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MARCH BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The regular meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm on Thursday, March 26, 2026.

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Shannon Brines, Chair
Jill Dohner, Vice-Chair
Maegen Gabriel, Treasurer
Patricia Denig, Staff Liaison
Brandon Henes, Secretary

DIRECTORS/STAFF ABSENT

STAFF/OTHERS PRESENT

Summer Roberts, Executive Director
Shazia Ansari, Finance Administrator
Michael (Virtual, Public)
Megan Phillips-Goldenberg (Virtual, from about 7:30 pm – 8pm)

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

State Council Updates

OATH OF OFFICE: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee (Gabriel): Last meeting was 2/20/2026. No updates.

HR Committee (Denig): Met on 3/6/2026 to discuss employee handbook and manual updates. Compensation study has been delayed. Plan to review "At Will" vs. "Just Cause" employees and bring to BOD for review.

Attendees: Summer Roberts & Patricia Denig.

Leadership Committee (Brines): Met on 3/9/2026 to set agenda.

Farmer Committee (Gabriel): No meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Gabriel to approve the February meeting minutes. Seconded by Dohner.

Vote: 5 yays, 0 nays.

Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

As of February 28, 2026

Total Assets	\$1,254,470.01
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$1,254,470.01
Total Monthly Income	\$334,526.71
Total Monthly Expense	\$77,608.95
Total Monthly Other Income	\$1,947.41
Total Monthly Net Income	\$258,865.17

Discussion Highlights

- Board packet was delayed going in out until missing documentation for large millage payment (preventing reconciliation of Huntington MMA) was acquired from Washtenaw County Treasurer
- Approaching end of Q2 (March), so almost 50% through year
- Washtenaw Farm Council Ground – site rental costs

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Motion by Dohner to approve payment of bills. Seconded by Henes.

Discussion: Regarding Purchase Order for NWF Grow More Training – TOPP Grant paid for training.

Vote: 5 yays, 0 nays.

Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

- MDARD CTAP Grant Changes
 - Roberts & Buzzard to apply
- Matthew Bertrand, WCPaRC regarding submission of letter to MDARD Invasive Species Regulation

PUBLIC NOTICES

No Discussion

FARMLAND AGREEMENTS & CONSERVATION PLANS

None

Discussion around NRCS and farmers needing assistance – Leadership Committee to discuss further

STAFF & PARTNER REPORTS

Executive Director – Summer Roberts

-Focus on hiring new Finance Admin (FA) and offboarding previous FA; picking up FA tasks and Admin Assistant tasks

Conservation Specialist - Nick Machinski

Resource Specialist - Doug Reith

Development Manager - Megan Phillips Goldenberg
Community Forester - Matt DeJonge
Community Engagement Specialist – Jill Lada
Washtenaw County Farm Bureau - Sue Rodgers (no report)
Produce Safety Technician, Genesee CD – Micah Hutchinson
MDARD Regional Coordinator- Nadene Berthiaume

OLD BUSINESS

1. Budget Scenario Updates/Staff Changes (10 min) – Brines/Roberts
 - a. NRCS Position
 - i. TOPP -> Funding KS through 9/30/2026
 - ii. NACD -> Applied on 1/8/2026; notice date has been pushed to June.
 - iii. AMP/EGLE OSN -> awarded, signed; Alex Caccari accepted Farmer Programs Specialist role (started 03/23/2026); Katy Beaven accepted Tech role (starting April 20)
 - iv. Cooperative Agreement with NRCS – on hold for time being
 - b. Finance Administrator
 - i. Shazia Ansari started 03/09/2026
 - ii. Learning and improving processes – conducting internal audit of all systems; will consult with outside contractor for review as needed (previously approved by Board)
 - c. Administrative Assistant
 - i. Lada helped with collecting applications
 - ii. Ansari and Roberts to review and proceed with interviews
 - iii. Anticipated start date will likely be in May
2. Recap of Legislative Action Day on March 11, 2026, Lansing, MI
 - i. Lada, Dohner, & Brines attended
 - ii. Well organized by MACD, well attended
 - iii. CD \$13 million request was met with a pessimistic tone since budget is being cut this year
 - iv. CDs need a spokesperson
 1. Directors need to build relationships with legislators
 2. Staff can attend meetings to keep WCCD in legislators/elected officials minds
3. NPEM and Board Elections, June 6th 2026
 - a. Board should plan to attend 7:30 am – 1pm
 - b. Attract attendees to Shed A where elections are being held by placing the free milkweed giveaway in the same area
 - c. As attendees enter/wait in line, encourage and direct towards voting
 - i. Station for checking residency/voting -> either at check-in or in Shed A
 - d. Board to procure “I voted” stickers to encourage participation
 - e. Could voters be entered into a giveaway by a partner org to encourage voting?
 - i. Roberts to check with MDARD Regional Coordinator
 - f. Information about candidates
 - i. Poster with QR code linking to bios on website

