



# Van Buren Conservation District

Minutes of March 23, 2022

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

VanTassel called the regular March 23, 2022 business meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

## Roll Call of Board Directors:

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

## Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) Staff Present:

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

**Approval of Agenda:** Sinclair requested the addition of Personnel Liaison and Druskovich requested the addition of Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) Liaison to New Business. Motion was made by Druskovich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Petersen to accept the agenda as amended.

**Minutes:** Petersen noted a correction that she attended the MACD Conference, not the NACD Conference. Motion was made by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Druskovich to accept the February 23, 2022 regular board meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** None.

## Treasurer's Report:

- Financial statements for February 2022 were presented. Due to inconsistencies at the County Treasurer's office, Druskovich recommended that Sinclair begin to determine the penalties for prematurely cashing in on a nearly-mature CD in order to ensure financial security in the coming months. Motion was made by Klein, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Petersen to give Sinclair the authority to prematurely cash in on the nearly-mature CD and report the penalties and interest discrepancies to the Board. Motion carried. Motion was made by Rybarski, 2<sup>nd</sup> by VanTassel to approve the February 2022 financial statements as presented. Motion carried.
- The bills of March 2022 were presented. Motion was made by Klein, 2<sup>nd</sup> by VanTassel to approve the payment of the bills of February 2022 as presented. Motion carried.
- Payroll Report for February 2022 was presented. Motion was made by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Rybarski to approve payment of payroll as presented. Motion carried.

## Old Business:

- **USDA Leasing Opportunity:** Sinclair shared that County Administrator Frank Hardester had a request for an addendum from the USDA. Discussion was had about future opportunities.



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- **FY 2021 Audit Update:** Sinclair shared the Van Buren Conservation District Annual Financial Report Year End September 30, 2021 with the Board. Discussion was had about the financial audit and its findings. Sinclair shared financial transparency has increased through the VBCD website and Freedom of Information Act efforts. Sinclair reported that quotes regarding increased services from the auditor have not yet been provided.
- **Volunteer Appreciation Night:** Sinclair and Hickmott updated the Board about the Volunteer Appreciation Night happening on March 30th at 5:30 PM. The new location is Walt & Marie's Country Market.
- **Return to Office Survey:** Hickmott shared the results of the Return to Office Survey from the VBCD staff. Hickmott shared establishment of policy regarding years of employee service corresponding with that employee's ability to telework. Hickmott shared the process of bringing employees back to the office through percent of time working in the office by April 1st 50%, May 1st 75%, and June 1st 100%. Discussion was had.
- **Food, Farm, & Fun Guide:** Diljak shared the first draft of the Food, Farm, & Fun Guide. The book will include a map of all green spaces in Van Buren County. The printed copies are expected mid-April.
- **2022 Tree Sale:** Sinclair shared the status of the 2022 Tree Sale.

## New Business:

- **New Staff Credit Card Authorization:** Kalli Marshall has been hired as the Recycling & Materials Management Coordinator. Sinclair shared that she will need a credit card in the amount of \$1,500. Motion by Druskovich, 2nd by Petersen to authorize a credit card for Kalli Marshall in the amount of \$1,500. Motion carried.
- **MISGP Continuation Funding Acceptance:** Sinclair shared that the MISGP Continuation Grant was approved. Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to accept the MISGP Continuation Grant. Motion was carried.
- **2022 Annual Meeting:** Hickmott brought up planning for the 2022 Annual Meeting and sought direction from the Board on input. The 2022 Annual Meeting will occur 5:00PM Wednesday Jul 27th, 2022. Discussion was had about the meeting location. The consensus of the Board is to host the meeting at the VBCD Red Arrow Property.
- **VBCD Mission and Vision Statement:** Hickmott shared that MDARD is pushing for conservation districts to have a mission and vision statement. Hickmott asked the Board if they would like to continue using our mission statement and direction to develop a vision statement. Discussion was had. The consensus was to continue using the VBCD mission statement but revisiting it again in the future. Regarding the vision statement, it will be on the next meeting's agenda to



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create. Druskovich requested that the Admin Team discuss it with the rest of the Staff for input as well.

- **Personnel Liaison:** Sinclair requested that a Board Director be appointed to support her when personnel issues arise. Motion by Klein, 2nd by VanTassel to appoint Druskovich as the Personnel Liaison. Motion was carried.
- **Michigan State University Extension Liaison:** Motion by Klein, 2nd by VanTassel to appoint Druskovich as the Michigan State University Extension Liaison. Motion was carried.

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

## Board Director Reports:

- **Chairperson:** VanTassel discussed his thoughts about office space and future opportunities. **Vice Chairperson:** Petersen shared her appreciation of staff reports. **Treasurer:** Druskovich discussed bookkeeping. **Secretary:** Rybarski shared her appreciation for the Annual Report. Discussion was had about the bottle cap project. **Member:** Klein shared his thoughts regarding a five-year plan and wetland protection education. Discussion was had.

## Correspondence/Other Information:

- **Administrator's Report:** Sinclair shared that the Cass Conservation District (CD) called to share her immense appreciation of Diljak's efforts for outreach and connecting folks at the SMC Career Fair with the Cass CD. A culvert is being replaced on 30th Street in Alma Township. The VBCD was forwarded a letter regarding MiWaters Site Submission Number HPF-4WQB-RJXAJ. Farming for the Future went well. The Fish Hatchery partnership for the Summer School program is moving forward. The Van Buren County Road Commission will partner with the VBCD and the SWxSW Corner CISMA for invasive species management. Butterfield Drain will have a prescribed burn completed in the coming weeks. Two applications for Seasonal Conservation Associate have been received. **Deputy Administrator's Report:** Hickmott shared that she and Lucas Hartman will attend the Hamilton Township April Board Meeting to update the Township on the Green Space project. Additionally, she reported on conversations she's had researching a Resource Recovery Program partnership with Van Buren County. **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects Report:** written. **CISMA Report:** written. **MAEAP Report:** written. **Outreach Report:** Diljak shared the finished 2021 Annual Report and plans to distribute locally and nationally along, an update on the SMC Career Fair, and a written report. **NACD/NRCS TA Report:** written. **Resource Recovery Report:** written.



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## 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:

- None.

**Next Board Meeting:** Wednesday, April 27, 2022 | 10:00 AM | Van Buren Conservation District | 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Adjournment:** Motion was made by Klein, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Rybarski to adjourn the meeting at 12:06 PM. Motion carried.

## APPROVED:

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Signature

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Date