



# Branch County Conservation District

---

387 N Willowbrook Rd, Suite F, Coldwater MI 49036

517-278-2725 ext. 5

[www.branchcd.org](http://www.branchcd.org)

## January 11, 2024 Board Meeting

**Board members present: Bill Wolf, Bing Johnson, Chantal Paxton**

**Associate Board members present: n/a**

**Staff: Jennifer Wortz, Allison Marshall, Chelsy Wagley**

**Guests: Sheila Easton**

The meeting was called to order at 4:11 p.m. by Bill Wolf

**Approval of Agenda and Minutes: Motion by Paxton and seconded by Wolf to agenda motion. Unanimously passed.**

**Motion by Paxton and seconded by Johnson to approve December minutes, motion passed unanimously.**

### **Staff Reports:**

**CTAI:** Marshall shared monthly report. Has been further refining the website and building the tree sale page from scratch. Got fingerprints done in Lansing for lincpass. Notified board of June 3-13 absence.

**FBB:** Wortz shared the report on behalf of FBB. Sold large amounts of seed, went on numerous farm visits. Signed up for a lot of training sessions, may request extra funds from the board.

*More details will be brought to the February Board Meeting.*

- Discussion point opened by Johnson about the germination quality of Pheasants Forever seed. Firsthand experience saw lack of germination with an experienced farmer. Seed source was unknown. Easton came into the meeting and explained 98% of CRP use PF seed and no large scale issues have been noted. Also mentioned 2-3 years are required to establish roots before considerable growth above ground can be observed. Easton left the meeting.
- Discussion point opened by Johnson regarding farmer acreage reduction. Wortz clarified that it is due to aerial mapping by FSA to increase precision. Any issues should be brought up with FSA, not BCD.
- Discussion point opened by Wolf with a desire to see farmer names on FBB and MAEAP reports. Privacy concerns were raised, but then agreed upon providing the names.

**MAEAP:** The focus of the last month was predominantly farmer outreach (Christmas cards,

cookie delivery) and training (AgLearn). Two farm visits in the future. Communication window has opened with several farmers due to cookie delivery.

**Director:** shared highlights from monthly report. All grants were filed, and is currently working on audit. Possibly switching to Quickbooks payroll. No board approval required because the price is the same as Paychex. Possibly taking a KCC Course to understand it better. Road Commission has a free room that we will use for the Annual Meeting. Plans to get a beekeeping speaker from MSU. Tree Sale date set for Friday May 3 all day. Lincpass pickup next week. Has several trainings coming up and plans to attend assuming there are sufficient funds in the budget.

- Discussion opened by Wortz of if we need annual meeting business sponsors. Johnson said we had sponsors in the past. Suggestions for sponsorships/displays were: Pheasants Forever, BCD paraphernalia, Bobcat, Kubota, Gander Mountain/Bass Pro, Family Farm and Home grill out, Clemens.
- Discussion opened by Johnson regarding if we have an inhouse shared file with all our passwords. Affirmed by Wortz.

**MDARD:** Report given by Wortz.

**Public Comment:** n/a

**Old Business:**

1. **Conservation District Property:** Wortz talked to Mike Hard (Drain Commissioner) and he expressed knowledge and intent to complete cleanup within Fisher Creek.
  - a. Quote on clean up update: \$1750 for trails and creek access from Sam Tucker.
  - b. Forestry Harvesting quotes: \$60,000 for 66 walnuts and 10 burr oaks. (Pole Hard Logging). \$75,000 for the same trees (Sam Tucker). Pole Hard Logging will pay all upfront, Sam Tucker will pay half before, half after. Both will leave tree tops. No official decision was made.
2. **Annual Meeting- March 14, 2024:** no discussion made at this time.

**New Business:**

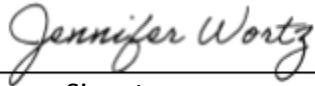
1. **Financial Report:** Motion by Paxton and seconded by Wolf to approve the monthly financial report as follows. Motion passed unanimously.

\$66,024.94	Primary
\$4,828.05	Secondary
\$1,499.25	Savings

2. **Closing Secondary checking:** Motion by Paxton seconded by Wolf to approve the combination of secondary checking into one account. Motion passed unanimously.
  
3. **Investing Money:** Discussion of moving money to MI Class Local Government Investment Pool. 5.54% interest. Compounded daily. Investment quantity may be as high as \$100k when grants are given to the district. Motion by Wolf to table this until the February meeting, seconded by Paxton. Motion passed in a vote of 3-0.
  
4. Approve Year End 2023 Budget and 2024 Budget adjustments: Total income is \$73k. Expenses \$84k. Explanation for the deficit is an \$8k deficit from MDARD and having to pay 3 months upfront for health insurance.  
**Motion by Chantal to table the budget adjustments/amendments. Seconded by Bing. Motion passed 3-0.**
  
5. Running for the Conservation Board: three spots open. Must file 60 days prior to the annual meeting Thursday, March 14, 2024. Form is on the website.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Wortz.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

January 12, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date