



Van Buren Conservation District

VAN BUREN CONSERVATION DISTRICT (VBCD)

Minutes of October 27, 2021

Minutes prepared by: Emily Hickmott, Deputy Administrator

VanTassel called the regular October 27, 2021 business meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

Directors present:

Bill VanTassel, Chair

Jan Petersen, Vice Chair

Paulette Rybarski, Secretary

Ron Klein, Member

Others present:

Kim Sinclair, Administrator

Emily Hickmott, Recycling Coordinator

Rocky Johnson, Auto-Owners Insurance

Jay Newell, Auto-Owners Insurance

Jack Knorek, MDARD

Agenda: Motion was made by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to move Health Insurance & Retirement up in the agenda beneath the approval of the Minutes. Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by Rybarski to accept the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Minutes: Hickmott indicated that the Next Board Meeting should indicate that the next meeting was Wednesday, October 27, 2021. Motion was made by Rybarski, 2nd by Petersen, to accept the September 22, 2021 regular board meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried.

Old Business:

- **Health Insurance & Retirement** - Rocky Johnson and Jay Newell introduced themselves. Johnson presented that to have Group Insurance, two people are needed to join and the employer needs to provide at least 25% of the premium contribution. Johnson shared that Priority Health is who Newell and Johnson choose for themselves. Each provider has Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum level plans. Very few service issues with Priority Health. As a group, the VBCD will have to decide what the deductible will be. Johnson recommends starting with what the VBCD will contribute to the plan. Then, select co-pays or premiums. The best plan for the VBCD group is a \$6,600 per month premium, but this can be decreased if desired. Johnson encouraged the board that this is a great benefit for staff and really indicates caring for the employees. Sinclair commented that this is great for getting and keeping employees. All plans include prescription drug plans. Additional options that could be added are dental and vision. A point person is needed to connect the Staff and Board with the insurance agent. The insurance agent is able to talk to individuals about their needs as well. Johnson provided an example application for review. PPO - Preferred Provider Organizations. There is a strong network in this area. Staff can check with their providers to determine if they are already in the PPO Johnson has suggested. The Platinum (\$6,600) example is a plan without a co-pay. Preventative health services are included. Johnson provided a Summary of Benefits for review. Deductibles can be as low as \$250 and as high as \$8,700. Plan does not require referrals. The plan follows the members throughout the country; it is not a Michigan-only plan. Sinclair confirmed that cost will change as staff changes occur. Staff changes can be completed online. VBCD is not big enough for COBRA. Johnson recommends starting plans after 60 days of employment. Johnson presented a \$1,000 deductible plan to compare. The premium is about \$3,300 per month. Co-pay is 20%. Plan changes can be made after 1 year. Payroll deductions are common. Employees can opt out; at least 2 employees must opt in. Plans presented today do not include an HSA but that is an option. Sinclair and Hickmott will create an updated Google Form for staff to complete before the next board meeting.

Public Comment: Knorek asked if the VBCD has had many folks from the public attending. Sinclair shared that we have not seen many members from the Public attending. Knorek recommended including the VBCD policy for Public Comment limitations on the agendas going forward.



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Treasurer's Report:

- Financial statements for September 2021 were presented. Discussion was had about the cost of the Resource Recovery program and opportunities for partnership with Van Buren County. VanTassel proposed a conversation with the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners about needs. Motion was made by Klein, 2nd by Rybarski to approve the financial statements as presented. Motion carried.
- The bills of October 2021 were presented. Motion was made by Rybarski, 2nd by Petersen to approve the bills of October 2021 as presented. Motion carried.
- Payroll for September 2021 was presented. Motion was made by Rybarski, 2nd by Petersen to approve payment of payroll as presented. Motion carried.

Old Business:

- **Red Arrow Property Visioning Update/VBC Mattawan Property** – Sinclair shared that the USDA came back and told the attorney that a request for a housing proposal will be going out shortly. Sinclair has informed Van Buren County Administrator Frank Hardester. The County is now delaying their listing for 30 days and is placing the VBCD on their exempt list for the realtor fees.

