

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
November 15, 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, Treasurer Allen, and 2nd Vice-President Sams
Board Members absent: Secretary Reed

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Minutes of the October 18, 2023 Public Meeting. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$118,845.90 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$37,690.78 as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE: No audience.

PRIOR BUSINESS: No prior business.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Tax Levy Ordinance Approval:

Pam Smith briefly explained the process of developing the Tax Levy Ordinance. The Corporate Fund account is limited to .01% of the EAV (Equalized Assessed Value), and the District always levies the full amount possible for the Corporate Fund (operating fund). The other special revenue fund accounts such as IMRF, Social Security/Medicare, Worker's Compensation, Liability Insurance and Unemployment Insurance are reviewed for the projected balance at the end of the current fiscal year and estimated expenses for the following fiscal year to arrive at an estimated fund balance. The levy amount requested is based on where the fund balance of these accounts needs to be in order to follow the new Fund Balance Policy adopted by the Board. This means that some fund balances may show a loss only because there is a decrease in the amount requested (revenue) over expenses. This enables the District to keep those fund balances from having more than needed to cover annual expenses. The Tax Levy Ordinance must be filed by the last Tuesday in December. No questions were raised by the Board.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Tax Levy Ordinance for Tax Year 2023 as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Record Disposal Approval:

Pam Smith explained that she had met with a State Archive Representative to review the District’s certificate for disposal and all records. Pam shared with the Board in their packet the application and the records that the state had approved to destroy. Once the Board approves the disposal, Pam will contact a shredder who will come onsite and shred all documents giving the District certification that all documents were shredded. The State is preparing a new application for authority to dispose of local records to send to the District to follow going forward.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Record Disposal Certificate as per State approval. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

3. Educator Guide Program Fee Change Approval

Alysia Callison explained that the Educator Guide had not been updated since 2018 and it was time for a refresher. Alysia listed the fee changes as follows:

- Proposed increasing on-site program fees from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per person per hour of programming
- Proposed decreasing the in-county off-site programs from \$50 to \$40 for the 1st program and from \$30 to \$20 for subsequent programs.
- Proposed increasing the out-of-county program fees from \$60 to \$75 for the 1st program, and the fee for subsequent programs remaining flat.
- Proposed to begin charging a \$20 mileage surcharge for programs over 80 miles roundtrip.
- Proposed changing the fee for Museum in a Box from \$5.00 for two weeks to being no charge

Staff’s reason for decreasing off-site in county fees, was to attract more usage. The reason to decrease Museum in a Box was mainly due to the fact that IDNR does not charge for their boxes. Staff needs Board approval to implement these fee changes.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve program fee changes as presented above. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

4. Holiday Schedule:

**MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
HOLIDAY SCHEDULE
2024**

MONDAY	NEW YEAR’S DAY	JANUARY 1
MONDAY	MLK JR. DAY	JANUARY 15
MONDAY	PRESIDENT’S DAY	FEBRUARY 19
FRIDAY	GOOD FRIDAY	MARCH 29
MONDAY	MEMORIAL DAY	MAY 27
WEDNESDAY	JUNETEENTH DAY	JUNE 19
THURSDAY	INDEPENDENCE DAY	JULY 4
MONDAY	LABOR DAY	SEPTEMBER 2
MONDAY	VETERANS DAY	NOVEMBER 11

THURSDAY
FRIDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY
WEDNESDAY

THANKSGIVING DAY
THANKSGIVING
CHRISTMAS EVE
CHRISTMAS DAY
NEW YEARS DAY

NOVEMBER 28
NOVEMBER 29
DECEMBER 24
DECEMBER 25
JANUARY 1, 2025

Pam Smith noted that on the copy of the Holiday Schedule sent to the Board an error was made on January 1, 2024 noting that “since it fell on a Sunday it was being observed on Monday”. The Holiday actually falls on Monday. The schedule has been changed to reflect this correction.

Some discussion followed concerning when the Center is closed verses when the Center is open. The Nature Center is only closed on the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Easter, July 4th, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. On Holidays that staff are off but the center is open, the center is staffed with two Weekend-Naturalists.

Trustee Allen **MOVED** to approve the Holiday Schedule for Calendar Year 2024 with correction. Trustee Castor **SECONDED** the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, “**AYE**”; Trustee Bendsen, “**AYE**”; Trustee Castor, “**AYE**”; and Trustee Sams, “**AYE**”. Motion carried.

5. Appoint Delegate(s) to the IAPD Annual Business Meeting

The Illinois Association of Park Districts holds an annual meeting for its members every January and the District needs to designate a delegate and an alternate delegate to attend these meetings. The Board was in agreement for Jerry Culp to be the delegate and President Bendsen agreed to be the alternate delegate.

