MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT August 21, 2024 5:30PM

PURSUANT to written notice given all members of the Board, the above meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by President Castor

Board members present: 1st Vice President Castor, 2nd Vice President Sams, Treasurer Allen, Secretary Reed, and Trustee Schneller

Board Members absent: None

Executive Director Jerry Culp noted that corrections needed to be made and voting to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2024, meeting would be moved to the meeting on September 18, 2024.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report from August 2024, disbursements from June 2024 (\$393,125.94), July 2024 (\$150,263.22), and August 2024 (\$137,351.83) including August 2024 additions to disbursements in the amount of \$57,076.90 as presented. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE", Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

IV. COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

No comments.

V. PRIOR BUSINESS:

1. No Prior Business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Annual Board Member Role Approvals

a. Election of Officers

Trustee Reed asked if it was necessary for officers to change every year, noting that changing the Treasurer position is not standard practice on most Boards so that institutional knowledge and signing privileges are able to remain over several years. Staff noted that all MCCD Board members were given signatory status. Trustee Sams asked what the duties of the Secretary were, and Executive Director Culp clarified that it was mostly to review and sign documents. Current Treasurer, Trustee Allen, agreed to remain in the position.

Trustee Sams moved to approve the following Board Roles for 2024-25: President: Trustee Castor; 1st Vice-President: Trustee Reed; Treasurer: Trustee Allen; Secretary: Trustee Sams; 2nd Vice-President: Trustee Schneller. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor; "AYE". Motion carried.

b. Appoint Macon County Conservation Foundation Board Liaison

Trustee Allen noted that the honor of being the liaison to the Macon County Conservation Foundation (MCCF), including attending their meetings, typically goes to the newest MCCD Board Trustee. In this case, that would be Trustee Schneller.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve Trustee Schneller as Macon County Conservation Foundation Board Liaison. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed,

"AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor; "AYE", Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

c. Appoint Illinois Association of Conservation Districts (IACD) Liaison

Trustee Allen offered to remain as IACD Liaison. Trustee Schneller offered to serve as back-up if Trustee Allen was unable to attend any meetings.

Trustee Sams MOVED to approve Trustee Allen as IACD Liaison with Trustee Schneller as a back-up liaison. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed; "AYE". Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Signatories Resolution Approval

Executive Director Jerry Culp presented the annual renewal for all MCCD Board members to be signatories on MCCD Accounts.

Trustee Sams MOVED to approve the Annual Signatories Resolution. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE". Motion carried.

3. Outdoor Classroom Bid Approval (Parks and Recreation Facility Construction Grant (PARC) Grant)

Executive Director Culp reported The District received one bid for the construction of the Outdoor Classroom as part of the Indoor/Outdoor Classroom PARC grant in the amount of \$642,885.65 from 4MC Incorporate of Decatur IL. The budget for this phase of the project was estimated at \$655,472.05. The District would prefer to have several bids, but 4MC has done work for the District before and the work has always been of good quality and completed on time. Sufficient funds are available in the Capital Fund Account for this expense totaling \$642,885.65. Funds in the amount of \$1,161,000 are budgeted in the Capital Fund Account for this expense totaling \$642,885.65.

Trustee Sams MOVED to approve the Outdoor Classroom bid from 4MC from Decatur in the amount of \$642,885.65, this includes the approval of the three alternates for the lighted bollards. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE". Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

4. Indoor Classroom Bid Approval (Parks and Recreation Facility Construction Grant (PARC) Grant)

Executive Director Culp discussed bids for work on the Indoor Classroom. The proposed plan includes converting the downstairs office area into program space that includes an outdoor classroom on the East end of the building. The District received 4 bids with the lowest bidder being Christy Foltz of Decatur in the amount of \$669,642 plus the alternate bid \$80,936 for a total amount of \$750,578. The estimated amount for this phase of the project is \$385,240 which puts the project \$365,338 over the estimated amount. Christy Foltz was contacted and confirmed their bid was complete according to the specifications. The District has worked with Christy Foltz in the past recommends them for this project.

