



DELTA
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

DELTA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

GLADSTONE SERVICE CENTER.
2003 MINNEAPOLIS AVE. GLADSTONE, MI 49837

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Delta Conservation District Board was called to order at 5:40 p.m. on April 12, 2024, at the Delta County Service Center by Chair Joe Kaplan.

AGENDA

1. **Pledge of Allegiance.**
2. **Roll call:** Segorski, VandeWater, Brockman, Kaplan all PRESENT.
3. **Staff Present:** Heather LeDuc, District Manager.
4. **Approval of Agenda:** *Segorski motion, VandeWater second to approve agenda as presented. Motion carried.*
5. **Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** None.
6. **Public Comment on Agenda Items:** No public comment.
7. **Approval of Minutes:** *Brockman motioned, Segorski second to approve **March 13, 2024**, meeting minutes as amended.*

*Brockman motioned VandeWater second to approve minutes from **February 14, 2024**, that had been approved without a second. Motioned carried.*

8. **Treasures Report:** None due to accountants having not finished bank reconciliation.

9. Standing Committee Reports

a) **Personnel Report:** None.

b) **Property and Equipment:** Brockman moved side-by-side, tractor and a tree planter for the tree sale. Brockman and Segorski inventoried all equipment including serial numbers. Gravely mower will need to be brought in for service because of a recall notice. LeDuc will put inventory into a database. Discussion about consolidating the storage units by excessing surplus inventory (i.e. silt curtains).

c) Records: None.

d) Finance: The District is financially sound. Additional reporting under old business.

10. MDARD Report: LeDuc provided Rachael Guth's report.

11. NRCS Report: Mike Van Wyk –Mike provided details about an incident in MQT with an NRCS vehicle and the USDA is reviewing their policy regarding who is financially liable for damage. CTAI employees are covered by the NRCS but MAEAP Tech and FAP Forester may not. An additional insurance rider may be necessary to cover District liability. Mike provided updates on NRCS staff positions that will be filled soon. Provided updates on required Civil Rights compliance.

12. Staff Reports: Manager LeDuc; provided MAEAP and CTAI reports. Provided details on upcoming tree sale. Provided an update on options with the FAP position that was vacated by the resignation of the District's Forester. The District will continue to receive administration through our MDARD grant and both LeDuc and MAEAP Tech Holly Hendrick will cover need work as much as possible. Provided letter of support for possible project in Soo Hill with CUPPAD. Updates on the future of MAEAP through the State budgeting process.

13. Commission/Liaison Report: Liaison Commissioner Barron was not present. Commissioner Steve Viau was in attendance and commented favorably on the new logo. Viau expressed his interest in self-educating about the District and desires to have a relationship with the District although he is not officially assigned to the District by the County Commission and is here on his own initiative.

14. Unfinished Business

a) Attorney General Assistance: Kaplan has been in contact with the AG and will report AG recommendations under New Business.

b) Accounting firm – Manager LeDuc reported that after April 15 the Accounting firm will begin reconciliation. Accountants are running payroll through direct deposit. Segorski is working with LeDuc on District credit card.

c) County financial obligation to District: Finalizing the final payment for the District share of Parks revenue from FY 2023 and first quarter of FY 2024 which awaits reconciliation from our accountants for basic auditing. This would include approval of Steve Wery's claim for incentive pay which has been forwarded to the County for action.

d) Jointly-owned dump trailer with County and Rory Mattson: Reiterated details. County has a \$1k investment in the trailer, \$2K by Mattson, and \$3K by the District. Kaplan has attempted to contact original owners three times to request a reissued certificate of title. No response. Otherwise, the District will seek a surety bond and law enforcement inspection through the SOS.

e) Email requirements for Board members; Kaplan recommended that *all Board members and employees use MACD (Michigan Association of Conservation Districts) or NRCS email accounts so the District can be compliant with record retention laws concerning email (7-year retention requirement).* Brockman motioned, Segorski second. Motion passed.

f) MAEAP breach allegations by the County: Board felt this issue was addressed at the last meeting. County motioned for Administrator Young to put concerns in writing to the District regarding “discriminating” against the County under the MAEAP program. Kaplan reported that he has spoken with Administrator Young and will provide the County with all their MAEAP plans and they will have to decide on how or if they will share that information with the public. This information is required to be held in confidence by law. Kaplan reiterated there has been no disclosure of any information held in trust and the County has full access to the District’s programs without discrimination. Commissioner Viau indicated there’s much confusion over what the issues are at the County level. The board expressed its willingness to address issues with the County regarding the MAEAP program.

