

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
November 16, 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; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Castor, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President Schneller (remotely); Treasurer Reed, and Secretary Allen  
Board Members absent: None

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Minutes of the October 19, 2022, Public Meeting. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$123,344.70 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$51,649.15 as presented. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

**COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:** No comments

**PRIOR BUSINESS:** No Prior Business

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Adoption of Tax Levy:**

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 review 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 the audit may show a loss in these accounts only because there was 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. The Board did not raise any questions.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the Macon County Conservation District's 2022 Tax Levy Ordinance as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

**2. Approval of additions to Employee Handbook:**

Four new additions to the Employee Handbook were included in the Board packet. Those presented to the Board for approval were an Emergency Closing Policy, a Cell Phone Policy, Whistleblower Policy, and a Progressive Discipline Policy. Pam Smith explained that these policies were developed to give guidance to management while keeping employees informed as to what is expected from them. Pam did note two corrections to the policies contained in the handbook after receiving some feedback from the Trustees. Those changes are as follows:

- 1) Under the heading “*use while driving*” in the Cell Phone Policy, the last sentence was removed that read: *Use of company owned vehicles or devices for personal business is discouraged.* This was removed to be included in a different policy pertaining to company vehicles.
- 2) In the second to last paragraph of the Whistle Blower Policy, the term “*Vice-President of Human Resources*” was changed to “*Director of Human Resources*”.

There was no further discussion of the policies.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the addition of the Emergency Closing, Cell Phone, Progressive Discipline, and Whistleblower Policies to the District’s Handbook as presented with changes. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, “AYE”; Trustee Reed, “AYE”; Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”; Trustee Castor, “AYE”; and Trustee Allen, “AYE”. Motion carried.

**3. Approve Holiday Schedule for 2023**

The Holiday Schedule for Calendar Year 2023 was presented to the Board a follows:

**HOLIDAY SCHEDULE 2023**

<b>MONDAY</b> <i>(Falls on a Sunday so observed on Monday)</i>	<b>NEW YEAR’S DAY</b>	<b>JANUARY 2</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>MLK JR. DAY</b>	<b>JANUARY 16</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>PRESIDENT’S DAY</b>	<b>FEBRUARY 20</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>GOOD FRIDAY</b>	<b>APRIL 7</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>MEMORIAL DAY</b>	<b>MAY 29</b>
<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>INDEPENDENCE DAY</b>	<b>JULY 4</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>LABOR DAY</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 4</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b> <i>(Falls on a Saturday so observed on Friday)</i>	<b>VETERANS DAY</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 10</b>
<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING DAY</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 23</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 24</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b> <i>(Falls on a Sunday so observed on Friday since Christmas Day is observed on Monday)</i>	<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b>	<b>DECEMBER 22</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>	<b>DECEMBER 25</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>NEW YEARS DAY</b>	<b>JANUARY 1, 2024</b>



Pam Smith presented adding Juneteenth Day to the Holiday Schedule. After some discussion and Jerry Culp explaining that he didn't know if the Board wanted the holiday just added or exchanged with another holiday. The Board unanimously agreed that Juneteenth day should be observed and just added without eliminating any other holiday.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the District's Holiday Schedule for 2023, adding Juneteenth day as an observed holiday. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

#### **4. Staff Reports**

Jerry Culp attended the IAPD Legal Symposium that dealt with employment labor laws, intergovernmental agreements and updates on legislation that affects the District. The old library space has been converted to an office connected to the existing staff office hallway. Next on the continuation of remodeling the Nature Center is to continue opening up the lower level to provide larger meeting rooms and collection room relocation. Jerry and Staff met with Upland Design to review several concepts created for the outdoor classroom. Staff will continue to review designs and hopefully bring a concept design back to the Board by January. A funding request was submitted to the Community Foundation for an additional smartboard. Staff attended the Harvest Festival on October 15<sup>th</sup> in Maroa with program services. The event was well attended. The Rock Springs Ramble will be held on May 20, 2023, and planning is well underway. The Foundation held a food booth at the District's Fall Festival this year which was well received.

Every year at this time, the District looks at employee health insurance and it goes out to bid for comparison. Pam Smith explained where the process was currently at in selecting insurance for the coming year. This year United Health Care (UHC), which the District has been with since 2013, raised their premium by 9%. The broker secured quotes from Blue Cross Blue Shield, Health Alliance and Allstate. Blue Cross Blue Shield still does not have a contract with Springfield Clinic, and Health Alliance was higher than UHC. Allstate Insurance could offer a substantial savings to the District but required all employees to submit a health application. We are still waiting for the final quote pending all applications being submitted. Each October the District recognizes employees for their years of service and this year two employees were recognized for having completed ten years of service – Joy Potter and Pam Smith. Pam spent time working on the four policies that were presented to the Board by gathering information from the District liability insurance as well as from SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management). Pam was excited to share with the Board that the District was going to participate in the Trees on the Tees event held by the Park District by providing a decorated tree. Staff were getting excited about discussing possible ideas for the decoration. In addition to purchasing a tree to decorate, eighteen staff including some spouses, volunteered to work the event on the night of December 9<sup>th</sup>. This is good for the District to be involved in the community.

Alysia Callison reported that Program Services staff were busy planning, coordinating and preparing for the Annual Fall Harvest Festival. She was pleased with the revenue that was brought in by the canoeing, archery and pumpkin painting collecting \$1,020.00 as compared to just under \$400 last year. Also the Foundation collected \$758 dollars at the food tent, which was well received. Alysia announced

that the Marketing Specialist, Susie Ryan, had resigned and moved on to another opportunity. The open position has been advertised and Alysia hopes to begin interviewing early December and have someone in the role by January. The Homestead Prairie Farm and Bethel Schoolhouse open houses have ended for the summer. Staff have been working on the winter edition of the Prairie Islander and planning programs.

**5. Other Business:**

Pam Smith reminded the Board when they had approved the Board meeting schedule earlier in the year, they decided as it got closer to Christmas they would decide if the December 21, 2022, meeting needed to be rescheduled since it was so close to Christmas. After some discussion, all were in agreement that the December 21<sup>st</sup> date would be fine.

**COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:** No comments.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Trustee Castor MOVED to go into Executive Session at 5:50 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 Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Castor MOVED to return to the Regular Public Meeting at 7:17 p.m. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

**ACTION ON RECOMMENDATION TO DISMISS CONSERVATION DISTRICT EMPLOYEE:**

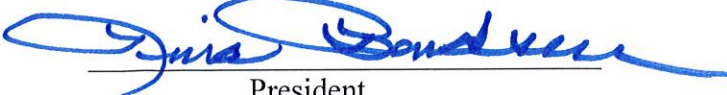
Trustee Bendsen MOVED that Shane Ravellette be dismissed, effective immediately, from the position of Director of Operations of the Macon County Conservation District, due to violation of the Workplace Harassment Policy in late July to early August 2022, as further set forth in the Notice of Charges provided to Shane Ravellette in the Loudermill Notice.

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



**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Trustee Schneller MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 7:20 p.m. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor "AYE". Motion carried.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary