



# Van Buren Conservation District

Minutes of March 22, 2023 Regular Board Meeting

Minutes Prepared by: Emilly Hickmott, Deputy Administrator

VanTassel called the regular March 22, 2023 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 – absent, excused
- Secretary, Paulette Rybarski – present
- Member, Ron Klein – present

## Others Present:

- Kim Sinclair, Administrator
- Emilly Hickmott, Deputy Administrator
- Carlie Southland, Conservation Associate
- Kyle Mead, Senior MAEAP Specialist

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to accept the March 22, 2023 regular board meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried.

**Minutes:** Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Rybarski to accept the March 1, 2023 rescheduled board meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** None.

## Treasurer's Report:

- Financial statements for February 2023 were presented. Motion by Rybarski, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to approve the February 2023 financial statements as presented. Motion carried.
- The bills of March 2023 were presented. Motion by Rybarski, 2<sup>nd</sup> by VanTassel to approve the payment of the bills of March 2023 as presented. Motion carried.
- Payroll & Paid Time Off Accumulation Report for February 2023 was presented. Motion by Rybarski, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to approve payment of payroll & paid time off accumulation report for February 2023 as presented. Motion carried.

## Old Business:

- **USDA Leasing Opportunity:** Sinclair shared that there is no news.
- **VBCD Property Update:** VanTassel shared that there is no news.
- **VBCD Foundation:** Sinclair reported that she is working on this.
- **Management Team Update:** Hickmott reported that she will be at the Emerging Leaders Academy April 17-20 and that she will be on vacation May 22-June 5. Sinclair reported that feedback from the staff has been brief but positive. Discussion was had. Board consensus was that a fiscal year transition is appropriate.
- **2023 Tree Seedling Sale Update:** Sinclair reported that tree sale is going quite well. Approximately 175 pre-orders have been placed already with two weeks left of pre-sale. Some species have sold out.
- **2023 Annual Meeting:** Sinclair shared that Hickmott and Sinclair confirmed Flywheelers Museum as the location for the 2023 Van Buren Conservation District Annual Meeting. The District will make a donation to Flywheelers Museum in appreciation of using the meeting. Discussion was had.



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- **VBCD Vehicle Update:** Hickmott shared an update from Druskovich that a Ford F-250 Crew Cab was ordered through the Michigan program and delivery is expected in the coming weeks.
- **Policy Review:**
  - **Anti-discrimination and Anti-harassment Policy 2023.01:** Hickmott reviewed the policy that was presented in January. Discussion was had about how many times the Board wishes to see policies before they are sent to the District attorney. Consensus of the board was to send the Anti-discrimination and Anti-harassment Policy 2023.01 draft to the attorney.

## New Business:

- **New Hire: Strike Team Crew Member – Caleigh Dahn:** Motion by Klein, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Petersen to hire Caleigh Dahn as Strike Team Crew Member at \$18.00 an hour. Motion carried.
- **New Hire: Strike Team Crew Member – Jena Johnson:** Motion by Rybarski, 2<sup>nd</sup> by VanTassel to hire Jena Johnson as Strike Team Crew Member at \$18.00 an hour. Motion carried.
- **MACD Summer Conference: June 5-6, 2023:** Sinclair reported MACD Summer Conference details.
- **Mini-grant Application: Maple Grove Elementary Outdoor Education Project:** Sinclair overviewed the project. The application was reviewed. Discussion was had. Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to fund the Maple Grove Elementary Outdoor Education Project in the amount of \$5,000.00 and request that a sign of recognition of the Van Buren Conservation District be added to the property. Motion carried.
- **VBCD 80th Anniversary:** Discussion was had about next year's anniversary and annual meeting.
- **Policy Review:**
  - **Disciplinary, Grievance, and Termination Policy 2023.01:** Hickmott presented the policy.
  - **Equal Opportunity Employment Policy 2023.01:** Hickmott presented the policy.

## Committee Updates:

- **Fund Development (Petersen, Rybarski, Sinclair):** No meeting took place.
- **Property Development (Druskovich, VanTassel):** No meeting took place.

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

- None.

## Board Director Reports:

- **Chairperson:** VanTassel shared that he has been busy at the township. **Vice Chairperson:** Petersen shared that Maureen Lewandowski is working on a Dark Sky Initiative county-wide. **Treasurer:** None. **Secretary:** Rybarski shared this is her busy season as well. **Member :** Klein shared that he was appointed as a trustee for Arlington Township and a liaison on their planning commission. Kalli Marshall gave an excellent presentation about transfer station opportunities to the township board. He is preparing for the June 14 Grazing Workshop hosted at his farm.

## Van Buren Conservation District Staff Reports:



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- **Deputy Administrator's Report:** Hickmott shared details about the upcoming volunteer night, tree sale, recycling collections, and provided a written report. **Administrator's Report:** Sinclair shared that tree sale is the next big project. Farming for the Future went really well. **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects Report:** Southland shared that she has been working on Farming for the Future recently, and she water samples biweekly with the University of Notre Dame. Storm sampling is starting soon too. She, Forestieri, and Fuller provided a written report as well. **CISMA Report:** written. **MAEAP Report:** Mead showed the Board the new electronic rental equipment reservation form and discussed other efficiencies and customer service that have been implemented in that program. He also provided a written report. **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:** Van Buren County Road Commission News Release: Farmers Can Help Protect Our Roads

**Next Board Meeting:** April 26, 2023 | 10:00 AM | VBCD Office | 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Adjournment:** Motion by Rybarski, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 AM. Motion carried.

### APPROVED:

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Signature

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Date