

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

February 21, 2018

PURSUANT to written notice given all members of the Board, the above meeting was called to order at 5:50 p.m. by 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Norm Jensen, with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board members present: Treasurer Johnson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President White and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Jensen and Secretary Elliott

Board member absent: President Murphy

Trustee White MOVED to approve the Minutes of the January 17, 2018, Regular Public Meeting as presented. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Johnson MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and Monthly Disbursements in the amount of \$109,662.65 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$29,708.53. Trustee Elliott SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; and Trustee Elliott, "AYE". Motion carried.

**COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:**

Semaj W. Allen, 2172 West Riverview, Decatur, IL 62522, spoke in regards to his suspension for a violation in the Deer Herd Management Program offered by the Macon County Conservation District. He asked the Board to reconsider a more fitting consequence for the violation rather than the permanent suspension that he had been given. He explained that he was shooting at a doe when a buck stepped into his line of view and the doe jumped out of the way. He has been bow hunting for four years and has not had a violation until now. He stated that he did explain to Ethan Snively his actions and that he would come back and get a doe. Instead, he decided to implement self-imposed consequence by never coming back to get a doe. He felt that there were other infractions incurred by other hunters that were more of a safety concern yet no penalties have been awarded to these individuals. He is more than happy to accept the consequences but not a permanent suspension, asking the Board to review their decision.

**PRIOR BUSINESS:**

1. **None:**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Sand Creek Crossings:**

Shane Ravellette has met with Massie & Massie Associates to get a concept design for the creek crossings at Sand Creek Conservation Area. He shared a visual of the low impact design to the Board. Trustee Elliot asked about using stepping stones but Shane replied that the architects were more comfortable with the design presented due to safety standards and future accessibility. For now, the District is looking at installing two crossings across the creek. A brief discussion followed concerning the locations of the two crossings. Trustee Elliott questioned what the cost would be to install the crossings, in which Shane replied \$50,000 for two of them. Trustee Elliott asked if it would be possible to go out to the site early before the budget study session to look at the locations. Shane assured the Board that he could take them out to view the sites and would be in contact with the interested Board members.

2. **Master Plan Approval:**

Paul Marien updated the Board on the interview process of possible consultants. Two firms were chosen for interviews, being Hitchcock Design Group and Vandewalle and Associates. Paul felt that the Hitchcock firm excelled and understood what the District was wanting them to accomplish. He shared a brochure with the Board members created by Hitchcock. Hitchcock's bid came well within the budget range established. Trustee Jensen inquired as to how many individuals represented each firm. Paul stated that Hitchcock had three representatives and Vandewalle had two representatives. Shane Ravellette commented that the administrative team was more impressed with the project leader from Hitchcock. Staff recommends pursuing a contract with Hitchcock Design Group.

Trustee Elliott **MOVED** to approve hiring Hitchcock Design Group to update the Conservation District's Master Plan and authorizing Paul Marien to negotiate a contract with them.

Trustee White **SECONDED** the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; and Trustee Elliott, "AYE". Motion carried.

3. **Schedule budget Study Session:**

Paul Marien reminded the Board that they must hold a budget study session and typically that has been done right before the regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Board unanimously agreed that 4:00 p.m. on March 21, 2018, would work. It will be a separate meeting from the regularly scheduled meeting at 5:30 p.m. and is considered a public meeting.

#### **4. Nature Center Roof Payout:**

Shane Ravellette reported that the skylight had finally been delivered and installed, completing the roof project. No leaks have been detected. Paul Marien noted that there was a \$2,231.00 deduct since not all of the allowance had been needed for sheathing.

Trustee Elliott MOVED to approve the final payout to Top Quality Roofing in the amount of \$34,600.50. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; and Trustee Elliott, "AYE". Motion carried.

#### **5. Special Event Permit Application Approval:**

Paul Marien explained that the Village of Warrensburg was requesting use of the Rock Springs Information Shelter as a rest stop as part of their fundraising bicycle event to be held on July 28<sup>th</sup>. Paul met with them and discussed what it takes to put together a bike ride event similar to Prairie Pedal. The Village was willing to give half of the proceeds earned to the Macon County Conservation District, pending a successful event. Paul noted that using the Shelter as a rest stop falls under the Special Event Permit. The ride will also make use of the bike trail. Their application has been completed and is awaiting Board approval. Paul asked the Board to waive the \$200.00 fee since half of the proceeds will be donated to the District. Trustee White inquired as to what type of food would be provided at the rest stop. Paul informed them that they would be using packaged snacks similar to the snacks used during the Prairie Pedal ride.

