



Van Buren Conservation District

Minutes of January 26, 2022

Minutes Prepared by: Jacob Diljak, Outreach Coordinator & Emily Hickmott,
Deputy Administrator

VanTassel called the regular January 26, 2022 business meeting to order at 10:10 AM.

Roll Call of Board Directors:

- Chairperson, Bill VanTassel – present
- Vice-chairperson, Jan Petersen – present
- Treasurer, Carl Druskovich – present
- Secretary, Paulette Rybarski – absent
- Member, Ron Klein – absent

Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) Staff Present:

- Kim Sinclair, Administrator
- Emily Hickmott, Recycling Coordinator
- Jacob Diljak, Outreach Coordinator

Approval of Agenda: Sinclair indicated the addition of “Open Meetings Act Advocacy” and “Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery Letter of Support” to New Business. Motion was made by VanTassel, 2nd by Petersen to accept the agenda as amended.

Minutes: Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by VanTassel to accept the December 15, 2021 rescheduled board meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None.

Treasurer’s Report:

- Financial statements for December 2021 were presented. Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by VanTassel to approve the December 2021 financial statements as presented. Motion carried.
- The bills of January 2022 were presented. Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by Druskovich to approve the payment of the bills of January 2022 as presented. Motion carried.
- Payroll Report for December 2021 was presented. Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by Druskovich to approve payment of payroll as presented. Motion carried.
- **Proposed Budget Amendments:** Sinclair presented the proposed budget amendments in light of the Operations Grant that was received after the FY 2022 budget was passed and the addition of Staff insurance. Discussion was had. Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by Druskovich to approve the proposed budget amendments. Roll call vote: Petersen – yes. Druskovich – yes. VanTassel – yes. Motion carried.

Old Business:

- **USDA Leasing Opportunity:** Sinclair shared that the Van Buren County Administrator reached out this morning asking for some information, so she will inquire about the state of the leasing agreement application and report back to the Board when she is able to do so.



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- **Health Insurance Stipend:** Sinclair reported that three staff members are eligible for a potential health insurance stipend. Discussion was had. Druskovich proposed the stipend be 80% of half of what the VBCD would have paid originally. Sinclair proposed a cap to the stipend. Druskovich proposed a \$750 per month per staff member cap. Motion was made by Druskovich, 2nd by Petersen to create a policy that VBCD employees who opt out of the VBCD group health insurance program are compensated 40% of the cost of the group health insurance for said employee to the VBCD with a maximum of \$750 per month per employee. Motion carried.

New Business:

- **Annual Designations:**
 - Depositories for District funds: Sinclair reported that Mercantile Bank is currently being used for checking, money market, and a CD. Consumer's Credit Union is being used for a CD.
 - Designation of Person(s) authorized to sign checks, contracts, and agreements: Sinclair shared that two Board Directors must sign all checks. All Board Directions are eligible to sign checks. Contracts & Agreements – Sinclair is designated by the Board of Directors to sign grants up to \$50,000, and all contracts and agreements above \$50,000 are to be signed by the VBCD Board of Directors Chairperson.
 - Designation of a day, place, and time for regular meetings which shall be held at least once every month: 4th Wednesday at VBCD Office at 10:00 AM
 - Designation of a Director to assume specific responsibilities of the Treasurer and/or Secretary: Motion was made by Druskovich, 2nd by Petersen to keep the same slate of officers (Chairperson – VanTassel, Vice-Chairperson – Petersen, Treasurer – Druskovich, Secretary – Rybarski). Sinclair called for nominations. Motion was made by Druskovich, 2nd by Petersen to close nominations. Nominations closed. Roll call vote: Petersen – yes. Druskovich – yes. VanTassel – yes. Rybarski – absent. Klein – absent.
 - Designation of legal counsel, district auditor, newspaper for legal notices, and election supervisor: Legal Counsel – Bauk & Seeber. District Auditor – Gaybridge and Associates. Legal Notices – Courier Leader. Election Supervisor – Motion was made by Druskovich, 2nd by Petersen to appoint Erin Fuller as the VBCD Election Supervisor, pending clarification of the role. Motion carried.
 - Annual Meeting Date Establishment: Wednesday, July 27, 2022.
 - Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by Druskovich to accept all annual designations other than those voted on by roll call or separate motion. Motion carried.
- **MDARD Annual Board Director Calendar:** Hickmott presented the Draft 2022 Annual VBCD Board Calendar. Discussion was had; no changes made.



