



## DELTA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

6822 US HIGHWAY 2, 41, and M35 - GLADSTONE, MI 49837

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### BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 13, 2023

A meeting of the Delta Conservation District was called to order at 2:00 P.M. on November 13, 2023, at the Delta County Service Center by Delta Conservation District Chair Joe Kaplan

#### AGENDA

##### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Directors Roll Call:** PRESENT: Kaplan, Brockman, Segorski, VandeWater. ABSENT: Ross

**Staff Present:** Rory Mattson, Steve Wery

**Conflict of Interest:** None

**Public Comment on Agenda Items:** None

**Approval of Agenda;** "District Truck" was added to New Business. *Agenda was approved without a motion.*

**Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** None

**Treasurer Report:** Treasurer's report from September 2023 was discussed but not approved. *Segorski moved, Brockman second to approve the September 2023 Treasurer Report. Motion carried.*

Question arose from the October 2023 Treasurer's report: Tree Farm inspection and Forester receiving payment for this service. According to Mattson board policy states that Forester receives half of the \$100 fee charged for inspection. Per diem policy of the District dictates Board members can receive \$40 per meeting for *Regular* board meetings. Mr. Ross' per diem check included payment for two "*Special*" meetings of the board so the amount of the payment will be adjusted from \$280 to \$200 (see Payment of Bills). A bill for \$10,000 was received for tree planting services. This is a cost-share program with the NRCS and the District previously received \$10,600 for this work. *Segorski motioned, second by VandeWater to accept the October 2023 Treasurer Report. Motion carried.*

**Approval of Minutes:** Corrections/Additions to the September 2023 Minutes included a date correction for the August 29, 2023 meeting and indicating who motioned and seconded the Treasurer's Report. *VandeWater motioned, seconded by Brockman to approve the Minutes from September 27, 2023 as amended. Motioned carried.* The October meeting minutes were not completed due to a miscommunication, however, Mattson provided his and Kaplan's notes from the meeting. *VandeWater motioned, seconded by Segorski to table approval of the October 13, meeting minutes. Motioned carried.*

### **Standing Committee Reports (18:45):**

**Personnel Committee:** VanderWater provided updates on the posting for District Manager. A few applicants have applied, deadline for the position has been extended “until filled”. Interviews will be conducted by the Personnel Committee along with a representative from MDARD and NRCS.

**Property & Equipment:** Agreement was reached with MSU to purchase the firewood processor. The processor is in excellent working condition per Steve Wery. Discussion regarding the processor already in possession of MSU as payment has not yet been received – Brockman will address this with MSU. Segorski provided an update on the progress moving the District office out of Pioneer Trail Park. Questions regarding taxidermy, wood stoves were addressed by Mattson. The status of the District-owned travel trailer on the District property was discussed. Rory indicated it was purchased in 2012, has not had a lot of use. Rory has the title and will locate the keys, Brockman will follow up on this with Rory.

**Records (37:00):** Christine Williams provided a draft report on her findings regarding District-owned technology and online accounts/resources. One issue highlighted in the report regarding domain accounts was updated on 11/13/2023 with information provided by GoDaddy the District’s domain host. Evidently, invoices electronically provided by GoDaddy may update whenever changes are made to the domain – this will be updated in the report. Rory added that there are additional external drives (flash or zip drives) at the District office and there is an upcoming training by MDARD regarding the new retention policy. Williams answered questions regarding the report. Williams will submit a revised report at the December board meeting.

Terry Burkart, the District’s attorney who resigned on September 1, 2023, has provided the District’s case files. These files will need to be processed to determine what will be made available through FOIA.

Segorski has been compiling a list of potential attorneys to replace Burkart’s firm as our general council.

**Finance Committee:** Segorski indicated that our primary contact at “Schneider, Larch, Haapala” is out on medical leave so there are no updates concerning hiring this firm as our accountant.

Segorski shared concerns that the District’s holdings at First Bank and Peninsula Federal Credit Union Bank exceed the FDIC ceiling of \$250,000. Mattson added that First Bank and the credit union provide private insurance for anything that exceeds FDIC limits. Segorski explained an alternative option for insurance through the Certificate of Deposit Account Registry Service or CDARS. Segorski will continue to work on this issue.

**Parks and Forests Committee:** Brockman indicated the District is on a holding pattern due to deer hunting regarding progress on the Cornell Forest Property regarding the motion adopted at the October 13, 2023 meeting.