Director Culp advised that the Board can either reject the bids and have the project reengineered and rebid, or it can approve the Christy Foltz bid and staff can work with the contractor to see if there are possible cost-savings by finding alternate products or processes within it for a cheaper cost. Because this is a publicly bid project and is a sealed bid process, there are no guarantees that a re-bid will result in a lower price or getting a better value.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Indoor Classroom bid from Christy Foltz from Decatur in the amount of \$750,578 for the indoor classroom construction. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE". Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.

5. Skid Steer Purchase Approval

Operations Director Julius discussed approval of purchasing 2024 John Deere 335P Compact Loader and a Drum Mulcher Mower to replace the 2016 Bobcat 770 and 2016 Bobcat Forestry Head. The current 2016 Bobcat 770 has costly mechanical issues and experienced harsh use as for many years it was the only compact loader the District had in use. The new John Deere 335P has more horsepower and hydraulic flow for increased productivity.

It costs \$106,702.40 for the new machine. This price exceeds its budgeted amount of \$100,000 by \$6,702.40. The \$100,000 budget figure was calculated based on the cost of the District's two current John Deere 333Gs. However, The 333G's have a hydraulic flow issue that causes them to overheat so Staff has had to update them with new couplers at a cost of \$4500. Conversely, the John Deere 335P has a factory-improved hydraulic flow and more horsepower than the 333G without needing expensive and time-consuming modifications. The MCCF has agreed to pay \$45,000 toward this cost, and MCCD will also earn a credit toward the purchase by trading in the Bobcat 770 with forestry mower attachment.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the purchase of the 2024 John Deere 335P Compact Loader with the Drum Mulcher Mower in the total amount of \$106,702.40 – acknowledging that both \$45,000 from MCCF and a credit for the sale of the 2016 Bobcat 770 would be applied. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE". Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

6. Polaris Ranger UTV Purchase Approval

Operations Director Julius discussed approval of purchasing a 2024 Polaris Ranger 1000 EPS to add a utility vehicle the Natural Resource Department fleet. With the purchase of the Floyd property, staff would like to relocate the current Polaris Ranger there for maintenance. Furthermore, this purchase will remove the inefficiency of transporting a utility vehicle and increase efficiency overall as the current one can be used simultaneously at other sites. The cost is \$19,638.72. Trustee Allen and Trustee Sams noted that they agree that this equipment is reliable and a responsible purchase for the District.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the purchase of the 2024 Polaris Ranger 1000 EPS in the amount of \$19,638.72. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed; "AYE". Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

7. Campground Road Resurface Contract Approval

Operations Director Julius informed the Board that Friends Creek campground roads are due for a new layer of oil and chip to maintain a nice road for the camp users. The last oil and chip was seven years ago and this new layer will help to lock down rock in the places that were cut a few years ago when the new electric lines were installed. One quote was obtained from a reputable contractor that the district has used for many years for various paving projects, Dunn Company. The quote is \$23,265.00.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the quote from Dunn Company for \$23,265.00 to oil and chip the campground at Friends Creek Conservation Area. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee

Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE". Motion carried.

8. Hunting Program Approval

Natural Resources Manager Mitch Lovgren presented the 2024 Hunting Program for approval. First, he reviewed information from 2023 and reported archery deer hunting was allowed at Rock Springs, Sand Creek, Fort Daniel, and Friends Creek Conservation Areas from November 3-December 28, 2023. The 2023 archery season closed with few incidents. Staff recommends that the Macon County Conservation District continue its archery deer hunting program for the 2024 season with most of the same structure. Data indicates that deer densities continue to be high within and around Conservation District holdings.

The season for 2024 is proposed as November 1, 2024 – December 27, 2024, and includes most of the same rules as last year including:

- a. There is a pre-season lottery drawing and then weekly drawings for extra spots.
- b. Participants are required to harvest a doe before an antlered deer.
- c. Fees will remain the same for 2024: \$30 for Macon County residents, \$60 for out of county residents and \$110 for out of state residents.
- d. Each participant is limited to two permits.
- e. District employees are permitted to hunt the entire 8-week program to have an MCCD presence in the field and to build relationships between staff and participants.

