



# Van Buren Conservation District

Minutes of September 27, 2023 Regular Board Meeting

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

VanTassel called the regular September 27, 2023 business meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

## Roll Call of Board Directors:

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

## Others Present

- Emilly Hickmott, Deputy Administrator
- Kim Sinclair, Administrator
- Jacob Diljak, Outreach Coordinator
- Lucas Hartman, Conservation Technician

**Approval of Agenda:** Druskovich requested “Proposal from O.A.K. from Tom Stanek” to New Business. Hickmott requested that “Designation of Person Authorized to Sign Contracts & Agreements” be added to New Business. Sinclair requested “Promotion of Emilly Hickmott to Executive Director” be added to New Business. Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Druskovich to approve the September 27, 2023 regular board meeting agenda as amended. Motion carried.

**Minutes:** Motion by Druskovich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to accept the August 23, 2023 regular board meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** None.

## Treasurer’s Report:

- Financial statements for August 2023 were presented and discussed. Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to approve the August 2023 financial statements as presented. Motion carried.
- The bills of September 2023 were presented and discussed. Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to approve the payment of bills of September 2023 as presented. Motion carried.
- Payroll and Paid Time Off Accumulation Report for August 2023 was presented. Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to approve payment of payroll for August 2023 as presented. Motion carried.
- FY 24 Budget Review
  - Adoption of General Appropriations Act Budget: Motion was made by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to adopt the Van Buren Conservation District FY 24 General Appropriations Act Budget as presented. Roll Call: Klein – yes, Petersen – yes, Druskovich – yes, Rybarski – absent, VanTassel – yes. Motion carried.

## Old Business:

- **VBCD Foundation:** Druskovich expressed desire to meet soon. Sinclair will work to set up a meeting with an emphasis on a fundraiser. Past events discussed: Melon Palooza and Strawberry Social. Discussion was had.



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- **Management Team Update:** The Executive Director transition press was released in the newspaper September 18, 2023. Hickmott shared the reception of the press release.
- **Policy Review:** Hickmott presented policies with marked up changes and discussion she had with the District attorney.
  - **Anti-discrimination and Anti-harassment Policy 2023.01:** Druskovich requested changes. Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by VanTassel to approve the policy as amended. Motion carried.
  - **Board of Director Policy 2023.01:** Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to approve the policy as presented. Motion carried.
  - **Conflict of Interest Policy 2023.01:** Motion by Klein, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Petersen to approve the policy as presented. Motion carried.
  - **Disciplinary, Grievance, & Termination Policy 2023.01:** Druskovich provided input for changes. Motion by Klein, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Druskovich to approve the policy as amended. Motion carried.
  - **Freedom of Information Act Policy 2023.01:** Motion by Klein, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Druskovich to approve the policy as presented. Motion carried.
  - **Investments Policy 2023.01:** Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Druskovich to approve the policy as presented. Motion carried.
  - **Nepotism Policy 2023.01:** Motion by Druskovich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to approve the policy as presented. Motion carried.
  - **Travel Policy 2023.01:** Motion by Druskovich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Petersen to approve the policy as presented. Motion carried.
- **Grant Application Submissions:**
  - **Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) | Creating a Culture of Resilience Capacity 2023 Grant Funding Opportunity | Protecting Van Buren County Coastal Areas Through Outreach and Education | \$24,699.28 | expected decision date January 1, 2024:** Hickmott shared grant submission update.
  - **EGLE | Van Buren County Municipal Transfer Station Recycling Infrastructure Project | \$500,000.00 awarded | \$0 match:** Hickmott updated that \$500,000.00 was offered from EGLE. Original request was over \$1 million. The Recycling Partnership is considering our request for an additional \$150,000.00 to help make up the difference for Townships. The District will receive \$4,000.00 in Admin from Van Buren County.

## New Business:

- **Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) Annual Fall Conference:** Sinclair invited the Board Directors to attend the conference. The Executive Director and Sr MAEAP Specialist will attend.
- **MACD Membership Dues:** Sinclair discussed MACD membership. Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by VanTassel to approve the MACD membership at the Platinum level for \$1,300.00. Motion carried.



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- **FY 24 Annual VBCD Board Calendar:** Hickmott presented the VBCD Board Calendar and changes. Motion by Druskovich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by VanTassel to approve the Board Calendar as presented. Motion carried.
- **FY 24 Calendar of Events:** Hickmott presented the calendar of events and discussed changes and to-be-determined dates and events. Discussion was had. Motion by Klein, 2<sup>nd</sup> by VanTassel to approve the FY 24 Calendar of Events as presented. Motion carried.
- **FY 24 Business Plan of Work:** Hickmott shared the Business Plan of Work. Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to approve the FY 24 Business Plan of Work as presented. Motion carried.
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) / Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) Memorandum of Agreement Comments:** Hickmott shared documents for review and encouraged Directors to provide comments. Discussion was had.
- **Proposal from O.A.K. from Tom Stanek:** Druskovich shared the proposal from O.A.K. from Tom Stanek for the review of proposals of buildings, questions related to, and site development. Discussion was had. Motion by Klein, 2<sup>nd</sup> by VanTassel to approve the proposal from Tom Stanek, O.A.K. representative, for up to \$5,400.00 as presented. Motion carried.
- **Designation of Person Authorized to Sign Contracts & Agreements:** Hickmott discussed the process of grant process within the District. Discussion was had. Motion by Petersen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Druskovich to authorize the Executive Director to sign contracts and agreements on behalf of the Van Buren Conservation District after the Board of Directors has reviewed and accepted proposals by motion during a board meeting.
- **Promotion of Emily Hickmott to Executive Director:** Motion by Druskovich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to promote Emily Hickmott to Executive Director of the Van Buren Conservation District effective October 1, 2023. Motion carried.

## **Committee Updates:**

- **Fund Development (Petersen, Rybarski, Sinclair):** The committee will meet in November.
- **Property Development (Druskovich, VanTassel):** Druskovich met with the architect again. Plans continue to develop.

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

Druskovich reported that the Schapp PA 116 application from the August 23, 2023 District board meeting was passed back to Hamilton Township. The Township requested information from the applicant and has not received the information yet.

## **Board Director Reports:**

- **Chairperson:** VanTassel shared his appointment to the Van Buren County Drain Commission Board. VanTassel and Sinclair discussed wetland restoration consultation. Discussion was had.
- **Vice Chairperson:** Petersen discussed her attendance to the Township Supervisors Meeting for the presentation from Mike Wilczynski of Pangea Environmental, LLC.



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- **Treasurer:** Druskovich discussed his thoughts on adopted policies and expressed his thanks to the Administrator and Deputy Administrator for their budget work.
- **Secretary:** None.
- **Member:** Klein discussed his MAEAP reverification, vernal pond restoration, and transition to beef.

## Van Buren Conservation District Staff Reports:

- **Deputy Administrator's Report:** Hickmott shared her attendance of the Great Lakes Leadership Academy and being absent the third week of October to attend her training. Hickmott shared her future reports will be verbal at board meetings.
- **Administrator's Report:** Sinclair shared her thanks to the Treasurer for budget input and assistance.
- **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:** email forwarded.
- **NRCS:** None.
- **Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) Foundation:** None.

**Other Correspondence:** MACD Vice President Nomination Request – Steve Law: The Board acknowledged the correspondence.

**Next Board Meeting:** October 25, 2023 | 10:00 AM | VBCD Office | 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Adjournment:** Motion by Druskovich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Klein to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 PM. Motion carried.

## **APPROVED:**

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Signature

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Date