



Washtenaw County Conservation District

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AUGUST BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:03pm on Thursday, August 15th, 2024.

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Shannon Brines, Chair (virtual)
Matt Nolan, Vice-Chair
Hannah Weber, Treasurer
Maegen Gabriel, Secretary
Tom Shanahan, Board Director

DIRECTORS ABSENT

OTHERS PRESENT

Deborah Shad, Finance Administrator (virtual)
Summer Roberts, Executive Director
Molly Eassa, Executive Assistant
Tomon Andrews, NRCS District Conservationist

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Public Comment

- Gross pollution in Washtenaw County. Resources provided, no further action.

MEETING MINUTES

Gabriel moves to approve July board meeting minutes, Weber seconds. 5 yays, no nays, no discussion. Motion passes

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee:

- 36% Compound Annual Growth Rate
- Quarterly numbers look great
- Variable spending for budget balancing
- Budget adjustment vs amendment
 - District policy - net zero
- Price for current audit is reasonable for total revenue
 - Changing auditors in the first quarter is best- not recommended to change auditors at this stage.
 - There is value in history with current auditor
 - Change in price of audit is due to time length of work spent on audit and new reporting
- Potential for new finance committee member- resume for next months meeting

HR Committee: N/A

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Total Assets	\$854,395.61
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$854,395.61
Total Monthly Income	\$1,192,029.83
Total Monthly Expense	\$1,070,275.68
Total Other Income	\$93,613.32
Total Monthly Net Income	\$213,423.99

Discussion

- Net income = \$213,423.99
- Reserve fund is lower than last year due to late grant funding causing need for rearrangement of funds.
 - We have 3 months of operating costs in our reserves funds
- Transferring interest into general fund
- Budget v Actual:
 - 83% through fiscal year budget
 - Gross profit is 79%
 - Total expenses 279% (this is listed wrong on documentation)
- Adjustment for MiFarmLink
 - MDARD is funding a total of \$100,000 (\$25,000 applied to FY24, remaining \$75,000 for FY25)
- MOSA TOPP budget will be submitted 8/30; Confirmed remaining money will be available FY25
- Total expenses on Budget v Actuals: 153.78%
 - This percentage wrongly calculated on document, more like 73.88%

APPROVAL OF BILLS

No purchase orders this month, N/A.

FARMLAND AGREEMENTS & CONSERVATION PLANS

None.

STAFF & PARTNER REPORTS

WCCD Executive Director, Summer Roberts

- FY25 budget & programming
 - Would like an earlier start next year and to receive more input from program supervisors
- 1:1 staff check-ins have gone well
- HR amendments
 - Memo for board? Verbal rather than written confirmed by BOD
- CF recruitment & hiring process
 - Welcome Matt DeJonge! Starting in October as new Community Forester.
- Hiring new NRCS tech to replace Matt will depend on conversation with Solomon Andrews about NACD TA FY24 Grant

WCCD Resource Coordinator, Doug Reith

- Website maintenance costs
 - Quote from Tamarack was in line with what was expected

- Gave presentation to the board- Weebly is a platform that you rent, own website on new platform, but hire Tamarack to maintain (i.e. like paying a plumber for professional services)
- Doug feels confident about cost & maintenance arrangement
- Has better relationship with Daniel at Tamarack
- Budget reflects maintenance costs for FY25

WCCD Community Forester, (Vacant)

WCCD MAEAP Technician, Nick Machinski

- Conservation tech in the field vs supervisor
- Invite Nick to the October meeting to discuss tile monitoring & others!
 - To also discuss creating a farmer committee
 - Good for educating farmers
 - Farmer advisory panel

WCCD Outreach Coordinator, Dru Mark-Wilson

WCCD Conservation Technician, Paul Buzzard

WCCD Conservation Technician, Matt DeJonge

MCSFP Specialist, Megan Phillips Goldenberg

MiFarmLink Specialist, Jill Dohner

- Researching grant opportunities for MiFarmLink
 - Conference outreach
 - Potential for leverage off TOPP or MCSFP
 - Potential for advertisement on the new Website
 - American Farmland Trust- could be a new grant opportunity

Conservation Technician (TOPP), Kimberly Williams-Guillen & Alex Cacciari

MDARD Regional Coordinator, Nadene Berthiaume

NRCS District Conservationist - Solomon Andrews

- Discussed making a routine of coming to monthly board meetings
- Met Kristen (new staff) and participated in onboarding efforts
- EQIP applications for funding have been coming in and are being approved
- CSP revving up- applications being processed
- ACEP- Urban sprawl in Washtenaw County is big
 - 15 applications early this year
 - District staff & NRCS staff worked together on this one
 - To be funded around mid-October
 - Review given to ED at end of the year
- Doing good at NRCS!
 - Top 5 in the state
 - Improvements for 2025
- Civil engineer moved to the office housed in field office covers several counties