- ii. Roberts to ask Reith to add a reminder to vote in the upcoming tree sale pick-up reminder email

NEW BUSINESS

1. Associate Board Directors (5 min) – Roberts
 - a. Review of applications
 - b. Dohner/Brines to follow-up with invitation to April meeting to be appointed
2. Policy Updates (15 min)
 - a. Bonus Compensation for Reith
 - i. **Motion by Gabriel to approve bonus compensation for Doug Reith. Seconded by Dohner. Vote: 5 yays, 0 nays. Motion carried.**
 - b. AI Policy tabled – to be discussed at Leadership and/or HR Committees
3. Grant/MOU Updates (10 min) – Phillips Goldenberg
 - a. Upcoming Grants/MOU
 - i. MyFarms Digital Adoption
 1. Application was not ready in time for Erb Family Foundation
 2. EGLE would still like to pursue with GLRI funding (i.e. federal funds)
 3. MPG negotiated higher indirect, maximum compliant with Federal guidance since no NICRA
 4. Discussion regarding staff capacity and splitting HR/admin duties and programmatic reporting responsibilities
 5. Clarification that position would start in FY27
 6. Board asked Phillips Goldenberg to continue discussions
 - a. Is EGLE trying to obligate funds by a specific date?
 - b. Does OH have a CD that serves in the same capacity (i.e. host and fiduciary)?
 - b. Grant applications/MOUs for BOD approval
 - c. Pending Notice
 - i. NACD TA
 - ii. MDARD Ag Regen
 - d. Grants/MOU for BOD Signature
 - i. Ag Plastic Recycling Event MOU (TOPP Grant)
 1. **Motion by Denig to approve signing the MOU with Eaton County Resource Recovery Department for the Agricultural Recycling event funded by the TOPP grant. Seconded by Henes. Vote: 5 yays, 0 nays. Motion carried.**
 - e. Received in FY26 & uploaded to Google Drive
 - i. MDARD FY26 Grants: OPS, CS, CTAP, RAP
 - ii. Saline-Macon (subawardee of RRWC)
 - iii. County MOU Ag Tire Drive
4. State Council Updates
 - a. NACD Conference in Grand Rapids, July 17-22, 2026
 - i. Reimbursement available
 - ii. Brines and Dohner plan to attend

- b. MDARD & MACD plan to do trainings like last year
- c. Region 10 Meeting
 - i. To be held by Livingston County
 - 1. Brines and DeJonge to assist
 - 2. Date TBD, but likely September, 2026
- d. MACD likely changing email policy
 - i. Will not allow generic emails in the future
 - 1. Higher probability of going to spam
 - 2. More difficult to manage
- e. Encouraged to do Fischer Insurance risk reduction trainings
 - i. Clarification needed on Board of Directors or staff
- f. Region 10 Secretary position still open
 - i. Brines to look into whether an Associate Director could serve (MACD bylaws, not MDARD regulations)

NEXT MEETING:

- 1. Regular Board Meeting: Thursday, April 23rd at 6 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:22 PM

Motion by Denig to adjourn. Seconded by Gabriel.

Vote: 5 yays, 0 nays.

Motion carried.

THESE MINUTES STAND TO BE APPROVED.

MINUTES APPROVED

APPROVAL SIGNATURE: _____

ADJOURNMENT