

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
March 23, 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 Schneller

Board members present: President Schneller (remotely), 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Bendsen, Treasurer Castor, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President Allen  
Board Members absent: Secretary Beckhart

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Minutes of the February 16, 2022, Public Meeting and the February 16, 2022 Special Budget Study Session. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "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 \$197,130.82 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$37,896.38 as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

**COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:**  
No audience present.

**PRIOR BUSINESS**  
No prior business for discussion.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. FY2023 Budget & Appropriation Ordinance Approval:**

The FY2023 Budget and Appropriation Ordinance hearing was held prior to the meeting with no changes being made. No further comments from the Trustees.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the FY2023 Budget and Appropriation Ordinance as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "Aye"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

**2. Approval of Deaccession of Library Books:**

Alysia Callison explained that the resource library is being moved from its current location in the north hall to a location in the lobby of the Nature Center. Since the new space is slightly smaller, the library collection needs to be downsized to accommodate the new space. Staff have worked hard looking through the collection in order to determine which books need to be deaccessioned. The list of books included in the Board packet need Board approval before they can be deaccessioned which includes 426 books, 15 binders and 26 AV items. Staff recommends deaccession of these books.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the deaccession of library books as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows:

Trustee Bendsen, "AYE" Trustee Castor, "Aye"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

### **3. Approval of New Credit Card Vendor:**

Pam Smith explained that the District has been with the current card vendor since implementing the new online registration system. The vendor has changed owners and do not provide the same friendly support as the previous owner. Vermont Systems (online registration software) has implemented their own credit card process called PayTrac. After an analysis was performed Vermont Systems should be able to save the District some money in the amount of credit card fees that are currently paid. In addition to saving money, it will also save Pam time working with the same system and not having to log into two other sites to run credit card reports. The new system will be more time efficient and provide more security for our customers. Customers will no longer be switched to a third party vendor when making credit card payments. Staff recommends switching from the current credit card vendor (Elavon) and moving to the Vermont System's new credit card payment system (PayTrac).

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the change of credit card vendors from Elavon to Vermont Systems, Paytrac. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

### **4. Approval of the Macon County Conservation foundation Board Members:**

Jerry Culp explained the Macon County Conservation Foundation by-laws state that the Foundation can have up to fifteen Board Members but currently only has nine with six being a quorum. The Foundation Directors have pushed hard for recruiting new Board members and are recommending four new Board Members for District Board Approval. The bio/application of the four new candidates were included in the Board packet and they are Laura Richardson, Craig Culp, Tom Leeper, and Kelly Brandon. A question was raised about the logo on the application, and Pam Smith stated that it had been an example to model the application after but the logo was an oversight and was never changed. Staff will change the logo to the Foundation logo. Board approval is needed to formally present these candidates to the Foundation Board in May.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the four individuals presented to serve on the Foundation Board: Craig William Culp, Kelly Brandon, Laura E Richardson and Tom Leeper. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

### **5. Approval of the Alcohol Ordinance:**

Jerry Culp explained that the Foundation Board had been discussing holding a new fundraising event called the "Wine in the Pines". In order to hold such an event, the District's "rules and regulations" needed to be modified. Staff wish to amend article II of Chapter II of the regulations, which currently does not allow consumption of alcohol on District properties. The amendment would allow the District to serve alcohol at Rock Springs Conservation Area through a special use permit reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees. Staff will work on the details of creating the special use form for such events. The Oglesby Mansion is

also included on this amendment which had been formerly approved in 2007, but no signed copy of the amendment could be found.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Ordinance Resolution Article II of Chapter II Alcoholic Beverages as presented which will allow alcohol consumption at the Rock Springs Conservation Area only with a special permit. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.

#### **6. Approval of Removal of Surplus Property:**

Shane Ravellette reported that staff had compiled a list of equipment requiring Board approval to take to auction. The District is required to send surplus equipment to auction. The revenue from the auction minus fees will be returned to the District's account. One item noted on the list, the chipper may be traded in for new equipment instead of auctioned off. The District may use up to three auction services. Staff recommends Board approval to auction the items presented to the Board.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the removal of surplus property as presented. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Bendsen, "AYE". Motion carried.

#### **7. Approval of Capital Fund Resolution**

Jerry Culp reviewed the creation of the capital fund that was presented during the budget study session. The establishment of this capital fund will move capital projects from the general fund to the capital fund account allowing for more consistency across the funds accounts and to better analyze yearly data associated with the general fund. Creating the capital fund will allow for better planning for future projects. The capital fund will be based upon the previous year's budget. As per the District's Attorney, a resolution creating the Capital Fund Account requires Board approval.

