

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
February 19, 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: 1st Vice President Castor, 2nd Vice President Sams, Treasurer Allen, Secretary Reed, and Trustee Schneller
Board Members absent: None

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Minutes of the January 19th, 2025, meeting. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report from January 2025 and disbursements from January 2025, in the amount of \$329,469.64 as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "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. **Budget Presentation**

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Budget as Presented in the Budget Hearing. 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.

2. **Set Hearing Date for FY 2026 Budget & Appropriation Ordinance**

The date for the Budget & Appropriation Ordinance Hearing is Scheduled for March 26, 2025, at 5:25 p.m. prior to Regular Public Board Meeting.

3. **Christy-Foltz Payout**

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. Christy-Foltz has submitted their fifth payout request for this project in the amount of \$17,767.80 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 \$17,767.80. Staff would ask for a motion to approve Payout Request #5 from Cristy-Foltz in the amount of \$17,767.80 for expenses related to the Indoor/Outdoor PARC Grant PARC-23-127.

Trustee Sams MOVED to approve the Payout Request #5 from Cristy-Foltz in the amount of \$17,767.80 for expenses related to the Indoor/Outdoor PARC Grant PARC-23-127 as presented. Trustee Schneller 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. Seever Far Drainage Proposal

Executive Director Culp discussed the District received an OSLAD grant to fund the restoration of this new acquisition. In preparation for the wetland restoration the field tile that was installed to drain the fields for agriculture will need to be located and will be used to restore the hydrology of the areas designated for wetland restoration. Seevers Farm Drainage of Argenta has submitted a proposal to complete the field tile location and evaluation in the amount of \$22,688.40. Funds are budgeted in the Capital Fund Account 6800-700 for this Project. Sufficient funds are included in the Capital Funds Projects account for this expense totaling \$22,688.40. Staff would ask for a motion to approve the proposal from Seevers Farm Drainage in the amount of \$22,688.40 to complete the field tile survey in preparation for the wetland restoration as part of the Fort Deniel Pothole Prairie and Seasonal Wetland OSLAD grant OS-24-2517.

Trustee Schneller commented that they are the right people to do it as they have a lot of experience. Trustee Reed asked if other proposals were submitted, and this company was the best fit for budget and timeline. Director Culp clarified that not all firms submitted proposals, but many were solicited, and the bid was competitive.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the proposal from Seevers Farm Drainage in the amount of \$22,688.40 as presented. 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.

5. Ford 150 Purchase Approval

Operations Director Julius discussed Currently the district does not have an electric vehicle in the operations fleet. In an effort to be make the fleet more environmentally friendly staff have chosen a Ford F-150 Lightning pickup that is completely electric. This new truck will be stationed at the Rock Springs Maintenance complex and used by operations staff for various duties such as site inspections, picking up parts, transporting staff to other locations, etc. This truck comes with electrical receptacles in the bed that staff can plug power tools into when working on projects. The primary charging station for this truck will also be in the Rock Springs shop. Staff are excited to get the first electric vehicle in the operations fleet. The financial impact is an expense of \$51,953.00 for the 2025 Ford F-150 Lightning EV. In the New Equipment Capital Fund account number 6851-700, \$52,500.00 was budgeted to purchase this truck. This purchase will be made with the State of Illinois Joint Purchasing Master Contract 24-416CMS-Boss4-P-63043. Staff would recommend a motion for Trustees to approve the purchase of the 2025 Ford F-150 Lightning EV for \$51,953.00 from Sutton Ford under the State of Illinois contract.

Trustee Schneller asked if it was a hybrid or fully electric. Julius confirmed it is fully electric. Trustee Allen asked if it was a full cab, and it is. Trustee Reed asked if the shop is the best place or not and Julius said it is where the vehicles typically park.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the purchase of the 2025 Ford F-150 Lightning EV for \$51,953.00 from Sutton Ford under the State of Illinois contract as presented. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed; "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Sams, "AYE". Motion carried.

