

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
April 16, 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 Hearing and Regular meetings on March 26, 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 Allen MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and disbursements from March 2025, in the amount of \$276,212.17 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:

No old business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Set Annual Meeting Dates

Finance & HR Director Besser presented the following annual meeting dates: **2025:** May 21, Wednesday; June 18, Wednesday; July 16, Wednesday; August 20, Wednesday; September 17, Wednesday; October 15, Wednesday; November 19, Wednesday; December 17, Wednesday; **2026:** January 21, Wednesday; February 18, Wednesday; March 25, (4th Wednesday to accommodate budget on review for 30 days); April 15, Wednesday

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

2. Annual Depositories Approval

Finance & HR Director Besser explained that each year any depository that the District may use needs to be approved, whether or not a particular institution is utilized.

Trustee Reed asked to clarify which were being used on the list next year.

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

3. Annual Signatories Approval

Finance & HR Director Besser explained that each year any Board Members must be listed as signatories. She is going to look into whether this should be redone and permanently moved to July to account for Board turnover.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the annual signatories as presented. Trustee Allen 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 moving funds from the Contingency Line

Finance & HR Director Besser explained that per auditors, the contingency line is to be used for unexpected occurrences within the budget. Expenses should not be applied to the Contingency line but rather moved from it to other line items for expenditures that exceeded their budget. The following transfers are needed:

- **5020-000 – Executive & Admin Employees:** This account had an overage of **\$2,902.86** due to unknown variables including the hiring of Nicky Besser and the overlap with Pam Smith, as well as the final payout for Pam Smith's retirement.
- **5190-000 – Legal Fees:** This account already received \$20,000 of Contingency funds in September of 2024 due to collective bargaining negotiation costs. These costs continue to exceed this budget by an additional **\$14,011.27**.
- **6112-070 – Nature Center Utilities:** This account had an overage of **\$5106.12** due to utility cost and use.
- **6702-100– Utilities Maint. Shop RSC:** This account had an overage of **\$3,1419.61** due to utility cost and use.
- **6710-100– Telephone Maint. shop RSC:** This account had an overage of **\$591.58** due to utility cost.
- **Account 9015-000– Property Tax Payments:** This account had an overage of **\$1,341.38** due to rise in property tax costs.

There is no financial impact to the District as staff budgeted \$50,000.00 for contingencies. Staff need to only move budgeted dollars from the Contingency line to the other lines, which requires Board approval. The total budgeted expenses for the Corporate Account will remain unchanged. Staff recommends transferring a total of \$27,112.82 from the contingency budget funds as presented.

Trustee Schneller MOVED to approve moving funds from the Contingency Line 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.

1. Approval of Christy-Foltz

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 47% 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 seventh payout request for this project in the amount of \$52,927.20 for work completed.

Director Castor noted that the payout needed to be updated to #7 on the memo.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Christy Foltz payout #7 as amended with the correct numerical payout noted for the memo. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed; "AYE". Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Approval of Fort Daniel OSLAD Wetland Engineering

The Macon County Conservation District acquired 242 acres of land in 2022 adjacent to Fort Daniel Conservation Area. The acquisition was mostly funded by a Clean Energy Community Foundation Grant. The District also recently received an OSLAD grant to complete the restoration of the site to include 220 acres of wetlands, upland prairie and oak savanna. The next phase is to complete the engineering for these wetlands. Staff requested proposals from three consultants and received a proposal from Northwater Consulting to complete the engineering for the wetland construction associated with the grant. Northwater consulting has worked with the District in the past on the engineering of three other wetland projects on District property. Staff feels they are the qualified firm to complete this work. Their proposal in the amount of \$16,900 includes the work necessary to complete the wetland engineering, specifications and bid documents for restoration of the wetlands.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Fort Daniel OSLAD Wetland Engineering as presented. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed; "AYE". Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Castor, "AYE". Motion carried.

3. Approval of Purchase of Ford F-350 Truck with Dump Bed and Snowplow

The current unit #28 is a 2001 Ford F-250 with 65,593 miles on it. This truck is used daily for maintenance work at Friends Creek Conservation Area and Buis Du Sangamon Nature Preserve. It is used to pull a flat deck trailer to transport equipment, and it is used to plow snow. The current F-250 has a standard bed on it. Considering the trucks age of 24 years and the increased frequency of repairs needed, staff feel it is time for replacement. The new F-350 will have a dump bed with folding sides. This will allow for hauling of brush, gravel, soil, etc. and much easier access to the bed. The new F-350 will also have an 8.5-foot Western snowplow. Currently Sutton Ford Inc. holds the state bid for Cooperative purchase of commercial fleet vehicles in Illinois. A quote of \$82,666.00 for the Ford F-350 with dump bed and snowplow has been submitted. The financial impact is an expense of \$82,666.00 coming from account number 6850-700. \$90,000.00 was budgeted for the purchase of the F-350 with dump bed and snowplow. With the cooperative purchase price, this puts the F-350 truck purchase under budget. The current Ford F-250 will be sold separately from this purchase.

