

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
March 26, 2025, 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: President Castor, Treasurer Allen, 1st Vice President Reed, and 2nd Vice President Schneller
Board Members absent: Secretary Sams

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the Minutes of both the Budget Study Session and Regular meeting on February 19th 2025. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements from February 2025, in the amount of \$203,999.09 as presented. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

IV. COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

No comments.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

1. MCCF By-Laws

Executive Director Culp followed up from the previous discussion involving the Bylaws of the Macon County Conservation Foundation (MCCF). The MCCF Bylaws allow for up to 15 member board and require a minimum of six members to be present for a quorum. With everyone's changing schedules it has been difficult at times to obtain a quorum to conduct business. The MCCF is requesting that the Macon County Conservation District Board approve the request to change Section 6 of their Bylaws to the following:

6. Quorum. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of 50% of the sitting Board Members. If fewer than 50% of the sitting Board Members are present at the scheduled meeting, no official decisions or votes may take place. In this case, the meeting may proceed as informational, but no binding action shall be taken. If a quorum is not present, a majority of the Board Members who are present may choose to adjourn the meeting. The meeting may be rescheduled at a later time or agenda items will be moved to the next regularly scheduled meeting. The Secretary shall provide notice of the adjournment to all Board Members, indicating the new time and date.

6.1 Meetings by Conference Telephone or Similar Communications Equipment Unless otherwise provided by these Bylaws or by law, members of the Board of Directors, or any committee designated by the Board, may participate in a Meeting of the Board or committee by means of conference telephone, live video conference or similar communications equipment whereby all persons participating in the meeting can either hear or see each other, and participating in a meeting in such

manner shall constitute presence in person at the meeting. However, it is the expectation for Directors to attend meetings of the Board and/or committees physically in person, whenever and wherever possible.

Staff asked for a motion to approve changes as presented.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the changes to the Macon County Conservation Foundation Bylaws as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen," Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

1. FY 2025-26 Budget & Appropriation Ordinance Approval

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the Budget as Presented in the Budget Hearing. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed; "AYE". Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Transfer of funds to Capital Fund and Resolution

In March of 2022, the Board approved a resolution authorizing the District to establish a capital fund account so that certain revenues now on hand or to be received in the future would be pledged to pay for planned and unplanned capital projects. The only financial impact is transferring funds from one account to another and does not impact the bottom line for the District as no expenditures occur with the transfer. Staff will ensure that the general fund never falls below the required 50% of operating expenses. For FY2025, staff are recommending the transfer of funds in the amount of \$985,220.40 from the General Fund to the Capital Fund Account. This amount of transfer will fund the capital funds for the current fiscal year (FY2025) leaving a "zero" fund balance as projected during the budgeting process.

Trustee Reed asked what qualified as a "Capital Expense" and if we were following set guidelines and standards. Executive Director Culp explained yes that they were over \$5,000 and one-time expenses that could depreciate and also ones that added that affect the EAV. Director of Finance and HR Nicky Besser clarified that these are all the expenses that were already approved throughout the year and that is why it is an odd amount.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Transfer of funds to Capital Fund and Resolution in the amount of \$985,220.40 as presented. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE". Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.

3. Christy-Foltz Payout #6

Executive Director Culp reported The Macon County Conservation District applied for and received an Illinois Park and Recreation Facility Construction grant to construct an Indoor/Outdoor classroom at Rock Springs Nature Center. The Board of Trustees approved a contract with Christy-Foltz in the amount of \$750,578 to complete the interior portion of the project. Christy-Foltz has completed approximately 40% of the work related to their contract including demolition, rough in electrical and plumbing, new partition walls, lower level offices and collection room. Christy-Foltz has submitted their Sixth payout request for this project in the amount of \$29,976.30 for work completed. Funds are budgeted in the Capital Fund Account 6800-700 for this Project. There are sufficient funds in the Capital

Account 6800-700 for this expense totaling \$29,976.30. Staff would ask for a motion to approve Payout Request #5 from Cristy-Foltz in the amount of \$29,976.30 for expenses related to the Indoor/Outdoor PARC Grant PARC-23-127.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Payout Request #6 from Cristy-Foltz in the amount of \$29,976.30 for expenses related to the Indoor/Outdoor PARC Grant PARC-23-127 as presented. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE". Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

4. Approval of MCCF New Board Member Jesse Blunt

Trustee Schneller discussed that she contacted the Decatur Emerging leaders who are members of the community who are invested in Decatur and 6 people showed interest. Jesse was one such member that showed interest. His grandparents lived close as he was growing up and he has a real connection with nature. He has had several professional experiences and is currently working at the Thinkwell Maker's Space downtown. She highly recommends him for the MCCF Board. Staff would ask for a motion to approve Jesse Blunt as a new member of the Board of Directors for the Macon County Conservation Foundation.

