

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

**December 17, 2014**

PURSUANT to written notice given all members of the Board, the above meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Trustee Ed Leonard, with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board members present: President Leonard, 1st Vice-President Stahl, Secretary Parish, Treasurer Murphy, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President Jensen.

Absent: None

Trustee Parish MOVED to approve the Minutes of the November 19, 2014, Regular Public Meeting as presented. Trustee Stahl SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Murphy MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and Monthly Disbursements in the amount of \$119,012.83 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$35,299.52. Trustee Jensen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Stahl, "AYE"; Trustee Parish "AYE"; Trustee Leonard, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE" and Trustee Murphy, "AYE". Motion carried.

**COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:** There were no comments from the audience.

**PRIOR BUSINESS:**

- 1. Ameren Transmission Project:**  
There was nothing new to report.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. Gerber State Bank:**  
Director Merner spoke with the District's attorney regarding the new agreement Gerber State Bank presented to the District for processing the District's payroll. Gerber sends the information to the employees' banks. The attorney recommends that the Board does not take action on the agreement at this time. Some of the verbiage in the agreement that is questionable pertains to the District pledging assets, changing accounting practices, etc. The Board tabled making any decision at this time.
- 2. Campground Report:**  
Paul Marien reported that the District had a great camping season this past summer between the great weather and work-related stays. Any improvements that were made to the campground were planned and there were no large unexpected expenditures. Trustee Parish raised the question as to what other campgrounds do for bringing in revenue. Director Merner responded saying that other campgrounds promote their amenities such as swimming pools,

arcades, and location, such as accessibility to a lake. Trustee Murphy asked how most of the campers hear about our camp. Paul stated that most campers already know about the camp and individuals have to like camping to have a desire to stay. The District is constantly looking at ways to improve marketing the campgrounds. Trustee Murphy suggested forming a committee and looking at some of the suggestions that were made last year. Paul stated that the most consistent advertising is the signage on route I-72. Staff suggested raising the camping fee for electrical sites by \$2.00. Trustee Parish commented that this fee was still \$1.00 below others.

Trustee Parish MOVED to increase the campground electrical rates by \$2.00. Trustee Stahl SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

**3. Payout Oglesby Mansion Painting:**

The funds for the expense of painting the south and west sides of the Oglesby Mansion were provided by the Oglesby Mansion Foundation. Staff recommended paying Jones & Sullivan \$22,000 for the work provided.

Trustee Stahl MOVED to approve the payment to Jones & Sullivan for \$22,000 for the painting of the Oglesby Mansion. Trustee Jensen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Stahl, "AYE"; Trustee Parish "AYE"; Trustee Leonard, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE" and Trustee Murphy, "AYE". Motion carried.

**4. Special Event Permit:**

Decatur Christian Schools completed an application to hold a fundraising event at the Friends Creek Conservation Area. The 5K race will be held to raise funds for the senior mission trip. The event is scheduled to be held on March 14, 2015. The school is aware that the facilities are shut down and that no water or utilities will be available at that time. Staff does not see any problem with the event and recommends letting the school hold their fundraising event. Trustee Leonard did question if there was enough parking and staff assured the Board that parking would not be an issue. Trustee Jensen also questioned the liability issue, and staff informed the Board that the school had already provided a certificate of insurance for the event.

Trustee Parish MOVED to authorize the District to proceed working with the school and the special event. Trustee Jensen SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

**5. Approval of Grant Application – Bike Trail:**

Paul Marien reminded the Board that the trail bridges are inspected annually as per IDOT (Illinois Department of Transportation). The District received a good report after the inspection, but staff are aware that there are some issues, particularly the settling of the approaches. Staff emphasized that the bridges are safe but some work needs to be done before they become a major issue. There is erosion happening that needs to be corrected. Staff are pursuing a grant offered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to assist with the expense. The trails were opened in 1996 with no major investment since that time. The first step in applying for the grant is to obtain a certificate statement from the Board stating that the District has the funds to complete the project. Director Merner informed the Board that monies from the Greenway Fund

can be used to assist with this project, which is approximately \$48,000.00. Trustee Leonard questioned if this project would need to be completed even if the grant is not awarded to the District. The answer was “yes” eventually something would have to be done to address the current issues within the next three years. Staff feels that the grant is worth pursuing.

Trustee Murphy MOVED to authorize to move forward with the grant process and approve certification statement. Trustee Stahl SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, “AYE”. Motion carried.

**6. Approval of 2015 Holiday Schedule:**

The schedule is just the standard schedule with July 4<sup>th</sup> being observed on Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, since the holiday falls on a Saturday. Director Merner reminded the Board that the Rock Springs Nature Center is closed on New Year’s Day, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas. The grounds are always open.

Trustee Parish MOVED to approve the 2015 Holiday Schedule as presented. Trustee Jensen SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, “AYE”. Motion carried.

**7. Policy Manual:**

The employee policy manual was provided to the Board at the November Board meeting for their review prior to this meeting. Director Merner emphasized that most of the changes that had been made were based on recommendations by the attorney. She noted a few changes that had been made since the Trustees were provided the manual. In the definition of family on page 15, “parents” had been mistakenly omitted from the definition and should be included. On page four of the policy, the reference to “other policies” was deleted since there were no other personnel policies in place by the Board. Director Merner also noted that the payout of sick leave had been removed, primarily due to new legislative action preventing the spiking of salaries. She also briefly reviewed the Paid-time Off Policy for part-time staff. Trustee Murphy questioned paying out unused paid-time off. Director Merner will question the attorney and get back to the Board. The personnel policy has not been updated since the 1990’s. After some discussion regarding the importance of the policy and the time needed to digest the material, the Board decided to table making any decision at this time. Director Merner did recommend that the Board contact her with any questions or concerns they may have in the meantime. Trustee Parish requested that the updated document with the changes above be sent to all the Board members.

**8. Staff Reports**

Director Merner informed the Board that she would be speaking to a group in January about the Foundation arranged by Nora Duncan, Foundation Board member.

**9. Other**

No other business.

**COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:**

Trustee Parish commented on how well done the District’s Volunteer Christmas party was and appreciated all the hard work that went into the event.

Trustee Murphy brought her granddaughter to feed the animals at the Rock Springs Nature Center and commented on how much she enjoyed the event. She commented that the Naturalist did a very good job.

Trustee Stahl expressed an interest in the “Nite Hike” to be held at Sandcreek Conservation Area and wondered how long the hike would last. Richie Wolf stated it would be approximately one and a half hour long.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Trustee Murphy MOVED to go into Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. for the purpose of 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.

Trustee Parish SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, “AYE”. Motion carried.

Trustee Stahl MOVED to return to the Regular Public Meeting at 7:18 p.m. Trustee Parish SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, “AYE”. Motion carried.

Trustee Stahl MOVED to approve the Executive Session Minutes of December 17, 2014. Trustee Parish SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, “AYE”. Motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Trustee Murphy MOVED to adjourn the Regular Public Meeting at 7:20 p.m. Trustee Jensen SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, “AYE”. Motion carried.

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President

ATTEST:

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Secretary