



Washtenaw County
Conservation District

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MARCH BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:00pm on Thursday, March 13th, 2025.

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Shannon Brines, Chair (arrived 7:15 pm)

Maegen Gabriel, Vice-Chair

Hannah Weber, Treasurer

Patricia Denig, Staff Liaison

Brandon Henes, Secretary

DIRECTORS ABSENT

None.

OTHERS PRESENT

Deborah Shad, Finance Administrator (virtual)

Summer Roberts, Executive Director

Jill Dohner, MiFarmLink Specialist

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

None.

MEETING MINUTES

Denig motions to approve the February meeting minutes, Weber seconds. 5 yays, no nays, no questions or further discussion. Motion passes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee:

- February 21st meeting
 - Discussed audit process
 - Current federal funding scenarios
 - Importance of the reserve fund and incorporating future additions to the budget

HR Committee:

- To be scheduled soon

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Total Assets	\$940,055.41
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$940,055.41
Total Monthly Income	\$299,884.53
Total Monthly Expense	\$86,590.18
Total Other Income	\$2,297.88
Total Monthly Net Income	\$214,553.63

Discussion

- Accounts receivable discussion
 - Waiting on USDA MCSFP grant funding due to federal funding pause
- Lower expenses due to conservative spending among staff and admin, particularly within the sales programs
- Halfway through fiscal year
- Higher interest income than anticipated due to budget adjustments

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Gabriel motions to approve bills, Denig seconds. All yays, no nays, no questions or further discussion. Motion passes.

FARMLAND AGREEMENTS & CONSERVATION PLANS

No farmland agreements.

Michigan Forest Association (MFA) #UnfreezeMyFarm discussion and potential campaign participation

- Connect farmers/contractors/landowners directly to campaign via email

Discussion around remaining politically neutral

MCSFP received FOIA for grant application documents

MOSA TOPP requested our support on a draft letter to Secretary Rollins, including our organization logo and name

- Board reviewed draft letter and Roberts should submit name and logo

STAFF & PARTNER REPORTS

WCCD Executive Director, Summer Roberts

- Grant reporting / Grant application process
- Audit compilation
- Federal funding freeze
- Met with MDARD Regional Coordinator for Operations Review

WCCD Resource Coordinator, Doug Reith

- New seasonal hire, Sam Diss

WCCD Conservation Technician, Matt DeJonge

WCCD MAEAP Technician, Nick Machinski

MCSFP Specialist, Megan Phillips Goldenberg

MiFarmLink Specialist, Jill Dohner

MDARD Regional Coordinator, Nadene Berthiaume

NRCS Representative, Solomon Andrews

OLD BUSINESS

1. Budget Scenario Updates/Staff Changes
 - a. Development Manager Work Agreement
 - i. Megan Phillips-Goldenberg employment change to development manager, review of edited work agreement
 - ii. Other staff new roles – Anna Cone and Paul Buzzard.
 1. Roberts to discuss permanency of these roles with staff
 - b. MSU Subawardee/TOPP
 - i. Not yet confirmed, to be finalized in the near future; Still no 2025 contract; TOPP Technicians continue to work reduced hours/use PTO
2. County MOU for Millage
 - a. Edited County MOU
 - i. WCCD Fiscal year rather than Calendar year; closed book submissions with outcomes, deliverables, etc.
 - ii. Roberts to send Brines PDF to sign
3. Newaygo Nursery
 - a. Continuing to assess plans to determine our involvement
4. HR Policies Review
 - a. Part-time Holiday Pay
 - b. Mileage Reimbursement
 - c. Sick Leave

- i. Temporary and seasonal employees sick leave versus part-time employees
 - ii. Use formula for sick leave versus by pay-period to ensure appropriate accrual
 - iii. Budget should not be impacted by new sick time accrual for temporary/seasonal employees due to 120 day wait period
 - iv. Shad and Roberts to bring implementation questions to Paychex meeting
- 5. Audit
 - a. In process

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. MiFarmLink Presentation - Jill Dohner
 - a. MiFarmLink overview and history
 - b. MiFarmLink transition from WCCD to MACD
 - c. Discussion surrounding funding and expenses of transition
- 2. Farm Bureau Meeting Prep
 - a. 2-3:30pm on March 19th, 2025 at 705 N Zeeb Road
 - i. Roundtable discussion/listening session
 - ii. Roberts to post meeting
- 3. Media Policy
 - a. Statement
 - i. Discussion surrounding expectations for approval of statement from board and constraints per the Open Meetings Act
 - 1. ED to use judgement making more localized, general statements
 - 2. ED to bring to Board's attention prior to making a statement with any strong political connotations
 - ii. Remaining politically neutral
 - iii. Staff to defer to ED instead of making statements themselves
- 4. BOD - employees vs. contractors
 - a. Employees - benefits/HR
 - b. Contractors - W-4; 1099 if over \$600
 - i. Roberts to speak with Nadene regarding roles and requirements for qualifying as a contractor
 - ii. Most districts have their board members as contractors
 - 1. Need resolution for this
 - iii. **Motion by Gabriel to become contractors if viable/recommended by MDARD, seconded by Denig. All yays no nays, no questions or further discussion.**
- 5. Maternity Leave Plan

- a. Roberts taking leave starting June 16th, 2025 for 12 weeks, plus another 12 weeks at part-time 20 hrs; Returning full-time Dec. 1st, 2025
- b. Discussed Administrative Coverage Options
 - i. Increase existing part-time staff hours & Patricia Denig volunteer
 - ii. Unused ED salary (approx. \$20,000) to cover administrative costs
- c. ED to have benefits deducted from paycheck when in part-time status
- d. Amend work agreements as needed

NEXT MEETING: Monthly Board Meeting: Thursday, April 17th at 7:00pm.

OATH OF OFFICE

ADJOURNMENT: 9:33pm.

THESE MINUTES STAND TO BE APPROVED.

MINUTES APPROVED

APPROVAL SIGNATURE: _