

**Branch County Conservation District
Board Meeting Minutes from December 12, 2017**

Board Members present: John Mitchell, Duane Clover and Bing Johnson

Staff present: Kathy Worst and Mike Censke

The meeting was called to order by chair John Mitchell at 7:08 p.m.

Secretary's Report: board minutes for the November 14th regular meeting were reviewed. Duane Clover 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 \$43,475.01, which includes \$24,597.60 in the checking account, \$14,932.92 in the savings account and \$3,944.49 in the checking merchant account. Bills in the amount of \$30,346.53 have been pre-paid and \$18,560.06 still needs to be paid out. Duane Clover made a motion to approve the treasurer's report and payment of all bills including the pre-paid bills, except for the three nurseries; Bing Johnson seconded; the motion carried and the treasurer's report was put to file for audit.

New Business

The Winter Newsletter was discussed. Duane Clover made a motion to approve creating, publishing and distributing the newsletter along with the associated costs; Bing Johnson seconded the motion; the motion carried.

Old Business

The MDNR Landowner Incentive Project on one of our HAP enhancement projects in Branch County has been completed. Things look very good. Kathy said we are waiting on the DNR grant funds to partially pay the contractor; we will submit and recoup any remaining costs through the landowner's CRP cost share.

The District Web Site redesign is moving forward. Staff will be trained to create and manipulate the website tomorrow. It is looking good so far.

The Self-Audit for FY16. Kathy was finally able to fix the issue within the computer, which was posting dollar amounts incorrectly on some checks. She will try to finish this within the next month.

The Lakeland School outdoor education day for April 30th, with a rain date of May 14th is moving forward. We will have 7 classes, with 31 students each. We just need to finalize our presenters and confirm the schedule with the school this spring. Kathy will be using some of the seedlings from our sale for a planting with the students. John Mitchell said he would definitely do the soils portion.

The 70th Annual Meeting, Election and Conservation EXPO planning is progressing. We almost have our speakers lined up. We need to find sponsors, decide upon lunch, any fees for the event and a couple other items. It was suggested that Kathy approach Clemens as a possible Sponsor.

Tree Sale: Tree selections have been ordered. The order forms and processing should be ready next week.

Natural Shoreland Steward Training program: Native plant programs and others are being worked out. Kathy asked for topic recommendations from the board for additional short one to two hour sessions. John Mitchell suggested irrigation and water withdrawal topics.

MAEAP tablet progress: Mike confirmed the cost of the equipment. Kathy and Mike are working on the formal MDARD pilot proposal for the tablet and are hoping to have it submitted by January.

Southern Michigan Invasive Species Team CISMA Grant: Nothing new. St. Joe is still awaiting approval.

Mission Statement: no progress.

County Commission Millage progress none. Kathy is to ask what a tenth of a mil would bring and continue to learn more. John will be able to help more in February.

The Prescribed Fire insurance company is waiting for credentials from our burn boss. John will work on this ASAP and submit. He will also look into other groups like PF to see if we could go through them.

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. Nothing heard yet.

Directors' and Staff Reports

Directors:

John Mitchell asked about the State of Michigan SUW Tax Issue. Kathy had not heard anything at this point and was hoping it was taken care of now. He also mentioned the up and coming PFAS Contamination issue. We will be hearing more.

NRCS District Conservationist: Marcus Reynolds – absent

CTAI Specialist: Sheila Wald – see written report

MWSP / MAEAP Technician: Mike Censke – see written report and present. He attended the Great Lakes Greenhouse EXPO for training as required for his specialization. He expects this to come through soon. His water withdrawal assistance to farmers is picking up. He discussed the progress with MAEAP verifications. They have been slow with harvest, but are now picking up; several verifications are scheduled in January. He attended a Fruit, orchard, manure training today. Things are going well.

Farm Bill Biologist: Vacant Tyler Tankersley submitted an additional final report before leaving– candidate interviews begin Friday.

Conservation District Administration: Kathy Worst – present – has been scheduling FBB interviews and assembling items for the hiring team. She also has time off scheduled in January.

Public Comments: none

Adjourn: the meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Insa Raymond, secretary.

Insa Raymond

Signature

1-9-18

Date