

**Branch County Conservation District
Board Meeting Minutes from January 9, 2018**

Board Members present: John Mitchell, Diana Lutz, Insa Raymond and Bing Johnson

Staff present: Kathy Worst, Marcus Reynolds, Sheila Wald and Lyndsay Morrison

The meeting was called to order by chair John Mitchell at 7:04 p.m.

Secretary's Report: board minutes for the December 12th, 2018 regular meeting were reviewed. Diana Lutz moved to approve minutes; Bing Johnson seconded the motion; minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report and Payment Voucher List for the last month were reviewed and discussed. There is currently a bank balance of \$36,265.99, which includes \$17,409.78 in the checking account, \$14,933.67 in the savings account and \$3,922.54 in the checking merchant account. Bills in the amount of \$3,571.64 have been pre-paid and \$31,220.33 still needs to be paid out. Bing Johnson made a motion to approve the treasurer's report, the pre-paid bills, and payment of all remaining bills as funds are available; Diana Lutz seconded; the motion carried and the treasurer's report was put to file for audit.

New Business

MACD has requested additional funds of \$400 to assist with Legislative efforts. After discussion, Diana Lutz made a motion to pay \$400 to MACD for lobbying efforts on the condition, that the funds were used for lobbying only. If additional districts did not supply enough funds to allow the effort to move forward, these funds are to be applied to our fiscal 2018 dues. Insa Raymond seconded the motion; the motion carried.

Lyndsay Morrison was welcomed by the board as our new Farm Bill Biologist.

The MAEAP Cost Share items list presented was discussed. Insa Raymond moved to approve the items list as presented giving Mike the discretion to purchase as needed and dependent upon what works best for his clients up to the allotted grant amount; Bing Johnson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Retirement Plan Advisors will be contacted by Kathy to set up a meeting date with staff. If staff is interested after they provide further information, a meeting will be set up with the board to approve anything necessary including policy additions to the employee handbook.

MDNR and Pheasants Forever are expected to do several additional restorations at Coldwater Lake State Park beginning this year. We expect to be asked to submit a proposal to complete much of this work. Bing Johnson moved to approve our involvement; Diana Lutz seconded the motion; the motion carried.

Old Business

Branch County as previously mentioned was completed, however Kathy mentioned that we are waiting on the DNR grant funds help cover expenses. The contractor has been paid. Remaining costs will be recovered through the client's CRP cost share.

The District Web Site redesign is still moving forward. Staff members are adding information and it should launch soon.

The Self-Audit for FY17 on Kathy's end has been completed and items submitted to Barry Assoc. We are waiting on their official letter to certify.

Smith – District Property was discussed. Marcus has seen a good deal of tree cutting going on and is suggesting we put up a gate to curtail this, before the site is harmed more. John has gates he can put up. We just need fence posts. We can take care of this after things thaw out.

The Lakeland School outdoor education day for April 30th, with a rain date of May 14th is moving forward. Diana said she would do the bird walk and Lyndsay will take on activity as well. Diana suggested a couple of games we could use, that would be simple for someone to handle. Kathy will ask Mike, if he will take on a topic.

The 70th Annual Meeting, Election and Conservation EXPO planning is progressing. Our speakers are lined up. We still need to find sponsors. The board agreed to go with a caterer for lunch. We will be charging a suggested donation of \$8 per adult and \$2 per child. Kathy said she tried to approach Clemens as a possible Sponsor and did not receive an answer. Diana suggested we purchase a pendant for Mary Ellen's award as the "Conservation Legacy Award" winner this year. Kathy will look into this with the local jewelers. She will try to invite people from some of the other clubs Mary Ellen has volunteered for in the area. She will also ask, if Mary Ellen will be able to attend. Kasey will be asked, if she can film this portion.

Tree Sale: we are moving forward. The newsletter is going out soon and being posted online, with a separate order form posted as well as e-blasts being sent to listed clients.

Native Plant Sale has a set date of June 9th.

Natural Shoreline Steward programming is in the works. We are holding an information workshop April 11th with Julia Kirkwood presenting. An actual training day is the works for early summer. Details are still being worked out for both.

MAEAP tablet progress: Kathy and Mike are still working on the formal MDARD pilot proposal for the tablet.

Southern Michigan Invasive Species Team CISMA Grant: Nothing new.

Mission Statement: no progress.

County Commission Millage progress none.

The Prescribed Fire insurance company is waiting for credentials from our burn boss. Lyndsay will be working towards her full red card certification.

Video Project: Kasey has been having computer issues, but is now able to work on this again. She hopes to have something very soon for the board.

Community Service Partnership with the City of Coldwater's - Sarah Fronczak, Rotary, Boy scouts for a tree planting. Sarah told Kathy it is moving forward; more details to come.

Directors' and Staff Reports

Directors:

John Mitchell said he has been working with Calhoun on buying their seeder for us. However, Marcus said he had just discovered they had already sent it back.

NRCS District Conservationist: Marcus Reynolds – mentioned they are working towards a smoother rollout and signups this year. He also mentioned, that we may be receiving another no-till drill from the DNR.

CTAI Specialist: Sheila Wald – see written report and Sheila mentioned she will be attending the upcoming two day Crop Summit and is hoping to learn from this experience.

MWSP / MAEAP Technician: Mike Censke – see written report

Farm Bill Biologist: New Lyndsay Morrison – It is too soon for a report, however introductions were made.

Conservation District Executive Director: Kathy Worst – present – She reminded the board she will be off January 18-29th.

Public Comments: Jack Knorek – Region’s rep - MDARD spoke about two items. First, he mentioned the announcement today that Ben Terrell would be taking over for the state as the new Right to Farm person. Second, the tree new MDARD tree policy language is currently being worked out. A webinar will be coming concerning licensing and inspections for those involved.

Adjourn: the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Insa Raymond, secretary.

Insa Raymond

Signature

2-21-18

Date