**MDARD Report:** None, though Rory indicated he would forward Rachael Guth's report and information on the MDARD training regarding records retention.

**NRCS Report:** None.

**Staff Report:** Steve Wery indicated all the pads for the electric power are in at Pioneer Trail Park though they are not energized. Trenching to the five cabins is being completed. UPPCO has completed their work. Steve thanked the District for the use of the wood-processor and tractor - the woodshed is full and there is firewood at OB Fuller. Silt-fence is installed at OB Fuller to keep sand off the road. Brockman recommended donating the remaining silt-fence to the County.

Masse's Floor Coating LLC of DePere returned to address some issues with the epoxy floor that was installed in the spring at the bathhouse at OB Fuller Park. Steve was grateful that they stood behind their product and the floor is high quality and looks "brand new".

Brockman expressed interest in storing the District's side-by-side and tractor at Pioneer Park for the winter. Steve asked Ashleigh Young, County Administrator, if the District could store equipment overwinter at OB Fuller, she would check with her grounds committee as soon as she could schedule a meeting.

Brockman also mentioned dump trailer ownership that is split 3-ways between the District, the County, and Rory Mattson. Steve was thanked for his service as the Parks look great.

**Commissioner's Liaison Report (1:27):** Commissioner Barron relayed that the resolution passed by the County board opposing legislation preempting local zoning control over industrial wind and solar is a moot point because days later it was passed by the Senate and awaits Governor Whitmer's signature. At the Chair's request, Commissioner Barron provided the following quote; "Genius is eternal patience" – Michelangelo.

**Unfinished Business (1:29):**

**Attorney General Assistance:** In accordance with the motion passed at the October 2023 Board meeting Kaplan reached out to the Attorney General. Awaiting response.

**Public Records Destruction:** per discussion of technology report (see Record Committee) Kaplan emphasized that staff should not be deleting email. Mattson indicated that the Board made that very clear in July.



## **New Business (1:30):**

**Payment of the Bills:** Segorski indicated that the bills have been reviewed and the only modification needed is to adjust Director Russ Ross' per diem from \$280 to \$200. *Segorski motioned, Brockman seconded to pay the bills with the Ross per diem adjustment. Motioned carried.*

**Review option to purchase YouTube premium to broadcast the monthly Board meetings.** For approximately \$130 year the District can subscribe to YouTube ad free. Brockman motioned to subscribe to YouTube Premium, seconded by Segorski. Motioned carried.

**Review options to hire an outside source to take monthly meeting minutes.** VandeWater indicated it may be to the Board's advantage to investigate options for hiring the taking of board minutes. *Segorski motioned, Kaplan seconded to authorize VandeWater to explore the options of hiring someone to take board meeting minutes. Motion carried.* Mattson added the Board motions have been improving and after the first of the year producing meeting minutes may not be as involved as they have been recently.

**Discuss and propose Work Session to review and modify, if necessary, the District Personnel Policy:** VandeWater recommend a work session to go over the District's Personnel Policy. Kaplan suggested he meet with Mattson and VandeWater to begin the process. The Board has invited staff to make recommendations.

**Discuss moving monthly meeting to after 5PM so the public can participate more readily:** VandeWater and Brockman expressed interest in moving meeting times to the evening to encourage more public attention. Board consensus is to move meetings to 5pm or later. Kaplan will check with Service Center regarding availability if we change times to 5pm or later.

**NRCS Early Release:** Mattson raised periodic early release by the Federal Government prior to Federal holidays. *Brockman motioned, Segorski seconded to follow Federal early release guidelines for District staff. Motioned carried.*

**Potential Federal Government Shutdown.** Mattson explained the implications of a Government shutdown on November 19, 2023. Mattson recommends the same contingency for all District staff as NRCS employees will not have access to Federal computers. No action taken.

**Credit card machine:** With the office move Mattson sought guidance for retaining a credit card machine for District business, especially for District tree sales. Mattson will check the details of costs and report back to the board for the December meeting. No action taken.

**Purchase for a Copy Copier.** Mattson recommends purchase of a new color copier from Cooper. Purchase would require a monthly maintenance agreement. No action was taken, review again in December.

