

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
November 17, 2021**

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, Secretary Beckhart, and 2nd Vice-President Allen,
Board Members absent: Treasurer Castor

Trustee Bendsen MOVED to approve the Minutes of the October 20, 2021, Public Meeting. Trustee Beckhart SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Bendsen MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$180,036.47 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$31,789.46 as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE: No audience.

OLD BUSINESS:

Trustee Schneller commented how nice it was that several campers from the Friends Creek Campground attended last month's meeting to say thank you for the improvements that had been made at the campground.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Tax Levy Ordinance Approval:

Pam Smith presented the proposed Tax Levy Ordinance and briefly explained the process. She met with Jerry Culp to review projected wages for next fiscal year as most of the special revenue funds are dependent upon wages such as the IMRF and Social Security Fund account. After projecting what the next year's expenses will be, Pam estimates what is needed from the tax levy to maintain between one year and one and a half years of expenses in each fund account. These amounts are used to complete the tax levy ordinance. For the general fund account, the District always levies the most that can be levied as the district is limited to the rate of .01. Since next year's budget has not been completed at the time of the tax levy, last year's budget is used in the tax levy to show expenses as compared to the levy requested. Some discussion followed as to why the Corporate Fund account expenses exceed the tax levy request. Pam and Jerry Culp both explained that the budgeted amount is a budgeted amount and not the actual expenditures. Pam explained that there are more revenues in the Corporate Fund account other than just the tax levy. The tax levy request will be seen again in the budget ordinance once it is developed.

Trustee Beckhart MOVED to approve the Tax Levy Ordinance for Tax Year 2021 as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Health Insurance Approval:

Pam Smith presented the Health Insurance proposal switching from United Healthcare (UHC) to Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS). Every year the District waits to hear from United Healthcare and their proposed premium increase for the next calendar year. This is normally done late October into November. This year UHC’s proposed increase was 7.5% so Pam asked the broker to go out to bid. She found that the only comparable insurance with \$500 deductible was BCBS which would save the District approximately \$28,000 dollars. Pam had Shannon with First Mid Insurance go back to UHC to see if they could match BCBS’s premium. UHC did come back with about a 3% decrease in premium but could not match BCBS. BCBS was still going to save the District approximately \$11,000.00 a year. The only difference with BCBS was that Springfield Clinic would not be in the network as compared to UHC. Employees were surveyed at the last all-staff meeting and found that three employees currently use Springfield Clinic, which means these employees would need to find a new doctor in the network. Pam also pointed out that UHC handles the COBRA Insurance for the District at no added cost but BCBS will not do the same. Pam would either have to use a third party vendor or manage the COBRA herself. She will check into the cost of the third party vendor and make a decision that would not impact the savings the District would see by making the switch. Pam also explained that there is always a possibility every year that the insurance will change based upon the cost. The District has been with UHC since 2012. After some discussion, the Board agreed to approve switching the employee health insurance from UHC to BCBS.

Trustee Beckhart MOVED to approve switching employee health insurance from United Healthcare to Blue Cross Blue Shield for the calendar year 2022. Trustee Allen SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, “AYE”; Trustee Bendsen, “AYE”; Trustee Beckhart, “AYE”; and Trustee Schneller, “AYE”. Motion carried.

3. Holiday Schedule Approval:

**MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
HOLIDAY SCHEDULE
2022**

MONDAY	NEW YEAR’S DAY	JANUARY 3
<i>(Falls on a Saturday so observed on Monday)</i>		
MONDAY	MLK JR. DAY	JANUARY 17
MONDAY	PRESIDENT’S DAY	FEBRUARY 21
FRIDAY	GOOD FRIDAY	APRIL 15
MONDAY	MEMORIAL DAY	MAY 30
MONDAY	INDEPENDENCE DAY	JULY 4
MONDAY	LABOR DAY	SEPTEMBER 5
FRIDAY	VETERANS DAY	NOVEMBER 11
THURSDAY	THANKSGIVING DAY	NOVEMBER 24
FRIDAY	THANKSGIVING	NOVEMBER 25
MONDAY	CHRISTMAS EVE	DECEMBER 26
TUESDAY	CHRISTMAS DAY	DECEMBER 27
	<i>(Since Christmas Eve falls on Saturday and Christmas Day falls on Sunday, they are being observed on Monday and Tuesday of the following week)</i>	
MONDAY	NEW YEARS DAY	JANUARY 2, 2023
	<i>(Since New Year’s Day falls on a Sunday, it is being observed on Monday)</i>	

The Holiday Schedule presented are the same holidays always presented with no new holidays added.

Trustee Bendsen MOVED to approve the Holiday Schedule for 2022 as presented. Trustee Beckhart SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

4. Board Policy Approval:

Trustee Schneller suggested tabling the approval of the Board Policy to allow the Trustees more time to read and study the proposed policy. She felt it was quite a bit of reading to digest. The rest of the Board members were in agreement to table a decision until the next meeting. She asked all Board members to keep their copy so that it would not have to be printed again and included in the next Board packet. Jerry Culp can also email out the policy to them as well. A decision was tabled until December's Board Meeting.

5. Top Quality Roof Payout:

The roof on the Information Shelter was planned to be roofed this fiscal year as the roof was showing wear. Staff contracted with Top Quality for the project and the cost to be paid out is \$19,500. This came in under the \$20,000.00 that had been budgeted. Shane Ravellette explained that Top Quality is one of the few vendors in Macon County to pay prevailing wage rates required by the District.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the payout of \$19,500.00 to Top Quality Roofing for the new roof on the Information Shelter at Rock Springs Conservation Area. Trustee Bendsen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Beckhart, "AYE". Motion carried.