New for 2024, a third disabled hunting blind at Friends Creek Conservation Area will be added to increase the current opportunities for this population. Trustee Sams asked if the disabled blinds are typically filled, and Lovgren said that interest has waned in the past but there have recently been calls from veteran-supporting organizations and they are often willing to support these efforts financially. Spots for the disabled blind stay open for this population even if they are not all taken in the initial lottery. Operations Director Julius noted this expands our program in the north end of the county at Friend's Creek.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the 2024 Hunting Program. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

9. Youth Hunt Program Approval

Natural Resources Manager Mitch Lovgren proposed that the youth hunt program would run concurrently with the MCCD Hunting Program and allows youth to engage in archery hunting safely in a controlled setting. The deer herd reduction program does allow for youth to hunt with their parent/guardian, but we do not have a dedicated area, like the handicap blinds, where a youth can hunt undisturbed by other hunters. If approved this program would provide an archery hunting opportunity for up to eight youth hunters over the course of the season.

Lovgren has been working with the Nature Preserve to authorize deer hunting and is going through the steps for approval. One current issue without this authorization and allowing youth to hunt on the Floyd property is an injured deer can run into the Nature Preserve and youth cannot retrieve it, which would be discouraging. Trustee Castor inquired as to the location and Lovgren said the deer population is good at the edge of the property and just needs a platform and blind. Operations Director Julius added that there was a cost of around \$500 but it is in the budget. Lovgren mentioned that the veteran's associations may be able to reimburse for some or all of these expenses. Executive Director Culp added that it is a great opportunity to introduce youth to hunting and that getting youth involved in any

activity is great idea and he supports it. Trustee Reed commented that she appreciated that it was in the form of archery hunting.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the implementation of this Youth Archery Hunt and the purchase of materials for a hunting blind. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.

10. Friends Creek Residence and Pavilion Contract Approval

Operations Director Julius informed the Board that the asphalt shingle roof on both the Friend's Creek residence and the small pavilion roofs are over 20 years old, showing considerable wear. Quotes from multiple contractors were considered with Muehlebach Roofing being the cheapest at \$16,150.00. Trustee Allen asked if Staff had looked at metal roofing and Julius confirmed they had not.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the Friends Creek Residence and Pavilion Contract. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

11. Griswold Homestead Cleanup Project

Operations Director Julius noted that the Griswold Conservation Area house trailer was around for many years. With its removal, Staff recommends a contractor clean up the trailer site, remove three acres of invasive and exotic trees/brush, and collapse and bury the old cellar and concrete on-site. The contractor will also excavate to reshape the portion of the glacial kame that the house trailer used to sit on. Once all of this is complete, staff can start the restoration process.

Two quotes were obtained for this project. Several other contractors were contacted but declined to give a quote. Eric Vieback and Son quoted \$19,000.00 and JRH Services, INC. quoted \$31,875.00. The district budgeted \$22,000.00 for the project. Staff recommends using Eric Vieback and Son for this project at a cost of \$19,000.00. This project was presented to the MCCF, and they agreed to provide 100% funding for the project.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Griswold Homestead Cleanup Project. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE". Motion carried.

12. Rock Springs Hedge Row Project

Operations Director Julius discussed that this property was purchased by the District several years ago and this project is the first step in starting the restoration of this land that was once a residence. Hedge is an invasive plant, and it has created a barrier in managing the site. In this proposal the hedge row will be removed, and the debris will be piled by the contractor to then be burned at a later time by the District. Once the trees have been removed the site will be excavated to a smooth grade along with an area that has previously been a soil borrow site, making it easier for district equipment to be used to finish restoration efforts. There is also an area that was used to dump dredged material from the Cattail Pond. The dredged material has dried out and can now be leveled in preparation for seeding. There is a concrete patio deck on this same property that will be removed by the contractor.

Several other contractors were contacted but declined to give a quote. Eric Vieback and Son quoted \$19,800.00 for this project. JRH Services, INC. quoted \$28,980.00 for this project. The district budgeted \$23,000.00 for the project and recommends using Eric Vieback and Son. This project is also 100% funded by MCCF. Trustee Schneller inquired about the location. Julius responded that it starts at the end of Brozio Ln. and will begin at the gate and go a quarter mile east.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Rock Springs Hedge Row Project. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE"; Trustee Schneller. Motion carried.

