

# MINUTES OF A BUDGET STUDY SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

March 18, 2020

PURSUANT to written notice given all members of the Board, the above meeting was called to order by President Parish at 4:30 p.m.

Board members present: President Parish, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President White, Secretary Johnson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Bendsen, and Treasurer Schneller

Board members absent: 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President White

Staff present: Shane Ravellette, Richie Wolf, Pam Smith (Alysia Callison conferenced into meeting)

**Comments from Audience:** No audience

## **New Business:**

### **1. Budget Study Session:**

Richie reviewed the budget book as presented to the Board. Below are some highlights from the overview:

- There is a large difference between FY20 and FY21 because a large grant was received for a land purchase.
- Two capital projects will be carried over to this fiscal year – the bike trail project and the pond project. New capital projects being budgeted are to remodel the ECO Center and remodel of the upper level of the Rock Springs Nature Center.
- The amount of tax distribution from the County property taxes is rather minimal as compared to other organizations with the District only receiving approximately 1.2% of the total taxes collected.
- Most of the tax levy requested is for the general fund account with 88.6% of the funds request going to the operating fund.
- Pam Smith reviewed the summary of all funds and explained the strategy behind maintaining the balances.
- Richie reviewed the General Corporate Fund account summary comparing budgeted year to current fiscal year with some highlights below
  - Revenue of \$24,000.00 was added to agricultural crops for leasing out the newly acquired property at Ft. Daniel.
  - Interest revenue was decreased due to falling interest rates (before the COVID -19 became an issue)
  - A 3% pay increase was budgeted overall for all employees. Over all, payroll decreased due to some retirements and the part-time increased due to increasing rate for minimum wage.
  - The ECO Center expense will only happen if the District receives the museum grant and/or fundraising generates enough funds.
  - Richie explained the increase in natural resources landscaping and restoration expense due to project that the Foundation is funding to clear the area at the corner of Rock Springs Road and Brozio Lane, which used to be an old landfill. Contractor will come in and bury the trash and the white pines will be removed. There was some discussion concerning removing the white pines but it was stressed that they are not native to Illinois.

- The increase in the Rock Springs Construction expense is due to the remodel scheduled for the upper level of the Nature Center. The remodel is to bring all employees to the upper level. There was some discussion as to the cost and purpose of the remodel. Staff explained that currently the staff are split between to levels and this would enhance efficiency and better communication among staff. Not to mention, receptionists would be more easily accessed by the public.
- Purchase of maintenance equipment at Friends Creek increased due to the purchase of golf cart for the campground and new steer skid as well as a basketball court being constructed in the playground loop at the campground.
- Maintenance of Roads & Facilities increased for Sand Creek Conservation Area due to installation a new furnace and new roof at the residence.
- The Engineering & Consulting fees increased due to the cost of completing the schematic design of the ECO Center (the more in-depth design detail).
- Pam Smith briefly reviewed the special funds and their balances and reported that the Greenway Fund account had been closed after completing the foot bridge at Sand Creek Conservation Area.
- Richie reviewed the pictures of some of the major capital projects in the budget book:
  - Floor plan for the upper level of the Nature Center
  - Parking lot at Leiby Hall
  - Adirondack lean-to being placed in the Pines
  - Diagram of the ECO Center remodel
  - New Polaris ranger to be purchased for the Rock Springs Conservation Area
  - John Deere 333G Compact Track Loader for the Friends Creek Conservation Area
  - Patching of the Rock Springs Bike Trail
  - Rock Springs Service Lane being oiled and chipped
- Staff explained that several areas had been combined such as Griswold being combined with Rock Springs and Ft. Daniel being combined with Sand Creek.


The Board received a tour of the proposed changes to be made with the upper level of the Nature Center.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Trustee Bendsen made a MOTION to adjourn the Budget Study Session at 5:30 p.m. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 PRESIDENT

ATTEST:

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 SECRETARY