6. Staff Reports:

Jerry Culp, Executive Director:

Director Culp Discussed that the month mostly focused on the budget process and that the staff did a great job. It will help the District a lot, especially with

adding and increasing staff. In front of you are the District goals. This year we kept last year's goals and commented on how they went and if they were met, and then additional goals were added. Moving forward, the Indoor/Outdoor classroom is about 35% complete. The moveable partitions and exterior doors are the major things left. As previously discussed, engineers are being solicited for the Fort Daniel OSLAD grant. The Rock Springs Ramble is moving forward, with registrations already coming. The new event at Woodbine Farms is June 14th and it is called Wine in the Wild. The Scovill Park West Bike trail grant is moving forward, and we are just waiting on contracts. This is a federally funded grant, and we are waiting on the contract. This month was the conference in Chicago and Culp attended the joint legislative committee meeting. This mostly reviews what legislation changed. The IAPD/IPRA is a great conference. Great sessions included ones on volunteers as well as legislation.

Phil Julius, Director of Operations

Operations Director Julius discussed that snow caused a lot of snow removal and salt work. The Shop at Fort Daniel lost power for a few hours. The Manlift was delivered and the staff is very excited to have a manlift that can be maneuvered most easily and they have many projects ready to go once the weather improves. A contract for the Illinois Bike Trail grant was received and returned for work on the Stephen's Creek Bike Trail. Julius attended the IAPD/IPRA conference in Chicago and it was very impressive. He found a tracking software to use in operations to help with work tracking/assets which will help to keep track of work and generate reports. Trustee Schneller asked if it would help with productivity. Julius commented that it can create work orders for staff to fill out and they can schedule inspections so they get done on time and be done regularly. They are still in search of a Friend's Creek Camp Host. They camp all summer for free and it is a seasonal position. The 2025-26 budget has also been a focus. The crew is near completing the removal of Black Locust at Friend's Creek and are working on invasive species removal including bush honeysuckle.

Alysia Callison, Director of Programs

Director of Programs Alysia Callison reported that she worked on the budget as well. There were also a lot of programs including 6 at the library in Moweaqua. There was a significant snow event in January which generated about \$1,100 in ski revenue. We are glad that people are still interested in the program. A student from DPS61 chose MCCD as an intern and will be helping 3 days a week through April. Callison met with the Children's Museum about partnering more, beginning with a Spring Break Camp at CMIL that MCCD will assist with. Jenny Garver held a quarterly volunteer staff meeting and worked on plans for volunteers to help with some of the gardens. Work was also done on some interpretive signage at Ft. Daniel and Rock Springs to help educate. Some public programs went well including a make a terrarium program which was so popular that a private group booked their own terrarium workshop. Some of the animals also went to the vet. The turtle had to get a beak trim. Trustee Reed told Callison that she does a fantastic job on WAND.

Ashton Nunn, Marketing Specialist (not present)

Marketing Specialist Ashton Nunn was not present so Director of Programs Alysia Callison also gave this report. Marketing is moving in the right direction and new followers are joining every month. Nunn is working with their web developers to update the website. She also attended the IPRA conference.

Nicky Besser, Director of Finance and HR

Besser noted that she was mostly working on the budget and also completed W2s and 1099s. she also attended the IAPD conference and was able to connect with

a few vendors and get a few reporting items fixed, so it was very worthwhile to attend.

VII. COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

Trustee Schneller thanked the staff for their hard work on the budget. Trustee Castor spoke on hearing Jerry Culp on the Brian Byers show alongside the Heart of Illinois Community Foundation discussing their grant-writing workshop. The conversation was mostly about how to build a grant application, and Culp discussed that if you believe in the grant, it is easier to write and typically turns out as a more effective application. Castor said that a lot of this discussion helped to promote the District. Trustee Reed commented that the goals are getting significantly better each year, and she appreciated that the invasive species were addressed in the goals.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Schneller MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:06 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”; Trustee Sams “AYE”. Motion carried.

President

Secretary