13. OSLAD Grant Application Approval

Executive Director Culp discussed the District's opportunity to acquire additional land along Big Creek that is adjacent to the Fort Daniel Conservation Area. This acquisition will not only protect important riparian corridor along Big Creek but provide a greenway connection to Spitler Woods that will make a valuable wildlife corridor as well as provide a connection from Mt Zion and the Mt Zion bike trail to Fort Daniel Conservation Area and the newly acquired historic Penhallegon Farmstead.

Originally, MCCD was listed as located in a disadvantaged community and would get a 90% reimbursement, but then the grant was updated to 100% reimbursement. Additionally, part of the property (40 acres) will be donated. If that is approved to be designated as a "match", the valued amount of the property could possibly be banked for a future grant. In the past there was concern about the HOA in the area and now the District working to ensure it is not included. One change is that the cost of the property came out at just under \$600,000, so Director Culp is proposing an amended memo to reflect a maximum spend of \$600,000.

Trustee Reed asked how many parcels the purchase included. Director Culp responded there were 7 parcels and there are more available, but this is what the District needed to complete this project. He added that it is possible to look at other parcels if the District wishes. Trustee Castor asked what the access was. Director Culp said it's the bike trail plus it connects to Ft. Daniel. Trustee Castor noted there is an area that was blocked off and asked if it was an issue. Culp responded that it was not an issue and can be managed. Trustee Reed asked for the cost of the HOA and Director Culp was not sure but offered to find out if desired by the Board. The value of the 7 parcels came out around \$600,000 and the 40 acres came out just under 400,000 for a total value of \$1,000,000. Trustee Allen inquired as to a triangle section of water not included but surrounded by the MCCD proposed parcels, and Director Culp mentioned it was still owned by the HOA.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the OSLAD Grant Application according to the revised memo with a maximum spend of \$600,000. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE"; Trustee Schneller; "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

14. Staff Reports:

Jerry Culp, Executive Director:

The OSLAD grant for Ft. Daniel is delayed because the IDNR requested an archaeological survey, and it took contacting over 20 archaeologists to complete. Operations staff did great with the blading and clearing. No artifacts were found that would lead to more digging. Staff does have to monitor the digging during building. The report was submitted and received this week, so now Staff is waiting for contracts to start construction. Staff is still working on engineering and Phil Julius is working on some architectural plans. This project will take place as soon as possible. A lot of the work for restoration must happen over the winter into spring depending on the wet season. Staff has 24 months to finish it. The PARC grant should happen mid-September with a goal of opening in May or June 2025. The Rock Springs Ramble was great, and the Prairie Pedal is coming up – volunteers are still needed. Staff applied for grants including the Steven's Creek Bike Trail Grant that will connect the MCCD's trail to Scovill Park West. Decisions will hopefully

be announced this fall and, if awarded, work would most likely start next fiscal year. The Illinois Labor Relations Board and Union negotiations are moving forward. Staff has just started going through contracts and will keep the Board updated. Finally, since the State is moving to everything grant-related being electronic, Director Culp is going through trainings to get up to date.

Phil Julius, Director of Operations

Operations Director Julius applied for the bike grant and was interviewed by WAND at the Open House. Julius set up and take down for the Ramble and it went well. He also met with the architect for the Penhallogen property confirmed the architectural style of the building will be largely maintained during updates. Operations Staff is working cutting and milling timber for a timber frame pavilion at Friends Creek Conservation area in the group camp area. This hands-on process has been very interesting and will also be an educational tool for the public to see a tree become a structure. Trustee Sams asked for how big the beams are. Julius replied that they are 9inX9inX18ft.. Staff is hoping to erect the structure this fall. Twelve staff attended the annual First Aid / CPR training. Oil and chipping was done at Friends Creek. Phil Julius and 2 supervisors attended the Special Park Districts Forum in Minnesota. It's a great time to get new ideas for things other districts are doing that might work at MCCD. An example of a borrowed idea is the implementation of the new QR codes at Friend's Creek this season. It was a great opportunity, and Staff are grateful to get to attend. Julius has been working on equipment quotes to work on the final cleanup of the Rannebebager property. Executive Director Culp added that Staff are also using MCCD lumber for the Outdoor Classroom and it's being milled currently. Natural Resources Manager Lovgren confirmed that MCCD has pine, oak, and black locust among other woods, which is also educational talking point.