Trustee Reed said 2001 and 64,000 miles means that it did not get driven much and will hopefully have good resale value. Director Allen asked where Sutton Ford was, and Phil Julius responded it was up near Chicago.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Purchase of Ford F-350 Truck with Dump Bed and Snowplow as presented. 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.

1. Staff Reports:

Jerry Culp, Executive Director:

Director Culp discussed the PARC grant at the Nature Center. Last week they started working in the creek bed where the water features will be. Right now, they have been doing some concrete work and planning and quite a bit of their cleanup is done. The grill and countertop are done on the exterior. For the interior work, they are mostly mudding and taping. They will put the floors in after they paint the ceilings. Cabinetry for the kitchen is coming in the beginning of May. It's going well. The grand opening will likely be in September. Ft Daniel property planning is going well, and we are looking for engineering with bids out in possibly June with summer construction. The bike trail connection is still stalled with no funding. Labor relation

collective bargaining will start up again next week. This year the giveaway at the legislative session is a glass cleaner towel with our logo and pine trees on it. ADM did meet with the District and invite them to learn more about carbon sequestration.

Director Schneller said that she has seen some educational materials, but did not want to give the impression that the District appreciates being courted. Director Castor asked if it was even legal to do something like this. ED Culp said that the land they really want to use is under the Bois du Sangamon Nature Preserve and that it has implications with many entities. Director Reed also expressed skepticism at the concept.

Phil Julius, Director of Operations

Operations Director Julius discussed that he wanted to express his appreciation for his staff for a rigorous and successful burn season. Now they are turning to things like fertilizing, seeding, and mowing. They hired a local farmer to drill some cover crops at Fort Daniel to hold the soil in place until the pothole prairie gets going. It's already 1.5" tall. Surveying was done at Rock Springs and Fort Daniel. Sievers was doing the tile survey at the same time as the Northwater rep, so that was good that they were able to work together. He has worked with a local provider to get the CPR and defensive driving/sexual harassment training scheduled. There is a bimonthly safety committee meeting to discuss issues with safety and trainings. There is also a safety award program. Operations staff are also working in the downstairs garage wall to increase space, especially with the addition of the golf cart. Since the current conference room is becoming an office, there will be another conference room downstairs with a large window area.

Alysia Callison, Director of Programs

Director of Programs Alysia Callison discussed that March was a quieter month as they are gearing up for the busy season. It is funny because the last two weeks were very busy, but it will not be reported until May. Staff attended some career fairs. They are preparing for Festival of Spring April 26th. They are making final tweaks to the map and brochure so that it is ready to go. Summer seasonal job postings went out with interviews in April. Summer Camp details were finalized and camps opened up April 1st and some camps are already full. It is wonderful to see how valued they are by the community. They are partnering with DPS as well as United Way for scholarships and voucher payments. Beth attended a Project Learning Tree workshop which is a curriculum based on plants with many hands-on activities and games to engage kids. This was focused on early childhood. Animals are a draw, but plants are important, so we want to increase interest. They are also partnering more with the Children's Museum. They ordered the Star Lab and have scheduled the Summer Concert Series. One thing to note is that attendance is much different than last March because Kids Fest was moved from March to April this year.

Ashton Dukeman, Marketing Specialist

Marketing Specialist Ashton Dukeman was not present, so Alysia Callison presented that there were increases in followers and many other metrics. One thing to note is that there was a large increase in job opportunities. Ashton was on both WCIA and WAND and has been working with Blue Heron to update the website.

Nicky Besser, Director of Finance and HR

Besser discussed how she worked on finalizing the budget, attended some informational meetings with an alternate deferred comp vendor, MissionSquare, set up meetings with Paycom to look at time clock options, completed end-of-year accounting actions, and helped adjust line-item expenses as needed. Summer camp is here, and Joy Potter has been doing an excellent job with vouchers. On the HR side, she worked on benefits changes for employees that had moved full-time, on-boarded some seasonal employees, and reviewed various job offer letters and postings.

VII. COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

Trustee Castor asked if a Camp Host had been hired. Phil Julius said they have an offer out, but otherwise they will have to cover it with staff until we hire someone.

VIII EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Trustee Schneller MOVED to go into Executive Session at 6:13p.m. for the purpose of:

1. Discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (21)

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 6:15 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 6:17 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