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MAY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:04pm on Thursday, May 15th, 2025.

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Shannon Brines, Chair

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

Molly Eassa, Executive Assistant (virtual)

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

None.

MEETING MINUTES

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee: N/A

HR Committee:

Met 04/30/25 and 05/08/25

Moving retirement plan from nationwide to MERs, on agenda

Looking at additional policies including: Vacation accrual, sick time payouts, part time work, compensation study, etc.

- Hoping to avoid 3rd party contractor/consultant and instead perform compensation studies in house using a process developed by Denig. Denig plans to start setting up this process during the ED's maternity leave.

Leadership Committee:

Met 05/06/25. Items to be discussed on agenda under old/new business.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Total Assets	\$1,120,227.21
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$1,120,227.21
Total Monthly Income	\$107,559.50
Total Monthly Expense	\$80,707.84
Total Other Income	\$2,451.78
Total Monthly Net Income	\$29,303.44

Discussion

Plant stock & supply line item is low compared to last year due to it being paid at a different time/when it hits the books

Budget vs actuals; almost 60% of the way through our FY budget

Millage funds are on schedule

'Other income' identification and elaboration

Discussion about practicality of event space usage

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Gabriel motions to approve the April bills, Weber seconds. 5 yays, no nays, no questions or further discussion. Motion passes.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Asked Roberts to share with Staff so they can share input/opinions with the BOD, if desired.

FARMLAND AGREEMENTS & CONSERVATION PLANS

None.

STAFF & PARTNER REPORTS

WCCD Executive Director, Summer Roberts

- Anna Cone took a position at MDNR and has left the WCCD team
 - Exit interview was very complimentary.
 - Discussion surrounding the practicality of hiring a new community engagement specialist versus a stop-gap measure with current temporary staff
- MDARD adjusted grant level (and funding) up for CTAP with Paul's return to the position
- Focus on FY26 budget and program planning and maternity leave planning

WCCD Resource Coordinator, Doug Reith

- Seasonal staff member to step in to help with NPEM coordination

WCCD Conservation Technician, Matt DeJonge

WCCD Conservation Specialist, Nick Machinski

MCSFP Specialist, Megan Phillips Goldenberg

- Closing MCSFP grant – MACD considering options (appeal vs. apply to AMP)
- Pursual of new grant opportunities

MiFarmLink Specialist, Jill Dohner

MDARD Regional Coordinator, Nadene Berthiaume

NRCS Representative, Solomon Andrews

OLD BUSINESS

1. Budget Scenario Updates/Staff Changes (15 min)
 - a. TOPP
 - i. Grant Cleared Federal Review!
 - ii. Review MSU Subaward Contract
 1. Contract from Jan 2025- Oct 2027
 2. If approved, Alex and Kim can come back on 5/19
 - a. **Weber motions to approve contract and reinstate staff in positions, Gabriel seconds. 5 yays, no nays, no questions or further discussion.**
 3. MOSA still owes just under \$10,000
 - b. Community Engagement Specialist
2. HR Policies Review (15 min)
 - a. Retirement Accounts Summary:

- i. Adopting a MERS 401(a) Defined contribution (DC) for the WCCD contribution with 100% match of full-time employees' contributions capped at \$61.54 per pay period with a five-year vesting period of 20% for every year an employee works for WCCD up to completion of five years where they will be 100% vested. Additionally, adopting a 457(b) Deferred Compensation (457) plan for the employee's contribution.
 - ii. Discussion surrounding grandfathering folks in to vesting schedule based on service years
 - b. BOD Motions and Sign MERS Resolutions
 - i. "Motion to move the WCCD retirement benefit from Nationwide to Michigan Employers Retirement System (MERS)."
 - ii. "Motion to designate the WCCD Board Chair, WCCD Executive Director, and the WCCD Finance Administrator as the authorized signers for MERS."
 - iii. **Gabriel motions to approve both statements above, Henes seconds. 5 yays, no nays, no questions or further discussion.**
- 3. Maternity Leave Plan (15 min)
 - a. Draft is in the works - planning is underway.
 - b. Context in draft will also be helpful for BOD and onboarding new employees.
 - c. Deb, Molly, MPG, and Patricia to take over ED responsibilities.
 - d. Plan is a good resource for other staff in the future who might need to take extended leaves.
 - e. Roberts to schedule special board meeting on 09/18/2025 for review of FY26 draft budget.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Brief Review of Senator Shink Listening Session (5 min)
 - a) Weber & Brines attended along with other WCCD staff
 - b) Packed, informative and diverse space
 - c) PA116 and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)/conservation easements were a hot topic
- 2. Media Policy (10 min)
 - a) Requires more extensive conversation - move to June agenda
 - b) Addressing how to navigate sensitive topics - spokesperson for media
 - 1. Roberts to update with chain of command for asking for BOD approval
 - c) Includes general policies for media content creation
- 3. FY26 Compilation Engagement Letter (5 min)
 - a) Same as last compilation
 - b) **Weber motions to approve signing Gabridge engagement letter for FY26 compilation, Gabriel seconds. 5 yays, no nays, no questions or further discussion. Motion passes.**

4. Knight Foundation Grant Memo (5 min)
 - a) Lost critical operating funds through losing the MCSFP grant
 - b) Covers lost funding for Finance Administrator and entirely covers salary and benefits for full-time development manager; could potentially cover gap in NACD/NRCS funding in FY26 for Natural Resources Technician
 - c) Funding for FY26 (one year)
5. EGLE P Reduction Grant Memo (5 min)
 - a) No match, already rolled into EGLE SHIP. EGLE gave to Lenawee CD to be signatory/administrator. Separate grant but aligned with EGLE SHIP. Runs through September 2028
 - b) Has some administrative dollars, but mostly cost share dollars for farmers
 - c) Flexibility in how Admin funding is utilized
 - d) **Denig motions to approve both Knight Foundation and EGLE P grants, Gabriel seconds. 5 yays, no nays, no questions or further discussion. Motion passes.**
6. MOSAIC Grant Memo (5 min)
 - a) Discussion surrounding the political connotations and limits to our involvement and advocacy.
 - b) WCCD would not be signatory or fiduciary
 - c) Board requests more information
7. NRCS Cooperative Agreement Draft (5 min)
 - a) Given current federal uncertainty, Solomon unsure about ability to get an NRCS cooperative agreement in place before FY26
 - b) While Roberts is on maternity leave, Brines agreed to keep checking in with NRCS on status
 - c) WCCD should apply for NACD grant next cycle to be safe
 - d) Roberts will bring information on another potential opportunity - contracting with City of Ann Arbor to perform farmers market inspections – to June BOD meeting
8. Annual Meeting Visioning (20 min)
 - a) Re-establish purpose and vision
 - b) Emphasize what the district has to offer – WCCD should talk while attendees eat (run-time has historically been too long and we lose people before we talk about the CD)
 1. Program specialists could each do quick pitch on program
 2. Focus on new programs/initiatives
 3. Drop keynote and/or ask farmers/partners to talk in a panel moderated by WCCD
 - c) Consider having program tables, including partners, so attendees can interact with staff and see where funds are going
 - d) Consider appetizers rather than full meal
 - e) Continue rotating locations within the county
 - f) How can we bring in new faces? Advertise during larger events, such as tree sale and native plant expo or consider combining events

OATH OF OFFICE

ADJOURNMENT: 9:32pm.

THESE MINUTES STAND TO BE APPROVED.

MINUTES APPROVED

APPROVAL SIGNATURE: _