

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
December 17, 2025, 5:30PM**

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

Board members present: 1st Vice President Reed, President Schneller, Treasurer Allen, Secretary Rade

Board Members absent: 2nd Vice President Chapman

Nicky Besser mentioned she had to amend the minutes sent to add a provision under the Signatories section to stipulate that other previous signatories should be removed. Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Minutes of the Regular meeting as amended on November 19, 2025. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE", Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and Disbursements from November 2025, in the amount of \$683,302.74 as presented. Trustee Rade SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE", Trustee Schneller, "AYE", Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

IV. COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

No comments.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

No Old Business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2026 Holiday Schedule

Executive Director Culp presented the 2026 holiday schedule with no changes from the previous year:

THURSDAY	NEW YEAR'S DAY	JANUARY 01
MONDAY	MLK JR. DAY	JANUARY 19
MONDAY	PRESIDENT'S DAY	FEBRUARY 16
FRIDAY	GOOD FRIDAY	APRIL 03
MONDAY	MEMORIAL DAY	MAY 25
FRIDAY	JUNETEENTH DAY	JUNE 19
FRIDAY	INDEPENDENCE DAY (OBSERVED)	JULY 3
MONDAY	LABOR DAY	SEPTEMBER 7
WEDNESDAY	VETERANS DAY	NOVEMBER 11
THURSDAY	THANKSGIVING DAY	NOVEMBER 26
FRIDAY	THANKSGIVING	NOVEMBER 27
THURSDAY	CHRISTMAS EVE	DECEMBER 24
FRIDAY	CHRISTMAS DAY	DECEMBER 25
FRIDAY	NEW YEARS DAY	JANUARY 1, 2027

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the 2026 Holiday Schedule as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE", Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Special Use Wedding Permit and Woodbine Rental Agreements

Marketing Specialist Ashton Dukeman discussed The Macon County Conservation District currently offers a wedding package that people can book. The pricing of the packages are due for an update, as is the application form we send to potential brides and grooms. The wedding fees were last updated approximately ten years ago, and we have since added the new indoor-outdoor classrooms in the lower level and the Hidden Hollow patio as options, and the Woodbine Farm is now ready to be used as a rental location. We will also be adding a \$150 refundable deposit that has not previously been charged. The application has been updated to match the format and style of the new forms that have been created for room rentals and birthday parties. Our goal is to make as many District request forms as consistent in appearance as possible. Key features of the proposed Woodbine policy and new pricing include full day rental options of either the outdoor site or the outdoor site with the house included Woodbine Farm Site - Outdoor Event: \$600 / Woodbine Farmhouse: \$400; Clear rules and regulations to guide permitted users; and a photography session day pass with \$150 fee.

Trustee Allen asked if they could put a tent up and Ashton Dukeman said yes. Trustee Reed asked what facilities were available outside. Dukeman said the new pavilion would be up with restrooms in it.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Special Use Wedding Permit and Woodbine Rental Agreements as presented. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE", Trustee Schneller, "AYE", Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

3. Vehicle Use Policy

Director of Finance and Human Resources Nicky Besser discussed that the District has several vehicles in use by employees as well as some employees that use vehicles in a commuter capacity. A vehicle use policy is essential in guiding employees and protecting the District with proper use of MCCD vehicles. This will also fulfill requirements by PDRMA (liability insurance) as well as from our auditor. She recommended the policy be put in place.

Trustee Reed asked how often we go over these policies with staff. Besser replied that ideally new policies would be reviewed at Quarterly Staff Meetings with sign-off. Trustee Reed suggested an annual review and sign-off of all policies.

Trustee Rade MOVED to approve the Vehicle Use Policy as presented. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Rade, "AYE", Trustee Schneller, "AYE", Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

4. Alcohol & Drug Policy for CDL Employees

Executive Director Culp said the District is tabling this policy for now.

5. Ft. Daniel Pavilion Bid Approval

Executive Director Culp discussed that The new parking lot has been completed and staff is currently working on the pavilion/shelter installation. The District recently approved the purchase of a Cedar Forest Products timber frame shelter kit through the Cooperative Purchasing organization HGAC Buy. The pavilion kit has been ordered and staff worked with Cedar Forest Products to complete the bid specifications for the installation of the pavilion. The pavilion kit installation bid was advertised and let for bidding on November 21st with bids due on December 9th. Three contractors submitted bids on the project. Lake Contracting out of Addieville, IL was the lowest qualified bidder with a bid amount of \$119,700. Staff have reviewed the bid with Lake Contracting and would recommend them for the project. Funds in the amount of \$883,000 are budgeted in the Capital Fund Account 6810-700 for this Project.

Sufficient funds are available in the Capital Fund Account for this expense totaling \$119,700.

Trustee Reed asked where the other vendors were located. Director Culp said they were from Decatur but were several thousand dollars higher.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Ft. Daniel Pavilion Bid as presented. Trustee Rade SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE", Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE". Motion carried.

6. Ft Daniel OSLAD Wetland Restoration KP Fencing Payout

Executive Director Culp discussed that The Board of Trustees approved a contract with KP Fencing in the amount of \$352,917.86 to complete the wetland restoration portion of the project. The Project bids were approved in August and the contractor started work in September, completing approximately 70% of the excavation. They have submitted the second payout request for work completed in the amount of \$66,558.47. Funds are budgeted in the Capital Fund Account 6810-700 for this Project. There are sufficient funds in the Capital Account 6810-700 for this expense totaling \$66,558.47

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Ft Daniel OSLAD Wetland Restoration KP Fencing Payout as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE", Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE". Motion carried.