- Urban engineer in Wayne County
 - Picked up on engineering process at NRCS
 - Supervisors doing well for Ann Arbor field office
- ** Solomon Andrews excused himself from the meeting at 7:43pm.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Google Drive Feedback
 - a. System works well and implementation will continue for future board and committee meetings.
 - b. Accessible, no notes.
2. Benefits Start Date
 - a. Date of hire may be difficult for adjustments systematically
 - i. Great offer for new hires to have benefits starting upon date of hire
 - ii. Stipend for back pay if 30 days(?)- this may be tedious
 - b. Date of hire- continue on, no need for motion
3. Values Retreat
 - a. Crossover with staff, board only time as well
 - i. Great for building relationships between staff and board
 - ii. Tom to be there in the last half of meeting
 - b. Open meetings act?
 - i. Post it probably
 - c. Consider Facilitators: Sarah McKinnon at Fishfly, LLC is one option
 - d. Set time/date at next meeting
4. Upcoming Grants
 - a. EGLE GRLI Grant- WLEB Cost-Share
 - i. Documents received from Brittany
 - ii. Memorandum budget vs work plan budget not aligned, meeting with Brittany soon to clarify to see if it fits in with the budget
 1. Memo entire grant, work plan states it's going to be allocated between 4 districts.
 - iii. More info about this on special August meeting
 - b. MDARD Capacity Building Grant for CD's in WLEB
 - i. Met with John Switzer and Michelle Selzer from MDARD who reached out about capacity building grant
 1. Still scoping, not official, but reconnaissance with some districts in southeast Michigan
 - ii. Potential for 7 total years (starting with 2 years, maybe 5 additional after initial 2 years)
 - iii. John brought up that they'd seen biggest changes with high functioning board, high functioning director, and Roberts added consistent funding
 - iv. Capacity grant would be tied to phosphorus reductions in WLEB
 1. Outputs vs impacts and state monitoring
 - a. State has plans for public dashboards- this could help?
 2. We probably do not have capacity for reporting/monitoring phosphorus on a per farm basis
 - v. Didn't give monetary estimate
 1. Suggested 75k
 - vi. Grant still in preliminary state
 1. Could the phosphorus stuff be reflected through reporting?
 2. Ties into potential for educational program

- a. Students could test the phosphorus levels
 - vii. Connection to Huron River watershed
 - 1. More so about capacity building
 - viii. Connection to schooling/education development within district
- 5. Region 10 MACD Meeting
 - a. 10am-3pm on 9/17 at Baseline Farm
 - b. Molly to order catering
 - c. Programming and capacity building
 - i. Arrive early around 9 for setup
 - d. Site may be a little tight if inclement weather
 - i. May need to bring chairs - ask attendees to bring collapsable camping type chairs
 - e. No rental fee!
 - f. Summer to reach out to other counties for participation potential
 - i. Wayne
 - ii. Ingham
 - iii. Livingston
 - g. Networking event!
 - h. Email Shannon for questions

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. FY25 Draft Budget
 - a. Meeting with Brittany for GRLI grant issue- amendment for grant funding *see above
 - i. Contingencies: will be in the red by 4k if that's the case^ can take out of reserve if necessary
 - b. Operating income?
 - i. Interest as income & equipment expense potential for -\$5,132.95
 - c. Most positions received 3% cost of living adjustments
 - i. Some grant funded positions received more than standard 3%
 - ii. Finance Administrator received pay adjustment as approved by BOD
 - d. Program consultants include Trilby, Tamarack, facilitators, etc.
 - e. Budget to be approved at September meeting
 - f. Plant sales for program income 189k
 - i. Not net, est. & costs around 120k.
 - g. Divvying up grant funding across stores
 - h. School and Community Habitat Grant Parameter Discussion
 - i. Applicants ask for herbs, vegetables, fruits – consider agricultural sister grant
 - 1. Need to assess what other orgs provide (already send options to applicants who are denied)
 - ii. New Community Forester can research and make recommendations
 - i. Draft budget looks good! - we may not even need special meeting
 - i. To be reviewed via email if necessary
 - j. Needs to be published 8 days before meeting
 - i. Newspaper and affidavit
 - ii. Copy on website and in office
- 2. Auditor RFP
 - a. Gabridge to be approved

- b. Opinion, not review
 - c. Weber motions to approve, Shanahan seconds. No discussion, no opposition. 5 yays no nays. Motion passes
3. Executive Director Annual Review
- a. Offered closed session, but Roberts didn't ask for one
 - b. Result for staff survey responses
 - c. Staff survey results
 - i. Everyone fairly satisfied with their jobs
 - ii. People enjoy work culture, mission and improving the county
 - 1. Autonomy and flexibility and healthy work environment
 - iii. Not entirely satisfied with compensation, but satisfaction is rising.
 - 1. May be difficult to continue upward trajectory
 - iv. Stress is split, some are really stressed and others not as much
 - v. Task clarity would make work less stressful
 - vi. ED transitional period was stressful
 - vii. Some partner relationships are a little strenuous
 - viii. Biggest issue may be turnover and large amounts of change
 - 1. Staff would like more stability
 - ix. Political climate and uncertainty also stressful
 - x. Job satisfaction may increase through better pay, more office support
 - 1. More opportunities for staff to get together
 - xi. Training for conflict resolution/communication & team building
 - d. ED survey results
 - i. Mostly positive and supportive
 - ii. Requests for:
 - 1. Being more present, in-person time
 - 2. Some organizational restructuring and allocation of priorities
 - e. ED review will be more informative next year (only 2 months in currently)
4. Roberts was asked about biggest issues/needs
- a. Lots of HR questions come up for ED
 - i. HR quarterly meetings are not sufficient during this learning/transition period
 - ii. Would love a consultant/training for HR

NEXT MEETING:

Special Board Meeting: Thursday, August 29th at 7:00pm.

Monthly Board Meeting: Thursday, September 19th at 7:00pm. (Budget Hearing)


OATH OF OFFICE

ADJOURNMENT: 9:46pm.

THESE MINUTES STAND TO BE APPROVED.

MINUTES APPROVED

APPROVAL SIGNATURE: _


9/19/2024