New Business:

- **SWMSWC Request for Fiduciary** - Hickmott shared that Calhoun County has passed resolutions to initiate either their exit from the SWMSWC or the dissolution of the SWMSWC. Hickmott and the other TAC members are willing to continue gathering multi-county representatives once a quarter in a roundtable format to continue regional collaboration. Hickmott is willing to administer a multi-county scrap tire grant using the VBCD tax ID number outside of the SWMSWC. The decision about the response to Calhoun County's resolutions will be determined at the November 17, 2021 SWMSWC meeting. Discussion was had.
- **Land Preservation Board - Grant Opportunity** - Sinclair is not preparing to pursue the Land Preservation Board grant opportunities because there is not a standing list of folks who are interested at this time. The grant opportunities do not provide administrative funding. The VBCD currently lacks staff to do the extra work needed for this opportunity. need administrative funds. Petersen shared that a lot of land is being leased for solar farms. VanTassel wants LPB opportunities included in the package of needs put together for Van Buren County.
- **VBCD Foundation - Annual Event** - Sinclair shared background on the formation and work of the VBCD Foundation. The board needs to be set up again. Sinclair proposes an annual event for the Foundation to promote and run, perhaps a beach cleanup. Then, a meeting would be held to conduct business at the end of the event. Board members were supportive of the idea.
- **MAEAP Grant FY 2022** - Sinclair presented the MAEAP Grant FY 2022 for approval consideration. Motion was made by Klein, 2nd by Rybarski to approve the MAEAP Grant for October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022. Motion carried.
- **MDARD Operations Grant FY 2022** - Sinclair presented the MDARD Conservation District Operating Grant Program FY 2022 for approval consideration. Motion was made by Klein, 2nd by Petersen to approve the MDARD Conservation District Operating Grant for October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022. Motion carried.

PA 116 / Right to Farm/ Farmland Preservation:

- **PA 116**
 - Rob Nobel 25360 12th Ave, Gobles, MI 49055 - three parcels
 - Van Buren County Public Notice for EGLE Submission #HP5-ZMJ2-5GM57
 - Site Name: 80-17879 60th Street Bangor
 - Motion was made by Klein, 2nd by Petersen to approve the PA 116 request for Rob Nobel. Motion carried.
- **Public Notice: PA 451, Tyler DeNormandie in Geneva Township. Submission Number: HP5-ZMJ2-5GM57** - Knorek noted that it is valuable for Conservation Districts to review these because district staff often is aware of protected



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species or wetland areas that other involved parties may not have yet noticed and are relevant to the projects. VanTassel noted that this is an additional service provided by the District of which to remind Van Buren County.

Board Director Reports:

- **Chairperson** - VanTassel shared that Almena's cleanup event went well but was slow. **Vice Chairperson** - Petersen shared that Bell's Brewery has received a grant to bale polypropylene bags. She indicated that it could be a great project for the VBCD Foundation. **Treasurer** - none. **Secretary** - none. **Member** - Klein would like to attend a future Scott Lake Association meeting with the CISMA Coordinator.

Correspondence/Other Information:

- **Administrator's Report** – Sinclair requested a move of the November 24, 2021 meeting to November 17, 2021. Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by Klein to move the November 24, 2021 meeting to November 17, 2021. Motion carried. Sinclair's new goal is to email meeting materials to the Board by the Friday before the Wednesday meeting. **Deputy Administrator's Report** - Hickmott shared the tax bill insert for Winter 2021 and the numbers of participating municipalities. **Outreach Report** - written. **MAEAP Report** - written. **Produce Safety Report** – written. **Natural Shoreline/Pine/Mill Creek/GLPF/ND Report** - written. **CISMA Report** - 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.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, November 17, 2021, 10:00 AM at the Van Buren Conservation District, 1035 E. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079.

Adjourn. Motion was made by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to adjourn the meeting at 12:20 PM. Motion carried.

APPROVED:

Signature

Date