**MOU between Delta and Schoolcraft Conservation Districts for the Forest Assistance Program (FAP)**

**(1:53):** Mattson explained this MOU was developed between Ashleigh Ritter Schoolcraft Co District Manager and District Forester Lyndsey Johnson and this is the first time Schoolcraft Conservation District is willing to sign an MOU regarding the FAP assistance provided by the District. Mattson supports the MOU. The time necessary to fulfil this MOU will be covered under the MDARD grant that supports Johnson's position. *VandeWater moved to approve the MOU between Delta and Schoolcraft Conservation Districts for the FAP Program, seconded by Segorski. Motion approved.*

**Confirmation letter to secure deposits.** Covered under Committee Reports during banking discussion. Year-end Updates on 2023 Park Service Provided to the County. Mattson has been reviewing the 2023 Park finances and met with Ashleigh Young (County Administrator) last week to discuss expenses related to the Fuller Park Bath House improvements paid for with Covid-relief funding to the County. The District is due to be reimbursed \$33,517.83 for the project. Future meetings will determine and finalize the payment for the District's share of Park revenue. Mattson indicated that the Parks may have set records for camping because of good weather.

**Michigan Association of Conservation District's Resolution from Delta and Schoolcraft County (2:08):**

Discussion regarding the Qualified Forest Program (QFP) advisory committee recommendations that QFP plans that a qualified Conservation District FAP forester could make a simple amendment to a QFP plan to bring a plan back into compliance with MDARD approval. VandeWater motioned to accept the forest management plan amendment for the Qualified Forest Program to present at the MACD meeting, seconded by Brockman. Motioned carried.

**Update and Questions on the MACD Annual Conference (2:21):** Mattson provided updates on the four resolutions to be voted upon at the Annual Conference. Resolutions include 1) Changing the structure of membership dues from four options to two options; 2) Request the State Legislature updating the Open Meetings Act to allow for virtual meetings through Zoom; 3) Revise MACD bylaws to allow changes in board elections at the Regional summer meetings instead of just at the Annual Meeting; 4) Revision to appointment of regular regional officers to fill a vacant board seat by the President of MACD from 120 to 60 days. Brockman motioned to support resolutions one (1), three (3), and four (4), and to not support resolution two (2), with the option of the Members (Segorski and VandeWater) present to change the District's vote at the Conference based on discussion, Segorski seconded. Motion carried.

**Delta Conservation District Truck (2:32):** Mattson informed the board that the truck is now at the District office in Gladstone with keys for the gas tank and the BP gas credit card. The limit on the credit card from the bank needs to be increased to cover expenses at the upcoming MACD Conference.

**General Public Comment (2:36):**

*Anne McNamara (Escanaba):* Recommended looking at board policy concerning attendance of board members. Concerning District banking - recommended asking questions concerning the details of the insurance company that that First Bank uses to insure accounts (exceeding FDIC limits) such as who owns the insurance company and what is their record. Concerning CDARS – does that system reallocate

money between banks or is it an agreement to share losses? Recommended an online presence for the District tree sale.

*Christine Williams (Ford River Township):* Questioned if the bank has insurance based on collateral and if that collateral is owned by the bank. How does the bank agreement get update as the amounts of the District holdings change. The domain for the Park which exists within the District's domain provider GoDaddy needs to be separated from the District and conversation should begin with the County to transfer the domain to the County.

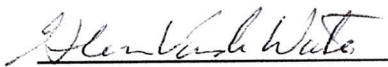
*Kelli Van Ginhoven (Escanaba):* Regarding the time change for District meetings would recommend a 5:30 or 6:00pm start for working people. Reiterated McNamara's concern regarding a board member that is going to miss half of the District's board meetings this year.

**Board Member Comments: (2:41):** Kaplan explained that under Conservation District law a Board member can only be removed for malfeasance and poor attendance does not meet that criteria according to the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Mattson added that the District had investigated this issue once when a Board member only attended two meetings in a year, so this issue has been brought up in the past. Mattson indicated the tree sale was online and supported retaining having a catalog as many of the people buying trees are older and prefer a catalog. Rory also shared that he has been working with Brandon regarding internet issues and the park domain will transfer to County by the end of December.

**Adjourn:** Motioned by Segorski, second by Brockman to adjourn the meeting at 4:45pm.

*These draft minutes submitted by Kaplan. Complete meeting recording available on the District's YouTube channel at [Delta Conservation District Board Meeting 10-13-2023 - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhrPtFK6KPo) (<https://youtu.be/XhrPtFK6KPo>) or through the District's website at [Board Meetings \(deltacd.org\)](https://www.deltacd.org/board-meetings.html) (<https://www.deltacd.org/board-meetings.html>)*

Meeting Minutes approved on December 13, 2023



*Glenn Vandewater, Secretary*