7. Staff Reports:

Jerry Culp, Executive Director:

Executive Director Culp discussed that the Fort Daniel OSLAD grant is going well on both the wetland restoration and the work at Woodbine Farm. Phil Julius and Mitch Lovgren have been especially effective in pushing the work forward and making sure the contract is going well. The only thing we are waiting on is the delivery date for the pavilion, which will then dictate the finish date. The RTP grant for the Rock Springs to Scovill trail is moving forward with the next steps being to be identifying how the trails will connect. We are still on track for engineering in the winter and construction in the summer. Rock Springs Indoor-Outdoor Classroom is in the reimbursement phase. The Foundation set the Wine in the Wild date as June 13th. The Macon County Board Meeting featured the developer for the Woodbine subdivision. We had written a grant to utilize some of this land, but it was not approved. The owner wants to donate a portion of the land to create the trail. At the meeting there were approvals made so that that donation could move forward. The labor negotiations are ongoing. We had a meeting with our new risk pool, PDRMA, and it was great. We will likely see a lot of positive changes due to this new partnership. We are also in the middle of the budget process.

Phil Julius, Director of Operations

Operations Director Julius discussed that the winter weather has caused a quick switch from mowing and leaf cleanup to removing snow. The attorney complimented the snow removal efforts compared to around town when she visited. The weather has provided time to sand, paint, lay carpet, and do other work on the new conference room downstairs. We hope it will be ready for use in January. It opens to the window of wildlife. The seeding at Ft. Daniel contract is signed and the seed is ordered. The contractor is hoping to be ready by January. Trustee Rade asked if he got it from Prairie Moon, and Natural Resources Manager said he sources it directly midwest growers. At the November Foundation Meeting, we approached them with potential projects. Natural Resources approached them with a hedgerow project that was approved. This should finish up the hedgerow removal. We also got another 3 point sprayer, which would be our second and we were awarded that. Finally, a seeder was also approved to

make it a lot easier to seed with minimal impact to the environment. Several staff members have been working on annual safety training. The Archery Deer Hunt is still going on and we are up to 75 total deer which is a lot of deer for our program.

Trustee Schneller said that annual safety training would go great with the annual policy review. Trustee Allen asked how Upland Game was going and Mitch Lovgren said it was a bit slower this year.

Alysia Callison, Director of Program Services

Director of Program Services Alysia Callison discussed that November is a bit slower. There were some field trips as well as the Candlelight Tour. This is at the Homestead Prairie Farm and they light it up with candles. Attendance was up. We also had our rescheduled Star Party to launch the Star Lab. We got great feedback and everyone enjoyed seeing the new equipment. It's exciting that we have it now and we have already gotten bookings. We also spent a lot of time planning for next year. Callison met with each staff member about their budgets and held an annual group planning meeting. We scheduled almost the entire fiscal year over a period of 6 hours. It's long but it's fun. We are also planning for next year's 60th anniversary of the District and 45th anniversary for the Foundation. We had an anniversary committee meeting to discuss what we want to do for that, and Program Services met to discuss how make it happen. It will be an engaging, exciting year. We also have been working on cleaning. We have a huge room downstairs filled with resources. Some of it is used constantly and other things have not been used in years. The team rented a dumpster and made some space to organize. We are still working on it, but a lot of progress is being made. A few staff attended the Midwest Environmental Education Summit held in southern Illinois. It was beautiful to see such a different part of our state and to engage with other educators who are doing similar work.

Trustee Reed said that she is sure that others also learned from our staff as we have a lot of great things happening here at MCCD.

Ashton Dukeman, Marketing Specialist

Marketing Specialist Ashton Dukeman discussed that she was working on the budget and anniversaries as well. She also created and sent out the end of year solicit for the Foundation. She got to see the new bus ad first-hand which was exciting. She and Jerry went on the news to discuss different happenings at the District. She also created a new form for birthday party rentals. She attended the Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon. She and Jerry have been working on the anniversary logos. She is working on the IACD Conference with Phil. The new rentals are going well. Social media and the website continue to perform well. Our most popular Facebook post was the memorial post for our frog, Gayle.

Trustee Rade asked how old Gayle was. Alysia Callison said we don't know for sure but at least 9.

Nicky Besser, Director of Finance and HR

Director of Finance & HR Nicky Besser discussed that she had been working on several policies and end of year renewals and was setting up the CDL drug testing program. She finalized the Tax Levy. She attended a webinar titled, "Bonds 101, the Basics of Issuing Debt" via the Illinois Government Finance Officers association. She also has been working on next year's budget process, including meeting alongside Jerry to discuss our contract with NSU, our tech company. She presented the final tax levy disbursement and was pleased that we were only under our ask by \$1,440.71 overall and \$1,856.40 in our Corporate Fund. Last year was under by over \$20,000. She also attended PDRMA's webinar, "CDL Drug and Alcohol" and also their 1-day Risk Management Institute.

VII. COMMENTS FROM THE TRUSTEES

No comments were made.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Trustee Allen MOVED to go into Executive Session at 6:14p.m. for the purpose of:

1. Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees.

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

Trustee Rade MOVED to return to the Regular Public Meeting at 6:25 p.m. Trustee Chapman SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Chapman MOVED to approve the Executive Session Minutes of December 17, 2025, as read aloud in closed session. Trustee Rade, SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE"; and Trustee Allen, "AYE". Motion carried.

IX. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Rade MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:27 p.m. Trustee Chapman SECONDED the Motion. Trustee Rade, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE"; and Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

President

Secretary