

**Branch County Conservation District
Board Meeting Minutes from March 13, 2018**

Board Members present: John Mitchell, Duane Clover, Bing Johnson, Insa Raymond

Staff present: Kathy Worst, Sheila Wald, Lyndsay Morrison

Visitor: Jack Knorek

The meeting was called to order by chair John Mitchell at 7:00 p.m.

Secretary's Report: the District Board meeting minutes for February 2018, were tabled.

Treasurer's Report and Payment Voucher List for the last month were reviewed and discussed. There is currently a bank balance of \$35,450.55, which includes \$15,615.00 in the checking account, \$14,933.67 in the savings account and \$4,901.88 in the checking merchant account. Bills in the amount of \$6,800.64 have been pre-paid and \$10,660.71 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, Bing Johnson seconded; the motion carried and the treasurer's report was put to file for audit.

Guest: Jack Knorek MDARD Area Rep. Spoke about other area reps. retiring and there would be some shuffling for a while to cover these regions until new staff can be hired. He also apologized for not making our annual meeting and discussed some of the things happening related to Calhoun CD.

New Business

Director Positions: The Board decided to keep the officer positions for the District Board as is, except Diana Lutz will now be serving in the role of the vice president, replacing Mary Ellen Newton, who retired.

John Newberry – Requests Vendor – Quincy Expo – March 24th : the cost is \$25.00 plus one donated item. The Board decided not to participate this year, may be next year.

2018 Michigan Watershed Summit: Kathy requested approval to attend. The cost is \$30.00. Insa Raymond moved the approval for Kathy to attend the MI Watershed Summit, and to spend the \$30.00 registration fee and applicable mileage, Duane Clover seconded the motion, passed.

PF Store – the Pheasants Forever seed sale and other projects we have been working on in partner projects would like to have us begin accepting ACH payments for work completed. This would allow for faster turnaround on our projects and help our cash flow as well. Kathy requested approval to do so as we are already doing this with other partnerships. The board directed her to go ahead and make the necessary arrangements.

Further discussion from John Mitchell discussed wildlife habitat seed held by the Calhoun County Conservation District, which they wished to sell. Seeds are bundled up into ½ acre packages, priced at 30% off retail price. It would cost us \$1250 if we would buy up their supply. This would make us some money and it would also help out the Calhoun County Conservation District. Insa Raymond moved to spend \$1250 and buy up the seed supply, Duane Clover seconded the motion, passed.

Old Business

Fisher Insurance – Change in Crime / Employee Dishonesty Coverage – the Board decided to stick with what we currently have and not to purchase this additional insurance. There is a new plan in development on pesticide liability – this might become important for the CISMA grant.

Michigan Sales Tax Issue: The issue has been fixed for 2016. However, now we are getting hit with the same issue for 2017. All taxes have been paid though.

70th Annual Meeting – EXPO: 49 people attended. Consensus was that the Expo went very well and was successful. Unfortunately, the invasive species workshops offered at the Expo cannot be counted towards the CISMA grant, not until the grant has been officially signed.

Tree Sale Progress: tree packaging will be in the morning of April 18, at the goat barn (beginning at 9:00 a.m.) followed by the District Board meeting at 12:00 p.m. (lunch). The tree sale will be on April 20th and 21st. Tentatively John will help on Friday (4/19) and Insa will help on Saturday (4/20). The sale starts at 9:00 a.m.

Native Plant Sale Progress: the sale is scheduled for June 9th. Kathy will work on this.

Natural Stewards Shoreline Workshop: this workshop is scheduled for April 11th. It is held in partnership with the Coldwater Lake Association and will take place at the Coldwater Lake Association Building, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Bing Johnson moved to spend up to \$75.00 matching funds offered by Coldwater Lake Association to provide a light supper, Insa Raymond seconded, passed.

Self Review Audit – Fiscal 2017: our in-house portion is complete; Barry Associates is doing a review, which is in progress.

Lakeland School Outdoor Day – April 30th, rain date May 14th: planning of this is in progress; we need one more speaker. Sheila suggested to have the new person do a program on invasive species. Insa offered to do an entomology program, if the invasive species program does not work out.

Community Service Partnership City of Coldwater, Rotary, District & Boy Scouts: we are expecting a tree purchase as part of this project; the girl scout portion of these partnerships may partnership might be putting out bird feeders around nursing homes.

No Till Drill: Duane, Kathy and Lyndsay will go through the drill for repairs and begin getting it ready for this spring.

MAEAP Tablet Proposal: on hold right now.

Southern Michigan Invasive Species Team CISMA Grant: a boat wash is scheduled for July 7, 2018, at Messenger Lake.

Prescribed Fire Insurance: at this time we make sure the landowner is covered, we are only there to assist with the burn. Our volunteers will begin assisting as weather and site conditions permit.

MAEAP Cost Share Grant: Mike experienced some delays.

PF & State – Coldwater Lake State Park Project: We are still waiting for the go ahead to submit our proposal for this season.

Smith District Property: The new owners logged the adjacent property they bought from Smith'. Hopefully, they won't sprawl over on our side to cut trees. We do need to mark the property line and get a gate up.

Mission Statement: no progress

County Commission Millage: no progress

Water Trails – City of Coldwater: no progress

Directors' and Staff Reports

Directors:

Bing Johnson: reported about an upcoming meeting for the community in Union Township, which is scheduled for April 10th. The meeting is about wind turbines and a proposed wind turbine project in Union Township. Wind turbines, even though a source for renewable energy, pose issues of noise, light, bird migration, aesthetics, bats, etc.

Duane Clover mentioned his niece would be leaving her post at the Michigan Department of Ag. for an advisor position with Sony Purdue in Washington DC.

NRCS District Conservationist: Marcus Reynolds – absent

CTAI Specialist: Sheila Wald reported the website is up and running. She is involved with the planning and coordination of both the regional and the State-wide MI Envirothon. Sheila attended soil sessions at Farmers Day and attended an organic farming workshop up at MSU. She also attended a soil health workshop led by an Amish person at an Amish Farm in Reading. See also written report.

MWSP / MAEAP Technician: Mike Censke – has lots of verifications done and in progress. See written report.

Farm Bill Biologist: Lyndsay Morrison has been working on planning and organizing the Habitat Workshop. Pheasants Forever (PF) paid for the advertisement in Shoppers Guide. She also has created a Coldwater Lake State Park Plantings poster, which PF paid for as well. Lyndsay has also been working on the District's website. See also written report.

Conservation District Administration: Kathy Worst – present – has lots of projects coming up: the Blitz, Portable boat wash at messenger Lake; Michigan Shoreland workshop, magazine articles for lake and shoreline owners. This used to be a newsletter for Coldwater Lake association members only. Now the association created the new magazine for Branch County lake and shoreline owners. Kathy also reported about the possibility of an AG Food Hub in downtown Coldwater. First discussions took place.

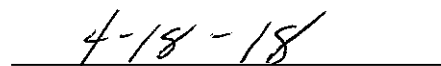
Public Comments: none

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

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Insa Raymond, secretary.



Signature



Date