

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

September 20, 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, Secretary Reed, and 2nd Vice-President Sams

Board Members absent: None

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Minutes of the August 16, 2023 Public Meeting. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements in the amount of \$172,676.81 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$52,831.79 as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE: No audience present.

PRIOR BUSINESS

1. Update on Board Remote Attendance Policy

Pam Smith briefly reviewed the update to the Board Remote Attendance Policy. During COVID, a Disaster Proclamation and Executive Order was issued to reduce the restrictions for Public Bodies to meet remotely. That proclamation ended earlier this year and the Board adopted a Remote Attendance Policy in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The Open Meetings Act was just amended to include one more reason a Board Member can attend remotely, which was due to "unexpected childcare obligations". Board approval is needed to update this policy to add "unexpected childcare obligations".

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the update on the Board Remote Attendance Policy as per the State of Illinois. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approval of the Annual Treasurer's Statement:

Pam Smith explained that the Annual Treasurer's Report was required by Statues 65 ILCS and must be filed within six months after the end of the fiscal year. This report is due to be filed with the County Clerk by the end of September. She explained that the report mirrors the audit in that it lists a summary of revenues, expenditures and changes in fund balances that are all reconciled back to the audit. The main difference is that expenditures for any vendor that total more than \$2,500.00 are listed out separately on the report with any amount under \$2,500.00 being compiled as one dollar amount. Payroll is broken down by ranges and listing those employees that fall within that range. In lieu of placing the Treasurer's Report

in a local newspaper, now the District can just post a notice in the paper that the audit has been performed and is available for review during normal business hours.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Annual Treasurer's Statement as presented. Trustee Reed SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; and Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Staff Reports:

Jerry Culp worked on the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Grant (OSLAD) for the proposed improvements at the Fort Daniel Conservation Area. The IDNR designated Macon County as an Economically Distressed County and qualifies the District to receive 100% reimbursement for the grant. Staff worked with the County Recorder and Treasurer to correct recently acquired property information. Jerry had the opportunity to work with the operations staff on the wetland construction at Friends Creek and Fort Daniel. Staff have been gearing up and preparing for the Foundation's Prairie Pedal Event. Attending the Farm Progress Show was another great opportunity to see all the agriculture equipment and natural resources exhibits. Staff will be looking into exhibit space to showcase the Conservation District in 2025. The District is moving forward with the grant process for the purchase of the Floyd Property. Upon the approval of the appraisal, staff will coordinate with the property owner to finalize the agreement and set a closing date.

Phil Julius shared aerial photos taken by the drone of the wetlands construction, which had been the main focus of the operations staff in the past month. Both wet lands at Friends Creek and Fort Daniel were completed. Phil gave a special thanks to all the operations staff as well as Jerry Culp for their work in getting the project completed ahead of the deadline. Staff at Rock Springs worked on tree pruning and cleanup in preparation of the Prairie Pedal event, trail edges were cut back and completed siding repair on the buildings at the Homestead Prairie Farm to mention just a few of the projects handled by staff. In preparation for the Sand Creek Run, staff mowed overflow parking as well as some trail pruning. At Friends Creek, staff repaired a water line at the campground, serviced the John Deere Tractor, and repaired electric pedestal at the campground. Ethan Snively spoke to the Audubon Society about the wetlands as well as worked with Millikin University Students for a work day at Fort Daniel. Natural Resources submitted the EPA Burn permit and conducted some prairie restoration mowing at the Seay Property (Fort Daniel).

After completion of the audit, Pam Smith and her staff worked hard on two major projects. One project was to clean up the personnel files and remove documents that pertained to personal information and separated those documents into binders for easy finding. The other project was preparing documents for State Approval for shredding which means going through boxes and labeling them for disposal according to the application as outlined by the State. Staff worked hard at creating and setting up a system that will be much easier to follow for future disposals. Once complete and sent to the State for Approval, a shredding company will be scheduled to shred the documents on site with proper certification for State Records. Signatory cards at the District banks were completed with the exception of Board signatures. Staff volunteered to assist the Good Samaritan Inn on two dates in September and plan to make a commitment to assist one day a month. Staff have signed up to volunteer at the Boo at the Zoo on October 15th and 21st. Two certificate of deposits that matured with Commerce Bank were redeemed and rolled over at 5.35% for 12 and 13 months. Pam's staff worked hard on designing and

preparing the Point of Sale system to enable credit card use at the Prairie Pedal Event.

Alysia Callison reported that August was a much quieter month as compared to rest of the Program Services summer. This gives the staff time to regroup and began preparation for winter programs and planning for the next fiscal year. Several programs held were "A Day in the life of a Zoo archaeologist," "Intro to Foraging", the Astronomy Jamboree and the Hummingbird Festival. The weather cooperated for the Astronomy Jamboree and patrons were able to see some great things with the clear skies with 65 individuals attending that program. Roughly 80 attended the Hummingbird Festival, but the weather was not as kind with a feel like temp of 110 degrees. Staff held several off site programs including Niantic Park District, Macon Resources, and Piatt Nursing Home. Staff began preparation for the Fall Harvest Festival. Program Services staff were able to visit the Ballard Nature Center and Lincoln Log Cabin Historic site. Staff also were busy preparing for the Foundation's Prairie Pedal Event. Staff attended the Good Samaritan's Mercy Market, as well as a Noon Women's Network Meeting at PawPrint Ministries' new facility. Another meeting was held with the marketing firm, Business Builders. They advised staff to put out less press releases and only do them for large events or just one once a month. According to the consultant, if there is too much PR for every program, news agencies struggle to figure out what is worth reporting and some of the larger events might get passed over.

3. Other Business

No other business.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES: No comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Trustee Allen MOVED to go into Executive Session at 6:06 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 Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Castor MOVED to return to the Regular Public Meeting at 6:13 p.m. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed "AYE"; Trustee Sam's, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.


Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Executive Session Minutes of September 20, 2023. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Sams' AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Reed "AYE". Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Allen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:14 p.m. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Sam's "AYE"; and Trustee Castor "AYE". Motion carried.



President



Secretary