



Van Buren Conservation District

VAN BUREN CONSERVATION DISTRICT (VBCD)

Minutes of August 25, 2021

Minutes prepared by: Emilyly Hickmott, Deputy Administrator

VanTassel called the regular August 25, 2021 business meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

Directors present:

Bill VanTassel, Chair
Jan Petersen, Vice Chair
Paulette Rybarski, Secretary

Carl Druskovich, Treasurer
Ron Klein, Member

Others present:

Kim Sinclair, Administrator
Emilyly Hickmott, Recycling Coordinator
Jacob Diljak, Outreach Coordinator
Dan Ruzick, Antwerp Township Supervisor
Lee Moser, Modern Woodmen Financial
Erin Fuller, Watershed Coordinator

Colleen Forestieri, Conservation Technician
Abbie Bristol, Strike Team Coordinator
Kyle Mead, MAEAP Technician
Lucas Hartman, Conservation Technician
Alex Florian, Invasive Species Coordinator

Agenda: Petersen requested that NACD Board Training Opportunities be added to New Business. Motion was made by Druskovich, 2nd by Rybarski to accept the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Minutes: Hickmott indicated that the motion for approval of the meeting minutes should read, "...to accept the meeting minutes of the June 23, 2021 regular board meeting minutes...". Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by Klein, to accept the July 28, 2021 regular board meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried.

Public Comment:

- Supervisor Ruzick was given the floor. Ruzick recounted his conversation with past Executive Director AJ Brucks regarding the Van Buren Conservation District millage. Antwerp Township wishes to have a passenger tire collection each year; they are currently sending about \$48,000 to Kalamazoo County a year for household hazardous waste disposal and \$60,000 to Best Way Disposal for the transfer station. The Township scheduled a collection with Best Way Disposal in 2020 that was postponed until 2021. Druskovich asked about how many tires they are collecting a year and Ruzick answered that Best Way Disposal will take about 300-400 tires for about \$1,300. Druskovich shared some techniques that have worked for him in Hamilton Township. Sinclair shared that we try to schedule collections that will attract the most amount of residents and explained the reasoning for asking municipalities for a financial buy-in. Discussion was had about a central HHW facility to start and then satellite collection facilities to follow. Antwerp Township would like to expand their transfer station's services. The board will discuss options.
- Lee Moser from Modern Woodmen Financial was given the floor to discuss retirement opportunities. Moser provided some background information about Modern Woodmen. Moser provided paperwork informing the staff of retirement options that are available. The SEP (Simplified Employee Pension) IRA with American Funds is the vehicle that Moser recommends for the VBCD. The funding of this vehicle is what needs to be determined. A flexible contribution can be used: 0%-25% (of wage) contribution. Moser would work with the individual employees for planning and setting up the accounts. These are employer-only contributions. A payroll-deduction IRA could be set up for any employees that want to contribute as well. Moser discussed some specifics of contributions. If VBCD decides to move forward, there is an authorization agreement. It would take a few days to get everyone enrolled. Druskovich encouraged the staff to discuss amongst themselves which direction they wanted to go. Each staff member can participate at a different rate if the board decides to go forward with this.

Treasurer's Report:

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- Financial statements for July 2021 were presented. Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by Klein to approve the financial statements as presented. Motion carried.
- The bills of August 2021 were presented. Motion was made by Rybarski, 2nd by Druskovich to approve the bills of August 2021 as presented. Motion carried.
- Payroll for July 2021 was presented. Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by Rybarski to approve payment of payroll as presented. Motion carried.

Old Business:

- **Antwerp Township Supervisor Dan Ruzick** - Supervisor Ruzick shared during Public Comment.
- **Red Arrow Property Visioning Update/VBC Mattawan Property** – Sinclair expressed that the board and staff need to get on the same page about how to move forward or not regarding the Mattawan Property. Sinclair wants the attorney to proposition the USDA to co-locate with us. Druskovich believes that the USDA would need to go with us in order for us to purchase the Mattawan property. The alternative would be to go to the Van Buren County Hartford property; USDA would need to co-locate to pay the lease. Klein commented that it would be strange to engage an attorney without a board member present; Druskovich volunteered to act as liaison. Klein asked for access to information from the USDA that governs the relationship with its landlord; Sinclair will provide it. Petersen expressed concern about moving forward without already having inspections of the Mattawan property completed; discussion was had. Motion was made by Druskovich, 2nd by Klein to engage the attorney to create a proposal for the USDA to co-locate with the Van Buren Conservation District at the Van Buren County Mattawan property. Motion carried. The board advises that the attorney determine a “respond by” date for the USDA.
- **MDARD Operations Review** - Sinclair shared that the meeting with Jack Knorek went very well; Hickmott attended.
- **Health Insurance & Retirement - Final Discussion Point** - Lee Moser shared during Public Comment. Sinclair asked how much the board is willing to provide. Druskovich shared that between 2-5% is standard and that this is similar to a raise. Druskovich recommends a 3% match. Sinclair shared some example calculations. Druskovich shared that the two proposals he had backed out due to COVID-19 cost complications. Druskovich will have someone else in September. Sinclair requested that the board set up a separate, budget meeting with her before the September meeting; the board agreed to September 1 at 9:00 AM.

New Business:

- **South Haven Schools Mini-grant Application** - Sinclair shared that the school wants \$2,000.00 for their CURB beautification program. They have already raised \$4,000.00. They want to purchase plants. Motion by Druskovich, 2nd by Petersen to approve the mini-grant application. Motion carried.
- **NACD Board Training Opportunities** - Petersen shared that she wanted to discuss it for Klein’s benefit, being a new board member. Sinclair shared that there is funding available for board member training.

PA 116 / Right to Farm/ Farmland Preservation: None.

Correspondence/Other Information:

- **Administrator’s Report** – verbal. **MAEAP Report** - written. **Produce Safety Report** – written. **Natural Shoreline/Pine/Mill Creek/GLPF/ND Report** - written. **CISMA Reports** - written. **Resource Recovery Report** - written. **NACD/NRCS TA Report** – written.

Cooperating Agency Reports:

- **NRCS Report** – none. **FSA Report** – none. **MDARD Report** – written. **Land Preservation Board** – none. **VBCD Foundation** - none.

Other Correspondence: None.



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Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, September 22, 2021, 10:00 AM at the Van Buren Conservation District, 1035 E. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079.

Adjourn. Motion was made by Druskovich, 2nd by Petersen to adjourn the meeting at 11:53 AM. Motion carried.

APPROVED: _____
Signature

Date