

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
November 19, 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, 2nd Vice President Chapman
Board Members absent: none

Trustee Chapman MOVED to approve the Minutes of the Regular meeting on October 15, 2025. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE", Trustee Reed, "AYE", Trustee Chapman, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Rade MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report and Disbursements from October 2025, in the amount of \$275,783.18 as presented. Trustee Chapman SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Chapman, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE", Trustee Schneller, "AYE", Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

IV. COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

No comments.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Annual Board Member Role Approvals

a. Appoint Foundation Liaison

Executive Director Culp asked if anyone could serve as Liaison to the Macon County Conservation Foundation at their meeting tomorrow, and if someone wanted to serve year-round, or if the responsibility would be shared. Trustee Rade volunteered to attend the November 20th meeting. Trustee Chapman and Trustee Rade agreed to split the term this year with each doing 6 months.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve Trustee Chapman and Trustee Rade sharing the position of MCCF Liaison. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE", Trustee Reed, "AYE", Trustee Chapman, "AYE". Motion carried.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Signatories Resolution

Executive Director Culp discussed that the Board needed to update its signatories, and two options were discussed in previous meetings. One was to have all members be signers, and the other was to only have the President, Treasurer, and Executive Director be signers.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the President, Treasurer, and Executive Director as signatories for the Macon County Conservation District and to remove all other signatories on the accounts. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE", Trustee Reed, "AYE", Trustee Chapman, "AYE". Motion carried.

2. Appointment of Delegates to the IAPD Annual Business Meeting

Executive Director Jerry Culp stated that two people had to be appointed to be delegates at the annual IAPD business meeting and offered for everyone to attend.

Trustee Schneller discussed it was a very valuable experience to learn and to network.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve Jerry Culp and Karen Schneller as delegates to the IAPD Annual Business Meeting. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, “AYE”; Trustee Chapman, “AYE”; Trustee Rade, “AYE”, Trustee Schneller, “AYE”, Trustee Reed, “AYE”. Motion carried.

3. 2025 Burn Report

Natural Resources Manager Mitch Lovgren discussed that Fire is one of the most useful tools to us as a Conservation District, and this report is something we turn into the EPA. Last year was a great burn season. We burned about 1100 acres at the District and about 400 acres at the Oakley Sediment Basin. Overall, we are trying to cover all the acres we have in a 3–4-year rotation. Last year we tackled about 250 acres that had not been burned in recent history. We also burned some core acres that were due for rotation. This year there are some redundancies from site to site as part of this rotation. At Rock Springs, it gets a lot of attention due to the houses and public that are around. This year there is a lot of invasive activity and so we want to address that this year. We do leave a refuge area so that the animals have a place to go and are not displaced from all the burning. At Sand Creek, we are burning both old and new acres. A new area we have identified for burning are some woods near the cemetery and a second forested area. The rest is the core area we burn on rotation. At Fort Daniel, we are letting a lot of it rest but are hoping to possibly have a fall burn. At Friends Creek, we have been covering most of it on rotation for quite a while. We also leave some refuge here to prevent animal displacement. At Griswold, there is a lot of brush, and we are trying to reclaim it as prairie. At Willow Branch II we will also be doing some work. The recommendation is 1172 acres, which is standard as we usually end up with 1000-1500 acres.

Trustee Reed said it was an excellent report. Trustee Schneller asked if they can’t burn if that means we spray. Lovgren responded that the weather made it difficult to spray and there were safety concerns, so they did what they could.

4. Tax Levy

Director of Finance and Human Resources Nicky Besser explained how the tax levy is calculated and presented the calculations from this year. We can only request up to 5% of the extended tax amount from the previous year, and all funds must comply with the fund balance policy set by the Board. The remaining money can be allocated to next year’s operating budget. This year the request is as follows:

GENERAL CORPORATE FUND	88.16%	\$ 2,050,500.00
IMRF	0.43%	\$ 10,000.00
SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE	4.88%	\$ 113,500.00
LIABILITY INSURANCE FUND	4.39%	\$ 102,000.00
WORKERS COMP FUND	1.42%	\$ 33,000.00
UNEMPLOYMENT FUND	0.02%	\$ 500.00
AUDIT FUND	0.71%	\$ 16,500.00
TOTAL LEVY ALL FUNDS REQUESTED	100.00%	\$ 2,326,000.00
% change from prior year	5.00%	

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the 2025 Tax Levy Ordinance as presented. Trustee Rade SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Reed, “AYE”, Trustee Allen, “AYE”; Trustee Rade, “AYE”; Trustee Chapman, “AYE”, Trustee Schneller, “AYE”. Motion carried.

