

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

December 18, 2013

PURSUANT to written notice given all members of the Board, the above meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Horn, with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board members present: President Horn, 1st Vice-President Leonard, 2nd Vice-President Murphy, Treasurer Parish, and Secretary Stahl.

Trustee Stahl MOVED to approve the Minutes of the November 20, 2013, Regular Public Meeting. Trustee Leonard SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Parish MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and Monthly Disbursements in the amount of \$116,756.97 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$26,526.43. Trustee Stahl SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Stahl, "AYE"; Trustee Parish, "AYE"; Trustee Horn, "AYE"; Trustee Leonard, "AYE" and Trustee Murphy, "AYE". Motion carried.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

President Horn called for comments from the audience. No comments from the audience.

PRIOR BUSINESS:

1. Ameren Transmission Line:

Director Merner informed the Board that she had listened to three hours of testimony via a teleconference. The District attorney would be attending a hearing tomorrow. She reminded the Board that the original route for the line did not affect the District but the alternate route does. The Illinois Commerce Commission's decision needs to be made by March 2014. There will be three days of hearings, briefs, and proceedings in February. The District attorney will monitor the proceedings and represent the District and submit all required paperwork.

2. Nomination Process-Board Members

Director Merner reviewed the process discussed at the November Board meeting. She asked if the Board had any revisions or recommendations to the process included in the packet. Board members suggested that a thank you letter be added to the process thanking the applicants for applying and one to be sent out at the end of the process. Trustee Horn suggested that the process indicate which entity (the Committee or the Board) was to identify criteria, recruit prospects and narrow the list of potential prospects. Director Merner will make the suggested changes and present to the Board at the January meeting.

3. Other: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Logo:

The logos on the entrance signs to the Rock Springs Conservation Area need to be replaced and staff suggested that the District have only one logo versus the two different logos that are currently being used by Program Services and Operations. After much discussion, the Board was in agreement that it would be worth some additional input regarding the lettering of the logo. The Board was in agreement that the current logo being used by Program Services was the best representation versus the shield that is being used on entrance signs and operations' uniforms. Director Merner will research different avenues and bring samples back to the Board.

2. Meeting Time:

It was suggested at last month's meeting that the Board members look at their calendars as to when they would be available to attend Board Meetings if the time were changed. After some discussion, Trustee Horn suggested that the Board meeting time be moved to 5:30 p.m. The meetings will remain on the third Wednesday of each month unless noted otherwise. The Board decided this change would be implemented beginning in January.

Trustee Stahl MOVED to change the meetings to 5:30 p.m. beginning in January. Trustee Parish SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

3. Farm Lease-Willow Branch

Director Merner asked what direction the Board would like to proceed regarding the farm lease at Willow Branch. There are approximately 55 acres that are tillable on the 80 acre property received from the Foundation. The current tenant is a no-till farmer. Currently Busey Bank is the farm manager and the Foundation had entered into a three-year lease with the farmer. Secondly, the farmer that was farming the 44 acres on the land acquired in 2012 no longer wishes to farm that property. Staff suggests the gentleman farming the 55 acre parcel adjacent to this one be asked of his interest to farm the 44 acres for one year. Staff requests direction from the Board. Trustee Parish suggested that the District not pull out of the lease but continue with the three-year lease and maintain Busey as farm manager and see if the farmer is interested in farming the additional 44 acres. The Board was in agreement. Trustee Horn suggested that staff begin the planning stages for work on the property. The Board requested more information concerning the cash rent dollars and the master plan numbers before they make a commitment toward the use of the cash rent. Director Merner will get those numbers and put on the January agenda.

Trustee Leonard MOVED to continue the lease cash rent and maintain Busey Bank as the farm manager. Trustee Parish SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Stahl, "AYE"; Trustee Parish, "AYE"; Trustee Horn, "ABSTAINED"; Trustee Leonard, "AYE" and Trustee Murphy, "AYE". Motion carried.

4. Campground Report:

Paul Marien briefly reviewed the campground report that was provided in the Board packet, emphasizing that the District had a good year but expenses still surpassed the revenue. He emphasized to the Board that he had included repairs and improvement expenses (\$9800.00) in the report for the first time. In the past, the expenses had not included any major repairs or improvements. The Board members, knowing this information, were in agreement that it was a good year in comparison to the other years. Employee wages are a major expense in running the campground. The District also purchased an ad to run in the visitor's guide at welcome centers.

After some discussion, all were in agreement that the marketing funds could be better used elsewhere. Staff will continue to research methods of promoting the campground.

5. Macon County Highway Department:

Director Merner informed the Board that she had met with Larry Bennett and Richard Kaufman from Gerber State Bank and Bruce Bird from the highway department to discuss the possibility of a land swap. Currently the supports for the bridge that serves the property north of Friends Creek Conservation Area are failing. After the highway department researched the costs to repair the bridge, they determined that it would be more cost effective to swap this piece of property for another rather than repairing the bridge and sought the conservation district's participation in the project. This exchange would give the District better access to the current conservation property on the north side. Trustee Parish suggested that the Foundation take the land and then sell off 10-15 acres of the land. The Board was in agreement that the District should participate in this process.

6. Departmental Reports:

President Horn asked staff to comment on highlights from their reports submitted in the Board packet. Paul Marien, Richie Wolf, Pam Smith and Director Merner summarized the highlights of their reports.

7. Other:

Director Merner shared two letters the District had received. One letter was from Bob Sampson and another letter was regarding the deer archery program. Both letters were very complimentary of the District. Board members suggested that the District send them a letter acknowledging receipt of the letters and thanking them for their feedback.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

Trustee Parish inquired about the new concealed gun law, and Director Merner informed the Board that she has been speaking with the attorney and will include this as an item on the January agenda.

Trustee Stahl complimented the District on the well done volunteer holiday party and Trustee Parish commented how nice it was to see the Dulcimer Club when you entered the facility.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Leonard MOVED to adjourn the Regular Public Meeting at 8:33 p.m. Trustee Parish SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

President

ATTEST:

Secretary