Trustee White MOVED to approve the special permit application for the Village of Warrensburg to hold a special event using the Rock Springs Information Shelter as a rest stop on July 28<sup>th</sup> as a part of their bike ride event and to waive the \$200.00 special permit fee. Trustee Elliott SECONDED the motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

#### **6. Wood Waste Guidelines Proposal:**

The Operations Department presented a wood waste guideline proposal to the Board in light of the current on-going issues within the community. Shane Ravellette stated that he wanted to apprise the Board that trees are taken down out of necessity and never for its value (with the exception of the Walnut Tree Grove). Trees are normally removed as part of a restoration project, exotic trees, damaged trees, or trees that pose a safety hazard. Some discussion followed concerning the different types of wood. The Operations Department desired to have a management plan in place and proposes offering the opportunity for individuals to buy these trees that are in need of removal for firewood as long as it was for personal use and not commercial. Participants would have to enroll in a program and receive training and then go to designated locations to cut down their firewood. There are some trees, Shane explained, that cannot be removed because of accessibility issues. Paul Marien explained that this is just a draft form presented to the Board for their review. Board Members were encouraged to submit any thoughts or suggestions they may have.

Trustee Jensen was pleased with the proposal and said that it was a good plan. No further action was required at the time of the meeting.

#### **7. Converting Accounting to Accrual Basis:**

Pam Smith reminded the Board that a few months ago they had been notified that the Illinois Comptroller's Local Government Division announced that local units of government would now be required to submit audited financial statements under the accrual accounting method instead of the cash basis of accounting. The District's Auditor suggested that the District begin with FY2018 switching their audited financials to the accrual method of accounting. His recommendation would be to submit accrual working papers at the end of the Fiscal year for the Auditor to make adjustments to the financials to be submitted to the Comptroller. This would not change how the current financials are presented to the Board on a monthly basis. To answer many of the Board Member's questions, Trustee White briefly reviewed the difference between the accrual versus the cash accounting method. He recommended that the Board approve switching the audited financials to the accrual method beginning with FY2018.

Trustee White MOVED to approve the Macon County Conservation District's auditor to begin reporting the audited financials under the accrual basis of accounting instead of the cash basis accounting beginning with the current FY2018. Trustee Elliott SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; and Trustee Elliott, "AYE". Motion carried.

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

Pam Smith reported that all calendar year end reporting had been completed such as the quarterly payroll tax reports, W-2s and 1099s. The payroll system had been updated to reflect the new tax tables implemented for the new tax law. She noted that the District's unemployment rate as well as the IMRF Employer rates had both dropped lower from the previous year. Pam also reported that IMRF saw a 15.7% return on their investments this past year. The results from participating in the Illinois Park & Recreation Association's salary survey had been received and would be reviewed by Paul Marien.

Richie Wolf reported that the Illinois bicentennial exhibit had been replaced with an exhibit focusing on Macon County. They had received archives from the History Museum as well as Millikin University. He reported that the Spring Edition of the Prairie Islander was to be mailed out on Friday. Applications for seasonal help will be posted on the District's website.

Shane Ravellette reported that due to the frozen pond staff were able to remove exotic and invasive species from around the banks of the Cattail Ponds making the ponds much more accessible. Staff also rented a tree shear attachment with all four areas sharing to take down smaller problem trees. After staff questioned for days

whether or not the new skylight had issues, they learned it could have different panel shades pending on how the light was hitting it.

Paul Marien spent considerable time scheduling interviews with the Master Plan Consultants. He also reported that the Macon County Conservation District had been approved for the registration of 421 acres at Rock Springs in the Land and Water Reserve Program. Staff were busy preparing budgets for submission to Pam Smith for compiling. Staff are brainstorming ideas to upgrade the ECO Center.

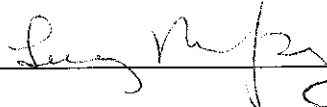
**COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:**

Trustee White suggested that the staff review Mr. Allen's comment for discussion. Trustees recommended putting the Deer Herd Management violation on next month's agenda.

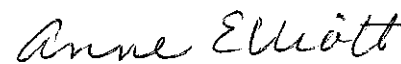
**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Trustee White MOVED to adjourn the Regular Public Meeting at 6:34 p.m.

Trustee Elliott SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

  
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President

ATTEST:

  
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Secretary