Trustee Castor MOVED to approve the Capital Fund Resolution as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

#### **8. Staff Reports**

Jerry Culp attended the IAPD Legislative Conference and felt it was a valuable conference, especially the time for networking. Jerry gave a presentation to the Rotary Club on the importance of Natural Resources and to the Audubon Society on the importance of Prairie Potholes and seasonal wetlands. He met with United Way to discuss grant opportunities to help bring children from the Boys and Girls Club out to Rock Springs for summer camp. He reported that the Xander's property was scheduled to close on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Jerry informed the Board that the land acquisition line item would be over budget due to this purchase and he was transferring \$35,000.00 from the vehicle line to the land acquisition line.

Shane Ravellette reported that operations staff were busy tying up loose ends and working toward closing out the fiscal year. Staff continually work to secure the best prices possible which includes an element of timing. Staff continues to keep working on the Friends Creek shop addition as well as the electrical project at the Campground. The electrical project still should be completed by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Shane reported that the backpack misters to remove large patches of honeysuckle at Rock Springs seemed to have worked for them. Staff worked on the big “buried” savanna project at Sand Creek. Staff have been very successful with this year’s burn season with 700 acres being burned thus far this year. Historically it’s been around 250-300 acres. Shane also discussed the burn at Friends Creek and the accidental burning of the large barn on the property. Staff created a detailed report of what happened and measures to take to avoid any further mishaps in the future. This report was shared with the Board so they could answer any questions from the public. Board recommended that staff review all structures on District property and create a plan as to what will happen to these structures in the future. The Board were all in agreement that this incident could be used as an educational tool.

Pam Smith reported that the Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance had been on display since February 17<sup>th</sup> with no one from the public inquiring about the budget. Pam conducted some research on the special Liability Insurance Fund and what expenses were allowed to be used against that budget. This is still a work in progress. Jerry Culp and Pam Smith met with the Foundation’s Finance Committee to draft a proposed budget to present to the Foundation Board. The new online donation button through Arreva is up and running with donors already using the donate button. There is still some design work to be completed on the page but it is functional for now. As presented to the Board, Pam worked on researching switching credit card vendors from Elavon to the Vermont System’s “PayTrac” as a measure of cost savings and time efficiency.

February was a busy month for Program Services. With the big snowfall that Decatur received, the District was overwhelmed with cross-country skiers. Alysia Callison commended her staff for working together to manage the large influx of guests. She reported revenue received from the event to be \$1,956.00 over the course of five days. Alysia reported that the laying of the carpet for the ECO Center was delayed so the Grand Opening was pushed back to April 10, 2022. This change will be announced on all media. Alysia reported on the meeting with United Way to discuss grant opportunities for the Boys and Girls Club to participate in the Earth Adventures Summer Camp. She will be giving a presentation to United Way in April. Alysia thanked Jenny and several volunteers for the hard work they have done in boxing up and downsizing the library collection. She announced that the Festival of Spring will be held on April 23<sup>rd</sup> hosted with the Audubon Society. Five out of the six summer concert series bands have been booked.

Susie Ryan gave the marketing report for the month of February. She has been working hard along with Jerry Culp on the 5K Rock Springs Ramble. Shirts, medals, and tote bags have been ordered. The next step was working on logistics. Susie spoke with the Early Bird Kiwanis Club presenting an overview of the District and programs that are offered. She reported that social media continued to grow steadily. Susie reported on the booth she hosted at the Argenta Ice Festival and announced that she will host a booth at the Festival of Spring on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Susie attended her first Illinois Association of Conservation District’s conference. She commented how fabulous it was and learned a lot!

**9. Other:**

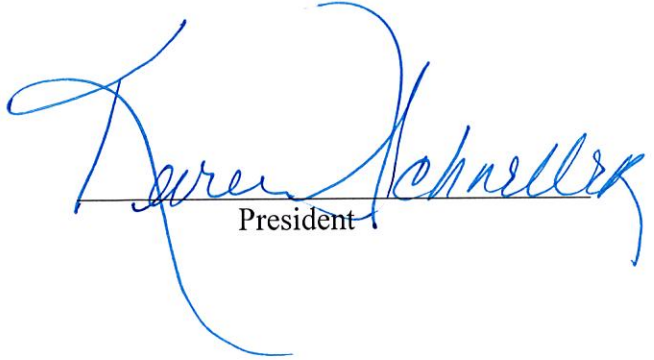
No other business was discussed.

**COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:**

Trustee Schneller thanked everyone for allowing her to attend the meeting remotely.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Trustee Allen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:16 p.m. Trustee Castor SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Bendsen, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor "AYE". Motion carried.

  
President

