

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
January 15, 2020**

PURSUANT to written notice given all members of the Board, the above meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by President Parish with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board members present: President Parish, 1st Vice-President White, Secretary Johnson, Treasurer Schneller, and 2nd Vice-President Bendsen
Board members absent: None

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the Minutes of the December 18, 2019 Public Meeting. Trustee Bendsen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Parish, "AYE"; Trustee White and Trustee Johnson, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee White MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$96,882.89 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$18,357.63 as presented. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Parish, "AYE"; and Trustee White, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

Bill Faber, Joyce Cooling, and Sue England from Decatur, Illinois, discussed their concerns with the horse trails at Sand Creek Conservation Area. Bill Faber cited that their two major concerns were runners confronting the horses on the trails and the roped off center section in the parking area. He felt that something needed to be done to educate the runners how to approach the riders as well as the risks involved. His concern with roping off the middle section of the parking area was the difficulty some riders were having parking their long horse trailers. That area had also been used by young riders to warm up their horses before taking off on the trails. Bill Faber felt that runners have other options while the horse riders only have the option of Sand Creek. Joyce Cooling gave an example of a close incidence with her horse and stated that the problem with many runners is that they wear ear plugs and can't hear anything. Runners need to be educated on the approach to take when coming upon a horse. Sue England talked about her incidence in which she actually fell off her horse because of a runner and wasn't able to ride for eight weeks after that incidence. She also reported that there are hunters on the trails and a lot of dogs running loose on the trails without a leash. She also expressed a concern about the roped off center section as it eliminated extra parking space. She felt that many of the runners are taking up parking spaces, and particularly, the ones where the trailers should be parked. Allowing camping on the weekends was also mentioned. Bill Faber left two articles with the staff and Board to read concerning safety.

PRIOR BUSINESS:

No prior business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Appointment of Foundation Members:

Richie Wolf reviewed the biographies on two Foundation Board candidates for the Board to consider. The first bio presented was on Kathleen Jensen who belonged to three running clubs, was a former fundraising chair, loves history, and has other Board experience. The second bio presented was on Tamara Wilcox who is the Executive Director for DOVE, Inc., and a background in financial matters. She is from Blue Mound and loves the outdoors.

Richie recommended appointing both of these individuals to the Board of the Macon County Conservation Foundation for three-year terms.

Trustee Johnson MOVED to approve the appointment of Kathleen Jensen and Tamara Wilcox as new Directors on the Macon County Conservation Foundation Board of Directors. Trustee Bendsen SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Parish, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Personnel Policy Revisions:

Richie Wolf introduced some minor changes needing approval to the Employee Handbook especially with the beginning of the year being a good time to make some changes. He reviewed the changes as follows:

- 1) Eliminating the 90-day introductory period for new hires, promotions and transfers. This includes changing the 90-day eligibility period for insurance to 30 days.
- 2) Eliminating the waiting period in which employees can begin to use their vacation/paid-time-off. The current policy reads full-time employees have to wait six months to use vacation time and part-time employees have to wait one year to use their PTO. Richie recommends changing the policy to allow all employees to use their vacation/PTO as it is accrued.
- 3) Per state requirement the following section is required to be included in the District's "Work place Harassment Policy":
"Alleged harassment by a trustee against another trustee can be reported to the Board President. If the Board President is the reporting person or is implicated by the allegation, the report can be made to any other trustee. Any report under this section must be referred to the district's legal counsel, who then must appoint a qualified independent attorney or consultant to review and investigate the allegations."
- 4) Two minor changes need to be made to the "Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing Policy" as follows:
- 5) **ACTS PROHIBITED:** *All employees are prohibited from engaging in any of the following activities while on Conservation District property or while performing work for the Conservation District: 1) unlawful manufacturer, dispensing, distribution, possession, or use of an illegal or controlled substance; 2) distribution, consumption, use, possession, or being under the*

influence of alcoholic beverage, cannabis or an illegal or controlled substance; and 3) possession or use of ~~medical~~ cannabis.
(Cannabis was added and “medical” was removed as per the highlighted areas).

- 6) A new “Appendix J” was added to the handbook: “Macon County Conservation District Employee Wellness Plan”.

The District’s attorney reviewed and approved all the above changes. There was some discussion concerning the 30 day waiting period for insurance as well as eliminating the introductory period but all were in agreement with the changes.

Trustee White MOVED to approve the changes in the Districts Personnel Policy Handbook as presented. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, “AYE”; Trustee Parish, “AYE”; Trustee White, “AYE”; Trustee Johnson, “AYE”; and Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”. Motion carried.

3. Staff Reports:

Richie Wolf reported that the District closed the Seay property purchase and received the grant funds from the Clean Energy Foundation. He reported that less than 10% of the 211 projects they had funded were over \$1,000,000. Richie announced that the Legislative breakfast will be held in Springfield on February 25th at 8:00 a.m. and invited Board members to attend. Trustee Parish stated that he would like to attend the breakfast. Richie reported that staff are continuing to work on completing the budget process and at the February Board meeting, a budget study session will be scheduled.

Pam Smith reported that staff kept busy processing the Foundation’s year end donations with a total of \$30,526.35 deposited, which is the highest amount of donations for year-end in the past four years. The District received the final tax levy distribution and in total received 99% of the amount requested. Pam also reviewed the Sangamon Property land management account through Busey reporting that an extra bonus rent was received in the amount of \$408.60 and a distribution was paid out to the Foundation in the amount of \$10,100.00 (which will be distributed to the District at fiscal year-end).

Shane Ravellette reported that the new Fort Daniel property has been secured with gates and signage and a new entry culvert is being planned. The District had another successful Deer Herd Management Program. He also reported that it appears that all the mechanical problems operations staff were having with the Bobcat has come to an end. The bridges on the bike trail has been put on hold due to the weather. All the planks have been laid on the bridges. The contractor work has been completed at Sand Creek but staff still need to work on rip-rap once weather permits.

Alysia Callison reported that December was a rather slow month for Program Services. She has been working on the next publication of the “Prairie Islander” and hired a new custodian. The Volunteer Holiday party was a success with approximately 100 volunteers and guests in attendance.

4. Other:

Kevin Greenfield, Chairman of the Macon County Board, asked Richie Wolf to set up a meeting to discuss Grove Branch where the shooting range is located for the Sheriff's Department for tomorrow (Thursday) at 1:00 p.m. Kevin told Richie that Howard Buffett has some ideas for the shooting range to discuss. Richie told the Board that he and Shane will meet with them and will report back to the Board at the next Board meeting.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

Trustee Bendsen asked what the next step would be after hearing the public's concern. She felt that the Board/Staff should at least be responsive to their comments. After some brief discussion, Richie Wolf assured the Board that he and Shane would meet and discuss some options of responding to their complaints.

Trustee Parish suggested that the Board begin to think about his replacement for the next term and appointed that Dave White and Nina Bendsen on the search committee for a replacement.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Schneller MOVED to adjourn the Regular Public Meeting at 6:21 p.m. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows Trustee Parish, "AYE"; Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.



President

ATTEST:



Secretary