Trustee Sams **MOVED** to designate Jerry Culp to serve as delegate and Nina Bendsen to serve as alternate to the Annual Business Meeting of the Illinois Association of Park Districts on January 27, 2024. Trustee Allen **SECONDED** the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, “**AYE**”; Trustee Sams, “**AYE**”; Trustee Bendsen, “**AYE**” and Trustee Castor, “**AYE**”. Motion carried.

6. Approval of IT Consultant Agreement:

Jerry Culp explained that the District reached out to Network Solutions here in Decatur and held several meetings discussing the possibility of moving from Integrity to Network Solutions for IT Support. Back in April, the District signed a month-to-month agreement with Integrity out of Bloomington as the District’s IT Consultant to help staff plan for future growth in technology. The transition has been rough and at the time of researching consultants, staff were not aware of a local IT Consultant. Since that time, Staff discovered Network Solutions and have held several meetings with them. After meeting with them, staff felt that this would be a better fit for the District and would be a local company. Though the cost is slightly more than Integrity, the agreement includes everything outside of special projects. Trustee Castor commented that he had experience working with Network Solutions and was happy with the work they have provided him. Staff recommends moving from Integrity to Network Solutions.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Information Technology Consulting Agreement with Network Solutions Unlimited, Inc., for a monthly fee of \$3,465.00. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

7. Staff Reports:

Jerry Culp reviewed his monthly report: The appraisal report was approved by IDNR for the Floyd property purchase and staff will begin the process of scheduling the closing on the property. Staff met with the architect at the Penhallegon House to discuss plans for renovation of the formal garden area in front of the house. The request for tax exemption on the Seay Property which was acquired in 2018 was submitted to the County. Staff will work on completing tax exemption paperwork on the Xander property next and the Penhallegon farmstead. Staff attended the Joint Legislative Committee meeting and the IAPD Legal Symposium. The main focus of the Legal Symposium was employment labor laws and Freedom of Information Act. To assist with future planning, staff attended a meeting hosted by the Midwest Institute of Park Executives (MIPE) to learn about work order and labor tracking software systems. An active shooting training was held at the quarterly all-staff meeting.

Phil Julius reviewed the Operations monthly report: Staff begun work on preparing the 2024-2025 budget for all sites. Staff was busy at most sites with seasonal type work preparing for the winter. Rock Springs staff kept busy preparing for the Fall Harvest Festival, and aerating, fertilizing and seeding all turf grass around the Nature Center. Water hydrants were winterized and the AC was switched to heat in the Nature Center. Staff prepared the pavilion for winter at the Griswold Conservation Area. A new bench was installed on the east porch of the Oglesby Mansion. At Sand Creek, Staff added rock to the deer hunting parking lots and some boundary mowing. A few small trees and shrubs were removed around a power pole at the Penhallegon Property. Staff at Friends Creek were busy cutting and splitting firewood and shutting down the campground for the season. Natural Resources staff held a seed collection day and working with a Millikin Class in fence removal on the Xander Property. The new "Wi-Fi" beds were planted with plants started by the Decatur Park District, which had a value of about \$2,500 if the District would have purchased the plants.

Pam Smith reviewed her monthly report: The unclaimed property report which is always due in November was filed. The District has always filed a zero report. Staff work hard at following up on any uncashed checks or unused gift certificates to avoid having to report to the state. Progress continues to be made on the Accounting Policy/Procedure Handbook. Staff began working with the broker on quotes for renewing employee health insurance. A representative from the Illinois State Archives met with staff to review the District's record disposal application and to approve the certificate of disposal. The new bulk ordering process for janitorial and office supplies has been going well and saving the District money. The District has received 96% of the requested tax levy with the last Distribution being sometime in November. The District received the check from the City of Decatur in the amount of \$57,121.56 for the construction of the wetland projects at Friends Creek and Fort Daniel Conservation Areas. The campground closed with a total revenue of \$90,562.25 for the 2023 camping season. Staff seemed to enjoy volunteering at the Boo at the Zoo and eighteen staff and spouses have volunteered to assist with the Park District's Trees on Tees.

Alysia Callison reviewed her Program Services Report: The first half of October was spent planning and preparing for the Fall Harvest Festival held on October 14th. Though the weather did not cooperate, about 200 people still attended the event. Staff conducted programs for approximately 200 1st-3rd graders from the Montessori Academy


for Peace and about 150 5th graders from Taylorville Junior High. Both of these groups were able to attend programs thanks to the bus grant provided by the Decatur Audubon Society. Staff met with a film crew from Western Illinois University's web program called "Take a Hike". Staff began the process of working on the department's budget for FY2025. Looking into November, staff will be spending time updating the Educator's Guide and the District's website.

8. Other

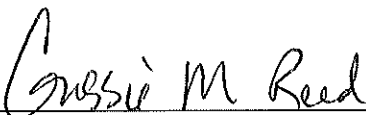
COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Allen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:25 p.m. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Sam's "AYE"; and Trustee Castor "AYE". Motion carried.



President



Secretary