5. Summer Camp Report

Director of Program Services Alysia Callison gave an overview of the summer camp program in 2025. The camps went well – the largest is Earth Adventures. Most saw increased enrollment, although there was a small decrease in History and Extreme camps. The Extreme Camp dip was largely due to having to cancel a week due to extreme heat. We did have a scholarship awarded by the United Way, which was a two-year grant, so that helped those needing a scholarship. We also have Decatur Public Schools which covers a lot of fees for summer programs. This year it was \$350 per child and that was great as well. There are some graphs and figures in the report, including enrollment numbers showing a 36% increase. Our net profit was \$18,000 including staff time, expenses, and supplies, etc. Recommendations for next year include increasing the cost of Mini Camp from \$8 to \$10 because the cost to run the camp right now is causing a small loss, and it's in line or cheaper than similar programs, and increasing the cost of Extreme Camp, which had been reduced during Covid to have on-site programs less than excursion camps. The recommendation is to make the Extreme Camp cost \$60 whether on or off site.

President Schneller asked if Mini Camps would have a profit or still be in the red. Callison commented it may still be in the red. President Schneller asked if it would be better to just raise it to the proper number. Trustee Rade said he thought \$12.00 was still a steal. Trustee Reed said they should not operate at a deficit, so they should move forward with \$12.00. Callison agreed that it was where she wanted to be and they would move forward with an increase to \$12.00.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Summer Camp 2026 recommendations as amended. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE", Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE"; Trustee Chapman, "AYE". Motion carried.

6. Health Care

Director of Finance and Human Resources Nicky Besser discussed that the renewal for the District Healthcare had not shown any changes to the plan benefits, but there was a 14% increase. To stay in line with requirements of collective bargaining and to continue to serve the employees of the District, it was proposed to keep the District's current contribution percentages toward employee premiums.

Trustee Rade MOVED to approve the 2026 Blue Cross Blue Shield District Healthcare plan as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Chapman, Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE", Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE"; Trustee Chapman, "AYE". Motion carried.

7. Christy Foltz Payout Request #13 (Final)

Executive Director Jerry Culp discussed that Christy-Foltz has completed the PARC Indoor-Outdoor Classroom project. The District realized a couple credits for allowances and changes in work adjusting the final contract amount to \$747,798.25. The final payout #13 in the amount of \$64,412.95 includes the retention closing out the project. 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 \$64,412.95.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the Christy Foltz Payout #13 as presented. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE", Trustee Rade, "AYE"; Trustee Chapman, "AYE". Motion carried.

8. 4MC Payout Request #5 (Final)

Executive Director Jerry Culp discussed that District staff worked with 4MC Corporation to issue a change order that reduced the contract amount to \$578,035.65. 4MC has completed the project and is requesting the final payment which includes the

retention amount of \$44,267.56. 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 \$44,267.56.

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the 4MC Payout Request #5 as presented. Trustee Allen SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Rade, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Chapman, "AYE", Trustee Reed, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE". Motion carried.

9. KP Fencing Payout Request #1

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 OSLAD Grant at Fort Daniel. The Project bids were approved in August and the contractor started work in September and has submitted the first payout request for work completed in the amount of \$126,397.21. 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 \$126,397.21.

Trustee Allen MOVED to approve the KP Fencing Payout Request #1 as presented. Trustee Reed SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Rade, "AYE"; Trustee Allen, "AYE", Trustee Chapman, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE". Motion carried.

10. Fort Daniel Conservation Area Prairie and Wetland Seed and Seeding Bid

Director of Operations Phil Julius discussed Contractors are currently doing excavation of the new wetlands, trail system and prairie restoration at Fort Daniel Conservation Area North of Woodbine Farm. Once excavation is complete, there will be 175 acres of prairie to be seeded and 16 acres of wetlands to seed. Three contractors submitted bids for the seeding project. One contractor only bid on the seed. The other two contractors bid on the seed and planting. These two bids were competitive and met the bid specs. Brown Seed Sales has the lowest bid and meets all the bid spec criteria. This bid is for \$154,205.00. This includes Prairie Seed, and planting as well as wetland seed and planting, and will come out of Capital account 6810-700. This project is funded by the OSLAD grant. This grant also involves the parking lot, plaza and restroom/pavilion (not part of this bid).

Trustee Reed MOVED to approve the Fort Daniel Conservation Area Prairie and Wetland Seed and Seeding Bid award as presented. Trustee Rade SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Rade, "AYE"; Trustee Schneller, "AYE"; Trustee Reed, "AYE", Trustee Allen, "AYE"; Trustee Chapman, "AYE". Motion carried.

11. Holiday time off request

Executive Director Jerry Culp discussed that the process regarding staff time off during the period between Christmas and New Year's was outlined and approved by the Board in 2024, and he would like to recommend this be implemented via the following criteria: **Eligibility:** Employees who work a minimum of 1000 hours per year will be eligible for paid time off between Christmas and New Year's, without utilizing their personal benefit time. **Operational Requirements:** While the office will be closed during this period, the Rock Springs Nature Center will remain open during regular business hours. Operations staff will continue to perform essential duties, including completing rounds to check on and clean up facilities. The District staff will be required to report to work if the necessity arrives unless they have previously scheduled time off using personal benefit time. **Snow Days:** In the event of inclement weather, staff members required to work will be handled accordingly. **Approval:** This request is being submitted to the Board for tentative approval of the holiday time off for this year. For subsequent years, the granting of time off will be based on the organizational and financial needs of the District, as well as the progress toward achieving District goals.