6. Native Seed Payout:

Shane Ravellette reported that a seed purchase was necessary as they enter the 2nd phase of the Fort Daniel Restoration as part of the Clean Energy Communities Grant requirement. This year's restoration is approximately 38 acres of seed. Furthermore, the District is wanting to restore 10 acres from an intergovernmental land exchange at Sand Creek Conservation Area. It costs approximately \$1,000.00 an acre for seed. Trustee Allen commented that \$1,000/acre is a good price. Shane also reported that David Horn's Millikin Class also helps collect seeds and also helps spread them. A December 2nd work day is planned. Trustee Bendsen asked if the Foundation would help fund the seeding. After some discussion, it was decided that the Foundation had offered to help fund the seeding and staff would confirm the amount. The Foundation normally funds projects each January for the following fiscal year and the transfer of funds is done in March of that fiscal year.

Trustee Bendsen MOVED to approve the payout of \$48,000.00 to Prairie Moon Nursery for the purchase of native prairie seed to seed 48 acres. Trustee Beckhart SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and. Motion carried.

7. Staff Reports

Jerry Culp attended the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) legal symposium regarding employment law, FOIA, etc., and found it to be very helpful. He attended the Oglesby Board meeting and they are preparing for the Christmas Tea in December. Jerry has been working on updating the District's policies and this month presented the Board Policy Manual for review. Staff had completed interviews for the marketing position and Jerry hopes to make a decision by early December. The main topic of discussion at the Central Illinois Directors round table was finding and retaining full time and seasonal staff. The quarterly all-staff meeting was held in October where Jerry reviewed the new purchasing policy and shared that other policies were being reviewed and updated as necessary. He announced that the Foundation's 5K Run was scheduled to be held on April 9, 2022. He has met with Foundation members working on the event and they are working through details.

Alysia Callison reported that the Fall Festival saw approximately 500 individuals attend charging for three events – archery, pumpkin painting and canoeing. The Prairie Homestead saw 491 guests visiting the home from June through October. The last event will be the annual Candlelight Tour on Saturday, November 13th. Alysia and Brock Rowland have been interviewing for the custodian position which is 30 hours a week. Alysia was excited to announce that the Audubon Society has offered to sponsor up to \$10,000.00 in transportation to the District sites for programs. The District is very grateful for their contribution. The ECO Center remodel is ongoing. Alysia and some staff visited Taylor Studios to see the exhibits in progress and will visit again soon in December to see the work 90% completed. Though Program Services Events are still not at pre-pandemic numbers they are seeing a positive trend upward.

Shane Ravellette reported that the two main projects for Operations Staff in October were the new shop addition at Friends Creek and restoration project at Rock Springs. Much progress has been made with concrete floor poured, wall girts, trusses and roof purlins in place. Restoration at the Prairie Homestead is well underway. Staff removed problem trees such as Osage orange and honey locust. Staff have had a great season for honeysuckle spraying. The Deer Herd Management program is off to a great start and two supervisors attended supervisor training at one of the National Park and Recreation Association schools in West Virginia.

Pam Smith and her staff kept busy training for the new upgrade to the online registration software. November 1st the upgrade went live and will be fully hosted by Vermont Systems. The new registration system is a web-based system. Joy Potter managed to stay on top of training amidst answering the phones. The design of the splash page or main registration page is still a work in progress. The annual unclaimed property report was filed with a negative report, which means there was nothing to report. A certificate with Busey Bank was redeemed due to the low interest rates being offered and was deposited in Gerber Bank. As reported in the Board meeting, the annual review of the employee health insurance was begun in October. Each year the District recognizes employees for various years of service. This year the admin team met to discuss the process going forward. Upon the recommendation of a staff member, the admin team decided to proceed in the direction of letting the employee pick an award from a list provided to them including jackets, outerwear, bags, fleeces, etc. Five employees were recognized this October: Melody Arnold for 40 years, Andy Murphy for 20 years and for five years Alysia Callison, Charlie Stobaugh, and Jeff Fasick. The District received the Medical Loss Ratio rebate check again this year and distributed the check to the employees who pay for dependent health insurance.

8. **Other:** No other business.

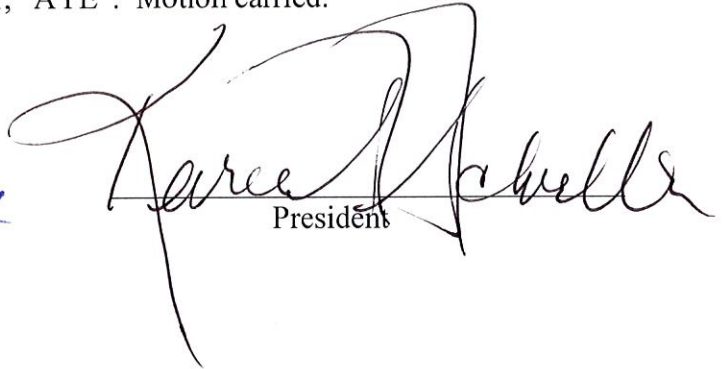
COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

Trustee Beckhart commended Shane Ravellette for a special that had aired on PBS. Trustee Schneller asked Board members if they had an extra copy of the Decatur Magazine to bring it to her. She also reported to the Board on the fundraising event "Wine in the Pines" that the Foundation Board was working on. The Foundation Board would like for the District Board to help promote and participate in the event. Jerry Culp will keep the Board informed as progress is made on the event. Trustee Schneller thank Ethan Snively for bringing the idea to their attention.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Bendsen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:10 p.m. Trustee Beckhart SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Beckhart, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.


Secretary


President