

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
July 16, 2025, 5:30PM**

PURSUANT to written notice given all members of the Board, the above meeting was called to order at 5:50 p.m. by Vice President Reed

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

Board Members absent: Secretary Sams

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Minutes of the Regular meeting on June 18, 2025. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and Disbursements from June 2025, in the amount of \$800,283.25 as presented. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

IV. COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

No comments.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

No old business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Annual Board Member Role Approvals

a. Election of Officers

Executive Director Culp explained that Michael Sams will be leaving the Board and two nominees have been submitted to the Macon County Board for appointment. Trustee Allen nominated Trustee Schneller as Board President. Trustee Schneller accepted the nomination. Trustee Reed and Trustee Allen agreed to remain in their current roles. The rest of the positions are tabled until new Directors are appointed.

Trustee Reed moved to approve the following Board Roles for 2025-26: President: Trustee Schneller; 1st Vice-President: Trustee Reed; Treasurer: Trustee Allen; Secretary: tabled; 2nd Vice-President: tabled. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

b. 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 Reed 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 Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Christy-Foltz Payout #10

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 95% of the work related to their contract including demolition, electrical and plumbing, new partition walls, lower-level offices and collection room. Christy-Foltz has submitted their tenth payout request for this project in the amount of \$80,604 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 \$80,604. Staff recommend approving the payout.

Trustee Allen asked how many payouts there would be in total. Executive Director Culp said 11.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Christy-Foltz Payout #10 as presented. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE Motion carried.

3. Staff Reports:

Jerry Culp, Executive Director:

Executive Director Culp discussed that he and Phil Julius had a meeting with the contractor for the interior of the Indoor-Outdoor Classroom, and they will be done in a week. The ribbon cutting is on September 12th. At Woodbine Farm the barn contract is out for bid. The bid for the Fort Daniel Wetlands will be out next week with hope of starting work in the fall. The Woodbine Farm event went well, and Ashton will give more information about that. Labor relations have slowed down but will pick back up after vacation season. He has been working a lot on grant reporting. Ashton is working on pricing for the new space. The Izaak Walton League hosted a picnic, and they donated \$1,000. Everyone has been very busy doing great work.

Director Reed suggested sending invites to the opening event for the new space and doing a media push.

Phil Julius, Director of Operations

Operations Director Julius discussed that he spent time working on the Woodbine Farm event, which was a success. Admin Staff have met with PDRMA about possibly switching to them for our liability and worker's comp insurance. Natural Resources have been working hard spraying invasives. Mitch Lovgren, Natural Resource Manager, feels good about the amount of invasives that have declined. The District got a new John Deere zero turn mower that includes a fan and roof coverage. The Ford Lightning charger arrived, and it was installed. Adam Reef has been utilizing it. Phil has also been working on several grant bids for the Woodbine Farm area and the Fort Daniel Wetlands.

Trustee Reed asked if we were still planning on putting some marketing on the vehicle showing that it is electric and we should promote that. Phil agreed they would move forward on it.

Alysia Callison, Director of Program Services

Director of Program Services Alysia Callison discussed that June had all 5 camps start and they are all well attended. They have had good feedback so far and the kids are enjoying it. They are in the 7th full week with 2 more weeks to go. In addition to summer camp, staff have been doing other programs including 32 regional library programs in June. Many of these are small communities that benefit from District resources. In addition, other programs are going on including for other camps, nursing homes, and daycares. There were also some public programs including the Firefly Hike

and the Independence Day 1860 event. The Summer Concert Series is also going well, including 290 people at the second week's show. Last week's show even got rained out, so it moved inside. The Star Lab arrived, and once summer is over, staff will be trained on it. The second week of September there is an astronomy event they where they may be able to use it. She has been working on interpretive signage that will go in the indoor-outdoor classroom. 2 DCLI interns will finish at the end of July.

Trustee Reed mentioned that she has heard great things from the interns involved and the programs are doing great. Looking at the chart at the bottom, it is clear that a lot of good work is being done.

Ashton Dukeman, Marketing Specialist

Marketing Specialist Ashton Dukeman discussed that they did several interviews with the new Event Specialist. She worked with Mitch Lovgren on helping the Sanitary District to help with some prairie they are trying to restore. She attended the Izaak Walton League Joe Howard Fishing Tournament and it was a lot of fun. The Wine in the Wild event did very well, grossing over \$47,000 in one night. They are hoping that they can do even more next year. Even though it stormed, everyone had a great time. Prairie Pedal is the next focus for fundraising. She is also working on the rental policies for the new Indoor-Outdoor Classroom. She also attended the Special Park Districts forum in Detroit, Michigan with Phil Julius and Adam Reef. The Facebook page got a lot of traction, with a post about the water flowing through the new outdoor space getting a lot of traction. A lot of people are asking about the Indoor-Outdoor Classroom.

Nicky Besser, Director of Finance and HR

Besser discussed that the new credit cards have arrived and so far are easy to use. She and Jerry worked to make sure the cash flow was handled for the large payouts that have been going out for contractors and capital costs, as well as the semi-annual iParks payment. She has been helping with some hiring and any issues arising with staff. She is also participating in collective bargaining.

VII. COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:

Trustee Reed noted that it's great to see the payments listed on the Financial Report so the Board can remember what they approved. She also said she appreciates all the staff working on Collective Bargaining negotiations as they are doing great work to support the District and its employees. Trustee Allen commented that he is sure it's hard to do an initial contract. Trustee Reed said she is very committed to and appreciative of the work that is being done and is there to support the staff. She encouraged the staff to train and teach interns to learn this work ethic as it's a great lesson for young people.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Allen MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 7:11 p.m. Trustee Schneller SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed "AYE". Motion carried.

President

Secretary