



Van Buren Conservation District

Minutes of December 13, 2023 Regular Board Meeting

Minutes Prepared by: Lia Will, Administrative Associate and Emily Hickmott,
Executive Director

Petersen called the regular Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) December 13, 2023 business meeting to order at 10:01 AM.

Roll Call of Board Directors:

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

Others Present:

- Emily Hickmott, Executive Director
- Kim Sinclair, Administrator
- Colleen Forestieri, Senior Conservation Specialist
- Lia Will, Administrative Associate

Approval of Agenda: Druskovich requested addition of “Drain Drill Repair” after “FY 23” under “Old Business.” Motion by Druskovich to approve the December 15, 2023 regular board meeting agenda as amended, 2nd by Klein. Motion carried.

Minutes: Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to accept the November 8, 2023 regular board meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None.

Treasurer’s Report:

- Financial statements for November 2023 were presented and discussed. The State has changed the date for later disbursement of the NACD grant. Motion by Klein, 2nd by Rybarski to approve the November 2023 financial statements as presented. Motion carried.
- The bills of December 2023 were presented and discussed. Motion by Klein, 2nd by Rybarski to approve the payment of December 2023 bills as presented. Motion carried.
- Payroll and Paid Time Off Accumulation Report for November 2023 was presented. Motion by Klein, 2nd by Rybarski to approve payment of payroll for November 2023 as presented. Motion carried.

Old Business:

- **VBCD Foundation:** None
- **FY 23 Audit:** The preliminary internal control paperwork has been completed for the audit.
- **Drain Drill Repair:** Druskovich requested assistance from Lucas Hartman and Kyle Mead to assist with the repair of the drain drill. Motion by Druskovich, 2nd by Rybarski to authorize Lucas Hartman and Kyle Mead to assist Druskovich in the repair of the drain drill. Motion carried.

New Business:

- **Selling Leave Requests:**



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- **Hartman:** Motion by Klein, 2nd by Druskovich to approve the selling of 40 hours of leave request by Hartman. Motion carried.
- **Hickmott:** Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Klein to approve the selling of 40 hours of leave request by Hickmott. Motion carried.
- **Mead:** Motion by Rybarski, 2nd by Druskovich to approve the selling of 40 hours of leave request by Mead. Motion carried.

Committee Updates:

- **Fund Development**
 - Meeting will be scheduled and posted. Druskovich asked to be included. Sinclair will send an invite with date and time.
- **Property Development**
 - Druskovich thanked the staff for all of the valuable input on the site plan and concept plan. Discussion was had. Druskovich and architect will consider input; there is no timeline to contend with. Forestieri informed the Board how convenient it is to have NRCS in the same building. The Hartford building discussion continues with the County.
 - Next Meeting: A January meeting will be scheduled.

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

Board of Director Reports

- **Chairperson:** None.
- **Vice Chairperson:** Enjoys reading the staff reports and appreciates the added pictures.
- **Treasurer:** Informed the Board of the 5% increase in property taxes for Hamilton Township and the Village of Decatur. Would like to see farmers who lease their land more informed about soil testing and best farming practices.
- **Secretary:** Looking forward to 2024.
- **Member:** Shared with the Board that Scott Lake flooding is threatening septic systems around the lake. The gravel mining operations in Arlington Township are still in dispute.

Staff Reports:

- **Executive Director's Report:** The NACD Climate Smart Grant application was submitted. The staff and Board meeting to discuss and plan for the new year is scheduled for January 31, 2024 at 12:00 pm. The draft annual report was presented to the Board for any questions or comments.
- **Administrator's Report:** Sinclair has been appointed to the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission. Jena Johnson's part time position continues through at least January. The review of grant applications by Hickmott and Sinclair is working well. The oversight will be valuable for catching any errors.
- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects Report:** written.
- **CISMA Report:** written.



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- **MAEAP Report:** written.
- **NACD/NRCS TA Report:** written.
- **NRCS Conservation Technician Report:** written.
- **NRCS CT Report:** written.
- **Outreach Report:** written.
- **Produce Safety Report:** written (October and November)
- **Resource Recovery Report:** written.

Cooperating Agency Reports:

- **FSA Report:** None.
- **Land Preservation Board Report:** None.
- **MDARD Report:** written.
- **MSUE Report:** email forwarded.
- **NRCS:** None.
- **VBCD Foundation:** None.

Other Correspondence:

- EGLE Public Notice Announcement: JPA-HPPX-YS29-T8JGX (80-240 Black River Street-South Haven)
- EGLE Notice of Application: HPZ-188S-168BB (80-79500 Shorewood Court-Covert)
- Notice of Application: HPZ-BJVV-THQZP (80-39532 Wilderness Dunes Lane-Covert)

Next Board Meeting: January 24, 2024 | 10:00 AM | VBCD Office | 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079

Adjournment: Motion by Druskovich to adjourn the meeting at 12:02 PM, 2nd by Klein. Motion carried.

APPROVED:

Signature

Date