Alysia Callison, Director of Programs

Director of Programs Alysia Callison reported that MCCD received a \$10,000 grant from United Way that will be spread over 2 years and that funding will be used for summer camp for scholarships. Staff are currently recovering from this year's summer camp before getting ready to plan next year. MCCD also received \$3,000 from the Heart of Illinois Community Foundation to use for scholarships for any programs for kids in underserved communities. MCCD also received a \$50,000 grant for the purchase of a Star Lab, which is a giant inflatable dome with a projector. The District used to have one, but this will be a much more updated version. It will be purchased next Fiscal Year. This summer had 5 summer camp with good attendance. Everything went well. Program Services also conducted 52 programs at 25 different libraries, both local and farther away. The Summer Concert Series was successful. MCCD had two interns from Dawson Civic Leadership Institute, and they were very helpful. MCCD hopes to continue that partnership. The District had a program interpreter, Hope Moore, who did a great job, as well as Maddie Bemisderfer, another historic sites intern, who still stay through November. MCCD has a new education animal – a rabbit named Basil. Trustee Reed asked if there is an increase in bilingual children. Callison did not know, but noted it was an interesting question.

Ashton Nunn, Marketing Specialist (not present)

Marketing Specialist Ashton Nunn was not present so Director of Programs Alysia Callison also gave this report. Callison reported that Engagement and Follows are increasing every month on social channels. Nunn attended a lot of community events as well in-person. MCCD is getting ready to do an overhaul of the website as it's very old, especially on the back end, and a new site will optimize

use with current technology. Nunn will work with Kestrel Tech, MCCD's existing contractor for the website, to overhaul that and make it more secure.

Nicky Besser, Director of Finance and HR

Besser noted that she was still getting accustomed to her role and things were going well. She administered payroll, benefits, and payroll tax training for Jerry Culp, Phil Julius, and Alysia Callison in case she was absent. She, along with Admin Assistant Joy Potter, processed all end-of-year school visits and summer camp registrations and she noted that Potter is doing an amazing job. Besser worked with a consultant, Carol Mensinger, who retired after decades of experience in government accounting. She was able to offer Besser guidance and ongoing mentorship as she navigates her first year. The External Audit is finalizing smoothly with the report pending. Besser worked with Director Culp to reallocate matured CD amounts per the strategic plan. She also attended IGFOA's Southern Region Lunch and Learn on 8/2/24 (IL Gov't Finance Officer's Assoc.). On the HR side, Besser worked on the onboarding of seasonal hires; implementation and testing of Sage HR benefits so employees can track and request time-off online; internal processes of hiring, timetracking, and communication; collective bargaining negotiations; planning the quarterly staff meeting; and the upgrading computer server, computers, and migration to Microsoft Office 365.

15. Other Business

a. Board Tour Dates - Once the Board decides on a date and agenda will be set. The Board tentatively agreed on Thursday, October 17th and the tour usually starts around 8:30AM.

VII. COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

Trustee Schneller stated she was glad to be back. She also wanted to make sure Executive Director Jerry Culp was recognized for his being awarded Nonprofit Professional of the Year.

Trustee Reed asked about giving the MCCD Board an update on the collective bargaining negotiations. Culp stated there were a couple sections of the proposed agreements, but MCCD was waiting for the full financial package before offering a counter-proposal. There are two meetings next week. Phil Julius and Jerry Culp also have a hearing on October 30th/Nov 1st about 4 disputed positions. Trustee Reed wanted to be sure the MCCD Board understood that there would be a monetary cost as we have needed to use a lawyer.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the staff reports. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Allen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:33 p.m. Trustee Sams SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed "AYE"; Trustee Sams "AYE". Motion carried.

President		

Secretary