



Van Buren Conservation District

Minutes of July 26, 2023 Regular Board Meeting

Minutes Prepared by: Lia Will, Administrative Associate

VanTassel called the regular July 26 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
- Secretary, Paulette Rybarski – present
- Member, Ron Klein – present

Others Present

- Emilly Hickmott, Deputy Administrator
- Kim Sinclair, Administrator
- Lia Will, Administrative Associate

Approval of Agenda: Amend agenda item “Draft FY 24 Budget” to “Draft FY 24 Budget Discussion.” Motion by Petersen, 2nd by Klein to approve the July 26, 2023 regular board meeting agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Minutes: Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Petersen to accept the June 28, 2023 regular board meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None.

Treasurer’s Report:

- Financial statements for June 2023 were presented. Forecast to be presented later. Motion by Petersen, 2nd by Rybarski to approve the June 2023 financial statements as presented. Motion carried.
- The bills of July 2023 were presented and discussed. Motion by Klein, 2nd by VanTassel to approve the payment of bills of July 2023 as presented. Motion carried.
- Payroll and Paid Time Off Accumulation Report for June 2023 was presented. Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Petersen to approve payment of payroll for June 2023 as presented. Motion carried.

Old Business:

- **VBCD Property Update:** The preliminary meeting attended by Druskovich and VanTassel with Schley Nelson Architects went well.
- **VBCD Foundation:** None.
- **Management Team Update:** The Executive Director transition will be announced at the annual meeting tonight. Employees will be recognized for their five years and 20 years of service.

New Business:

- **Quarterly Review:**
 - **FY 23 Plan of Work/Business Plan:** The business plan was reviewed. No action.
 - **FY 23 Budget:** Sinclair reported that she anticipates the budget being negative because of the unexpected truck purchase and late execution of the GLRI grant.



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- **Fund Development:** Sinclair reported that the NACD grant will be submitted to cover two technicians instead of one.
- **Draft FY 24 Budget Discussion:** The GLRI grant funding for FY 23 has not been received yet. Work has started on the FY 24 budget. The FY 24 budget discussion will continue at the next meeting.
- **Rental Equipment:** The Truax needs repair. The cost will be considered for the FY 24 budget along with maintenance costs for all pieces of equipment.
- **Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:** Hickmott advised that DEI policies formally reflecting the District's values are a necessity with new questions added to grant applications. Discussion will continue at the August meeting.
- **Grant Application, Approval, & Signing Process:** Hickmott presented a procedure for grant signing. The Board added a step to clarify that grant negotiations which obligate the District \$50,000.00 or more than the amount the Board approved before the agreement was sent will be brought to the Board for consideration before Management signs the grant agreement.
- **Grant Application Submissions:**
 - **Wildlife Forever and USDA Forest Service | Clean, Drain, Dry Initiative Eastern Region Mini Grant | \$2,500.00 requested | Expected Award Date: 18 August 2023:** Grant for outreach materials. Motion by Klein, 2nd by Petersen to accept \$2,500.00 Wildlife Forever grant, if awarded. Motion carried.
 - **National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) | 2023 Outreach and Technical Assistance | \$159,000.00 requested | Expected Award Date: November 2023:** Motion by Petersen, 2nd by Rybarski to approve the grant submission and accept the funds if approved. Motion carried.
 - **Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) | Creating a Culture of Resilience Capacity 2023 Grant Funding Opportunity | \$20,000.00-30,000.00 | Expected Award Date: January 2024:** The grant will allow for critical dune education and outreach. Match dollars are necessary before submitting. Motion by Klein, 2nd by Petersen to approve the grant submission and accept the Creating a Culture of Resilience Capacity 2023 Grant funds, if awarded. Motion carried.

Committee Updates:

- **Fund Development (Petersen, Rybarski, Sinclair):** A meeting needs to be scheduled for strategy to be considered for implementation of renewing the millage. The committee will schedule a November meeting.
- **Property Development (Druskovich, VanTassel):** None.

Farmland and Open Space Preservation [Part 361 (Public Act 451 of 1994)] Application for Review: None.

Board Director Reports:

- **Chairperson:** VanTassel shared the Almena land swap is progressing.



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- **Vice Chairperson:** Grateful to be on the Board.
- **Treasurer:** N/A
- **Secretary:** Solar power issues ongoing and the pollinator garden at Hamilton Township is beautiful.
- **Member:** Klein shared status of the request for a gravel pit in Arlington Township and requested that a member of the Michigan Geological Survey present at the August meeting.

Van Buren Conservation District Staff Reports:

- **Deputy Administrator's Report:** written.
- **Administrator's Report:** Looking forward to the transition and focusing on the budget/finances.
- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects Report:** written.
- **CISMA Report:** written.
- **MAEAP Report:** written.
- **NACD/NRCS TA Report:** written.
- **NRCS CT 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: August 23, 2023 | 10:00 AM | VBCD Office | 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079

Adjournment: Motion by Klein 2nd by Petersen to adjourn the meeting at 12:03 PM. Motion carried.

APPROVED:

Signature

Date