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

12. Staff Reports:

Jerry Culp, Executive Director:

Executive Director Culp discussed the PARC Grant for the Indoor-Outdoor Classroom is over, and we are working on reimbursement from the IDNR. We are moving forward with the wetland work at Fort Daniel, and we are deep into that project. Staff has been doing some of the work in-house, and some will be outsourced. The parking lot is installed and looks great. The earthmoving on the wetlands is great, and the approved bid for the seed tonight will keep the project moving forward. We are currently advertising the bid for the pavilion going out Friday, so things are moving forward. A lot of the progress is dependent on weather. We started engineering for the RTP Grant to Scovill and need to work with the Park District to decide where it will connect to existing trails. We are working with the Foundation on their investment goals and starting their budget process. There was a joint legislative committee meeting two weeks ago that reviews all IAPD legislation that is being reviewed by the state. Then the committee makes recommendations to the sponsor of the bill. There was a legal symposium discussing employment law and safety and it gives a lot of things needing updated to policies. We are still working with the labor relations board. We have been working with PDRMA as our new liability insurance carrier. We are working on this process including a meeting on December 15 to discuss their operations.

Phil Julius, Director of Operations

Operations Director Julius discussed that he spent a good amount of time with his staff at Woodbine Farm working on the drainage as well as on the paving. There was also an archeologist on site. He put the seed bid out as well and worked on the selection process. Operations and Natural resources is doing forestry mowing and is doing a lot at Sand Creek in particular. The Deer Herd management program has started and in week one there were 30 deer killed, which is already about half of what has been taken typically in past years. Natural Resources hosted a volunteer seed collection, and they will then come back to plant for a full view of the process. Other staff are working on winterizing locations. Friends Creek campground is still open, but no water is available. A generous donor donated \$5,000 to replace several trees on the Griswold tree line. 5 oaks and 5 maples were planted, and the staff has been taking care of them. We have been interviewing candidates for the natural resources tech and have offered a job to a candidate who accepted.

Alysia Callison, Director of Program Services

Director of Program Services Alysia Callison discussed that October has two large events. The first is Fall Harvest fest. The attendance was low, but revenue increased. The Treat Trail is the second and it's very popular. We keep getting great feedback and are excited to grow it. The goal of the event is to get kids out and instead of just getting treats, they also get an educational experience. This year's challenge was that after weeks of drought, there was a huge thunderstorm, so everything was moved indoors. 550 people came through the event. We also had sponsors and Glenda Williamson was the presenting sponsor and there were other community organizations that participated. Overall, the profit was \$2,300. We also had several successful public programs. One was the Bigfoot Hike, which started last year with great response. This year we expanded it to 2 nights, and it sold out and brought in about \$500. We also did a homeschool program. We have some that come every month and had some new families. There were 20 different field trips and booked programs. Bats and survival

skills were popular. A lot of groups have been using the Indoor-Outdoor space. Jenny did several volunteer hikes, and she did her quarterly meeting as well. Alysia is working on a partnership with Scouting America to create a Teen Club that meets at Rock Springs. Teens tend to be hard to reach but underserved, so this is still in development. She is working on budgets as well. She is trying to find a way to make the weekend staff feel more fulfilled. She sent a survey out to see if she can make some positive changes. She noted that in her report she added a few more attendance categories to better provide information.

Trustee Reed suggested a trip to the Law Enforcement Center. They do simulations, see the city, etc.

Ashton Dukeman, Marketing Specialist

Marketing Specialist Ashton Dukeman discussed that October was very busy. During fall programs there was a lot of social media activity. The Chamber’s ribbon cutting was well-attended. She started gathering items for the fall Prairie Islander. She is working with Phil on coordinating the IACD conference. And she is working on the form for room rentals and making it as easy as possible to do. She is drafting matching forms for weddings at Woodbine that she hopes to present soon. She is doing a lot of rentals and showings of the new space. Some schedule the viewings and others stop by once they see it during a visit to the Nature Center. She has been working on planning campaigns for next year’s 60th anniversary of MCCD and 45th anniversary of MCCF. She also had a booth at the Millikin Health Fair and she likes to remind them they can hop on the Fairview Trail by MU and bike directly here. There was a Wine Tasting at the Indoor-Outdoor Classroom auctioned off at the MCCF Wine in the Wild event, and it was a paired with food. Gk9 loved it so much they are interested in partnering more. MCCF made about \$300 selling concessions at the Fall Harvest Festival. Several rentals have occurred with good feedback. Social Media is continuing to excel.

Nicky Besser, Director of Finance and HR

Director of Finance & HR Nicky Besser discussed that most of her time was spent on the healthcare renewal and tax levy, as well as on the new budget. So far things are going well, and she will continue to finish these projects through December. She is working on end of year renewals and other activities the come with the end of the calendar year.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Trustee Rade MOVED to adjourn the Public Meeting at 6:57 p.m. Trustee Chapman SECONDED the Motion. Trustee Rade, “AYE”; Trustee Allen, “AYE”; and Trustee Chaman, “AYE”. Scheller, “AYE”; Trustee Reed, “AYE”. Motion carried.

President

Secretary