



Van Buren Conservation District

Minutes of January 25, 2023 Regular Board Meeting

Minutes Prepared by: Emily Hickmott, Deputy Administrator

Petersen called the regular January 25, 2023 business meeting to order at 10:11 AM.

Roll Call of Board Directors:

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

Others Present:

- Kim Sinclair, Administrator
- Erin Fuller, Water Quality Project Manager
- Emily Hickmott, Deputy Administrator

Approval of Agenda: Hickmott requested addition of Proposal to Repower Holtec’s Palisades Nuclear Plant to New Business. Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to accept the January 25, 2023 regular board meeting agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Minutes: Hickmott noted a Scrivener’s error in the first motion in the Payroll & Paid Time Off Accumulation Report bullet. The motion should read “Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to approve payment of payroll & paid time off accumulation report for November 2022 as presented.” Motion by Druskovich, 2nd by Klein to accept the December 14, 2022 rescheduled board meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None.

Treasurer’s Report:

- Financial statements for December 2022 were presented. Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to approve the December 2022 financial statements as presented. Motion carried.
- The bills of January 2023 were presented. Druskovich asked about the check for the cleaning of the office to Suzie Wiles. Sinclair shared that mouse nests were found in the kitchen stove, so she hired Wiles to deep clean the office. Wiles is a relative of the Deputy Administrator’s and the Treasurer’s. Sinclair made the decision to hire her after researching other cleaning services and finding her prices more affordable and her response time quickest. Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to approve the payment of the bills of January 2023 as presented. Motion carried.
- Payroll & Paid Time Off Accumulation Report for December 2022 was presented. Druskovich noted that Hartman, Hickmott, Mead, and Sinclair sold time back to the District within policy. Motion by Klein, 2nd by Rybarski to approve payment of payroll & paid time off accumulation report for December 2022 as presented. Motion carried.

Old Business:

- **USDA Leasing Opportunity:** Sinclair shared that she and Hickmott met with Julie Pioch to strategize partnership. They discussed the possibility of Druskovich becoming involved with Michigan State University Extension’s (MSUE) advisory board. Sinclair has received no additional news about the USDA leasing opportunity. Petersen shared she previously served on the MSUE advisory committee. Discussion was had about transition at the County.



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- **Red Arrow Property Driveway and Storage:** Hickmott presented Schley Nelson Architects proposal. Druskovich shared that he appreciated the proposal and is interested in more detailed information. Discussion was had. Druskovich offered to house the rental equipment for one more year while the development of the Red Arrow Property is in process. Sinclair suggested that VanTassel and Druskovich form a committee with the Administrator and Deputy Administrator to work on the development of the property outside of board meetings. Motion by Klein, 2nd by Rybarski to form a Property Development Committee with members VanTassel and Druskovich to explore Red Arrow property development. Motion carried. Fuller shared that the Staff spent a lot of time during the pandemic brainstorming; Hickmott will provide all of the notes to the Committee. The Committee will follow up with Nelson regarding the proposal and next steps.
- **VBCD Foundation:** Sinclair reported that she is working on it.
- **Policy Review:**
 - **Anti-discrimination and Anti-harassment Policy 2023.01:** Hickmott shared that she and Sinclair drafted the policy. Motion by Druskovich, 2nd to Klein to review the Anti-discrimination and Anti-harassment Policy at the February meeting. Motion carried.
 - **Attorney Policy Review:** Klein shared that he and Hickmott discussed the potential for having the policies reviewed by the District attorney. He recommends that the Board take this action because the District attorney is covered by malpractice insurance. Discussion was had about which step in the policy process the policies should be sent to the attorney. Motion by Druskovich, 2nd by Klein to engage the attorney on all policies after the Board has done an initial review at a board meeting. Motion carried.

New Business:

- **Annual Designations:**
 - Depositories for District funds: Sinclair reported that Mercantile Bank is currently being used for checking and money market. Consumer's Credit Union is being used for a CD. Motion by Druskovich, 2nd by Rybarski to continue using Mercantile Bank and Consumer's Credit Union. Motion carried.
 - Designation of Person(s) authorized to sign checks, contracts, and agreements: Sinclair shared that two Board Directors must sign all checks. All Board Directors are eligible to sign checks. Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to authorize all Board Directors to sign checks. Motion carried. Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to designate the Administrator to sign contracts and agreements up to \$50,000, and all contracts and agreements above \$50,000 are to be signed by the VBCD Board of Directors Chairperson or the Treasurer. Motion carried.
 - Designation of a day, place, and time for regular meetings which shall be held at least once every month: Motion by Druskovich, 2nd by Rybarski to designate the fourth Wednesday of each month at 10:00 AM at the Van Buren Conservation District Office, 1035 E Michigan Ave.,



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Paw Paw, MI 49079 for the Van Buren Conservation District's regular meetings for 2023. Motion carried.