Trustee Reed asked if he would bring any racial diversity to the Board. Director Schneller said no, but that he did offer a unique perspective.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve MCCF New Board Member Jesse Blunt. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE". Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.

5. Staff Reports:

Jerry Culp, Executive Director:

Director Culp discussed that as the weather has gotten warmer, a lot is being done on the outside constructions. At least 95% of the concrete work is done and next they will work on the water feature. Inside they are about 45% done. Right now they are working on the operable walls to separate the classrooms. This has taken longer than expected, but that date is pushed as the external operational doors will not come until June so the grand opening will likely be pushed to July. The exterior is due to be done in May. It's starting to look great. The Ft. Daniel Pothole Prairie OSLAD grant is moving forward with the tile survey which should happen next week. After this, engineers can start working and we are also getting proposals for the wetland work, which should be available in a week or two. It looks like summertime bidding and contracts in late summer or early fall. We also finished putting a paved walkway at the Penhallegon property. For MCCF, the Rock Springs Ramble is coming up and about 35 runners are signed up. The Woodbine Farm Event, Wine in the Wild, is ramping up and looking fun it is on June 14th. The Foundation went through their budget process as well this month. They do a lot for the District, so we appreciate the work they do. Rock Springs Scovill Park West Bike Trail has not been disbursed. This may be because it is Federal money. We are continuing to work with United Way to see how we can work in the community. Staff went to the Great Lakes Park Training Institute, and it addressed a lot of issues with parks including accessibility, OSHA standards, Natural Resources, and other topics. Of course, networking is also great.

Trustee Reed asked if we expected any changes due to the political climate. Director Culp said no, there is an RTP grant that is federally funded where the contract has not come in, but there is no specific reason yet and it's not abnormal for things to take time. In case of any increase in material costs, contractors are used to navigating things as they change. They have run into times when the contractors

want to change specs and if it was over budget they were just told no. The answer is 99% there should not be additional costs.

Phil Julius, Director of Operations

Operations Director Julius was not present, so Natural Resources Manager Mitch Lovgren gave this report. A few operations staff members went to IACD and then executed a phenomenal burn season, burning around 1,000 acres, including 300 acres of land that had not been burned recently. It was dry, so there were a few days they had to call off especially since if we start fires, other people will also. With burning we also do a lot of seeding including Wetlands at Sand Creek and at Griswold. Today they assisted the City with the OSB burn (Oakley Sediment Basin). The operations staff must go back and fix up trails after burning, so they are doing that. There was great success from misting last year with the mitigating Bush Honeysuckle. Some volunteers have helped with seeding and also invasive mitigation which is helpful. The staff worked late days without complaint and did amazing work.

Trustee Schneller mentioned that the District bought another mister and asked if it had helped. Lovgren mentioned that it's great because now there is a mister on every site. Schneller asked if success meant that it was not growing back. This is very encouraging in invasive species mitigation.

Alysia Callison, Director of Programs

Director of Programs Alysia Callison was not present so Marketing Director Ashton Dukeman gave this report. There was a lot of professional development and planning and programming also starts. The Eagle viewing trip as well as homeschool programs were well-attended. The Summer Concert Series is being booked. Job listings were posted for summer camp staff. Callison and Dukeman met with Macon-Piatt Special Education about whether there was anything they could do for internships.

Ashton Dukeman, Marketing Specialist

Marketing Specialist Ashton Dukeman discussed that there were many conferences that were attended. Next year IACD will be hosted by MCCD, so that will be a lot of work for Ashton and Phil. The Great Lakes Park Training was attended by Dukeman and Callison. The GLPTI Conference and Women in Leadership was also great, with about 150 people participating. She won a registration last year via a photo contest. She has been busy working on the Foundation events including Wine in the Wild and Rock Springs Ramble.

Nicky Besser, Director of Finance and HR

Besser noted that she was mostly working on finalizing the budget and getting things ready administrative for the new year. She did attend the annual Network Solutions contract planning and budget meeting, met with RecTrac to simplify our billing process (a connection made at IAPD), and attended meetings with MissionSquare to determine if it was worth moving to their deferred comp program. She also finalized the employee gifts for their 2024 anniversaries.

VII. COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

No comments.

VIII EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Trustee Schneller MOVED to go into Executive Session at 6:01p.m. for the purpose of:

1. 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. 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1)

Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; and Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Allen MOVED to return to the Regular Public Meeting at 6:27 p.m. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the Executive Session Minutes of March 26, as read aloud in closed session. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Schneller MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:29 p.m. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed "AYE". Motion carried.

President

Secretary