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- **2022 Plan of Work/Business Plan:** Hickmott presented the Draft 2022 Plan of Work/Business Plan. Motion was made by Druskovich, 2nd by Petersen to approve the 2022 VBCD Plan of Work/Business Plan. Motion carried.
- **Employee Development Training Policy:** Hickmott explained that the Administration Team had discussed implementing a policy to ensure fair use of training funds amongst staff members and are looking for input from the Board on the idea. Sinclair shared that training funds come from two pots of money (grants and operations). Additionally, there are two types of training (ones staff wants and ones admin/board need or want). Discussion was had. Emphasis on job description. Policy: what we have is working. Procedure: follow the policy and if there's a problem, take it to the board. Make it clear to the employee why or why not. No policy is needed as this is a procedure.
- **2022 Scrap Tire Grant Update:** Hickmott reported that she is submitting the 2022 Scarp Tire Grant to EGLE. She shared that she is waiting for some information from grant partners but will submit before the deadline. The grant will include partners from Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, and Van Buren Counties. The grant vendor was changed to Cobalt. Memorandums of Understanding have been distributed to grant partners and will be signed by the VBCD Board Chairperson.
- **Open Meetings Act Advocacy:** Sinclair shared a draft letter from the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts that the MACD Director has been asked to submit. Motion was made by Druskovich, 2nd by VanTassel to table the request. Motion carried.
- **Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery Letter of Support:** Sinclair reported that the VBCD is working with the Van Buren District Library to put together a summer program and are looking to include the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery. The VBCD has been asked to sign a support letter for the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery as they apply for a grant to construct aquarium exhibits. Motion was made by Druskovich, 2nd by Petersen to sign and submit the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery letter of support. Motion carried.

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

Board Director Reports:

- **Chairperson:** Almena Township is working to continue being an ecotourism leader in the community. **Vice Chairperson:** Petersen appreciated the board meeting packet preparation. **Treasurer:** The audit is moving forward. Reporting timeliness has been discussed. The books are all in order. **Secretary:** none - absent. **Member :** none - absent.

Correspondence/Other Information:

- **Administrator's Report:** Sinclair received a request for funding for Van Buren Youth Camp. Mini-grant funding could be used to help support the camp. Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by Druskovich to donate \$500.00 to the Van Buren Youth Camp. Motion carried. A hold has been placed on the USDA requirement for employee COVID-19 vaccinations. Sinclair reported on the



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success of the team working in compliance with the 25% capacity requirement. Sinclair requested use of Druskovich's farm for tree seedling sale wrapping; Druskovich is happy to host. **Deputy Administrator's Report:** written. Hickmott indicated that the 2021 Annual Report is nearly complete and will be presented to the County Commissioners. **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects Report:** written. **CISMA Report:** written. **MAEAP Report:** written. **Outreach Report:** written. Diljak shared that the annual report is almost done and that calendars are printed and being distributed. **NACD/NRCS TA Report:** written. **Resource Recovery Report:** written.

Cooperating Agency Reports:

- **FSA Report:** None. **Land Preservation Board Report:** None. **MDARD Report:** Written. **MSUE Report:** None. **NRCS:** None. **Van Buren Conservation District Foundation:** None.

Other Correspondence: Sinclair presented a card of appreciation from Modern Woodmen.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 | 10:00 AM | Van Buren Conservation District | 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079

Adjournment: Motion was made by Petersen, 2nd by Druskovich to adjourn the meeting at 12:22 PM. Motion carried.

APPROVED:

Signature

Date