- o Designation of a Director to assume specific responsibilities of the Treasurer and/or Secretary: Sinclair opens nominations for Chairperson. Motion made by Klein, 2nd by Rybarski to keep the same slate of officers (Chairperson - VanTassel, Vice-Chairperson - Petersen, Treasurer - Druskovich, Secretary - Rybarski). Sinclair called for nominations. Sinclair called for additional nominations. Motion was made by Druskovich, 2nd by Rybarski to close nominations. Motion carried. Nominations closed. Sinclair shared that a nomination was made to keep the same slate of officers in 2023. Roll call vote: VanTassel - absent. Petersen - yes. Druskovich - yes. Rybarski - yes. Klein - yes. Motion carried.
- o Designation of legal counsel, district auditor, newspaper for legal notices, and election supervisor: Motion was made by Klein, 2nd by Rybarski to appoint the following: Legal Counsel - Bauckham, Sparks, Thall, Seeber & Kaufman, P.C. District Auditor - Gaybridge and Associates. Legal Notices - South Haven Tribune. Election Supervisor - Erin Fuller. Motion carried.
- o Annual Meeting Date Establishment: Motion was made by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to establish July 26, 2023 as the Van Buren Conservation District annual meeting date. Motion carried.
- **Quarterly Review:**
 - o **FY 23 Plan of Work/Business Plan:** Hickmott shared that Quarter 1 of Fiscal Year 23 has finished so the plans have been shared to keep the board up to date of our progress.
 - o **FY 23 Budget:** Sinclair provided a quarterly budget review with a column dedicated to percentage of budget. Discussion was had. Druskovich shared that Quarter 1 is typically higher on expenses and lower on income because of when grants and millage funds come in.
 - o **Fund Development:** Hickmott proposed that a Fund Development Committee be formed to work on fund development and millage renewal preparation. Discussion was had. Motion by Druskovich, 2nd by Klein to form a Fund Development Committee with members Petersen, Rybarski, and Sinclair. Motion carried.
- **Board Committees:** All Board committee discussions were previously addressed.
- **Management Team Updates:** Management Team roles and responsibilities were reviewed. Discussion was had.
- **Notice of Application: HPM-V2C1-KZHP5 (80-76776 Thornhouse Court-South Haven):** Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy sent Notice of Application HPM-V2C1-KZHP5 to the Board for review.
- **Kayak Launch Support:** Hickmott updated that the Kayak Launch Project grant application is being resubmitted; additional local support would be beneficial. Motion by Druskovich, 2nd by Rybarski to provide a letter of support and match funds in the amount of \$5,000.00 for the Van Buren County Parks & Recreation Committee's grant application regarding the Kayak Launch Project. Motion carried.



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- **Proposal to Repower Holtec's Palisades Nuclear Plant:** Hickmott & Sinclair reported. Discussion was had. Druskovich, Klein, and Petersen shared that they do not feel they have enough information to provide a letter of support.

Farmland and Open Space Preservation [Part 361 (Public Act 451 of 1994)] Application for Review:

- None.

Board Director Reports:

- **Chairperson:** None. **Vice Chairperson:** Petersen shared that the Recycling & Materials Management Coordinator gave a great presentation to the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners and really appreciated the board reports and staff's involvement. **Treasurer:** Thank you to the Management Team and especially Sinclair's additional budget review information. **Secretary:** Rybarski wishes everyone a great 2023. **Member :** Klein shared that solar is being considered in Arlington Township. Klein is going to host a field day at his property on June 14, 2023.

Van Buren Conservation District Staff Reports:

- **Deputy Administrator's Report:** Hickmott shared that she has applied to be considered for Land Preservation Board and that Druskovich has been requested to apply and provided a written report. **Administrator's Report:** Sinclair shared that a lot of the team is traveling for training; things are going well. **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects Report:** Fuller shared Farming for the Future details with the Board and provided a written report. **CISMA Report:** written. **MAEAP Report:** written. **NACD/NRCS TA Report:** written. **Outreach Report:** written. **Produce Safety 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 (VBCD) Foundation:** None.

Other Correspondence: None.

Next Board Meeting: February 22, 2023 | 10:00 AM | VBCD Office | 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079

Adjournment: Motion by Druskovich, 2nd by Klein to adjourn the meeting at 12:30 PM. Motion carried.

APPROVED:

Signature

Date