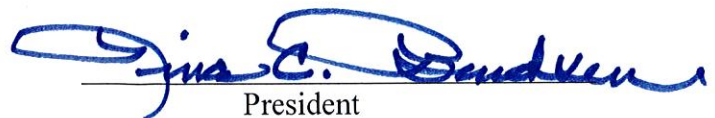
Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE" and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Allen MOVED to return to the Regular Public Meeting at 6:50 p.m. Trustee Beckhart SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Executive Session Minutes of June 15, 2022. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Beckhart MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:55 p.m. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor "AYE". Motion carried.


President


Treasurer