15. New Business

a) Payment of bills. *Motioned by Segorski, seconded by Brockman to pay bills as presented. Motion carried.* Members comment positively on the new presentation of bills.

b) Russ Ross resignation: Member Ross submitted a resignation letter to the board on March 29, 2024 (effective March 27, 2024) due to the ongoing direction of Chair Kaplan and the Board for the best interests of his health. The board wished him well. Brockman motioned to accept Russ Ross’s resignation. Motion carried. The Board has two options; leave the position vacant until the next annual meeting (in August) or appoint a new member to the vacancy. Ross’s seat is up for re-election in in 2025. Kaplan expressed his preference for breaking the low glass ceiling.

c) Mattson lawsuit: Mattson has filed a lawsuit against the District for a breach of contract regarding a bonus and DLA payout. On the advice of the AG’s office, the complaint was reported to our insurance company, and they have assigned council to handle this issue. Kaplan will communicate with the attorney next week.

d) Attorney General Response: Kaplan reviewed Attorney General letter sent to District on March 20, 2024, regarding possibly violation of District law by former District employee. Kaplan also provided details of a conversation with Senator McBroom following his letter to the editorial. Kaplan will answer the AG’s letter.

e) Vehicle acquisition: Brockman explained authorization for acquisition of a new District vehicle for staff use through MI Deal. Property and Equipment Committee (Brockman and Segorski) authorized Manager LeDuc to apply ahead of the deadline on April 12 at 5pm. Brockman recommended a new vehicle and indicated a Jeep Compass would be the best fit for the District's needs. The application can be cancelled without financial penalty to the District. *Segorski motioned to purchase a vehicle for District use with a cap of \$36,000, Brockman seconded. Roll call VandeWater, Brockman, Segorski, Kaplan all YES.* Discussion identified that Manager LeDuc and the Committee will make final decisions on the purchase. Kaplan inquired whether or not the District's budget would be need to be amended (Rachael Guth will assist LeDuc in reviewing) and insurance requirements.

f) Delta CD Branding: LeDuc discussed getting pricing on CD branded clothing and supplies for District events and functions for staff and board members. LeDuc presented a budget of approximately \$1300. Board members recommend working with a local supplier if possible and limit initial order to staff only at this time. *Brockman motion to authorize Le Duc to spend up to \$500 to purchase apparel for staff and keep it in Delta County. Motion passed.*

16. General Public Comment:

Chris Williams (Ford River Township): Provided comment on Delta County Commissioner's Barron, Moyle, and Petersen undermining the good work of both the Staff and Board of the Conservation District. Commended the Board and new Manager for staying true to the promise of accountability and transparency. Stay the course.

Tina Vanderlinden: Shared concerns and questions regarding the District's choice of accounting, IT services and providers, legal representation, MDARD's response and District actions regarding MAEAP. Why did Kaplan go through boxes of District records and what was he looking for, asked if any members had comment on why the District employee left due to a "toxic work environment" and a "witch-hunt".

17. Board member comments: **Brockman:** Commended the board on the progress of the District and shared appreciation of the job that Heather LeDuc is doing as District Manager; also thanked Chris Williams for help on behalf of the District. **VandeWater:** Read the MOU between Districts to promote the mission of Conservation Districts to protect natural resources and assist community conservation. Shared concerns over divisiveness. **Segorski:** Indicated he has provided enough comments this week. **Kaplan:** Provided comments on potential consequences of transparency and accountability and how this may create challenges between an elected board and a hired staff.

18. Adjourned: Brockman motioned, Segorski second to adjourn at 7:20pm.

These draft minutes submitted by Chair Kaplan. Complete meeting recording available on the District's YouTube channel (<https://youtu.be/vaQY5nbvM7w>) or through the District's website at [Board Meetings \(deltacd.org\)](https://www.deltacd.org) (<https://www.deltacd.org/board-meetings.html>).

Meeting Minutes approved on May 8, 2024

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glenn Vandewater". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Glenn Vandewater, Secretary

