



DELTA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

6822 US HIGHWAY 2, 41, and M35 - GLADSTONE, MI 49837
(906) 553-7700

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 23, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 P.M. on August 23, 2023, at the Delta County Service Center, Escanaba, MI 49829, by Delta Conservation District Director Russ Ross.

Pledge of Allegiance

Directors Present: Russ Ross, Mike Segorski, Glenn VandeWater, Nate Brockman, and Joe Kaplan.

Staff Present: Rory Mattson & Tina Vanderlinden.

Election of Officers:

Chair: Brockman nominated Kaplan; Roll call – Segorski, VandeWater, Brockman, Ross & Kaplan voted for Kaplan; Kaplan was elected. **Treasurer:** VandeWater nominated Segorski; Ross nominated Ross; Roll Call – Kaplan, Segorski, VandeWater, Brockman voted for Segorski; Ross voted for Ross; Segorski was elected, Vice-Chair: Segorski nominated Brockman; Roll Call-Kaplan, Segorski, VandeWater, Brockman & Ross voted for Brockman; Brockman was elected. **Secretary:** Segorski nominated VandeWater; Roll Call – Kaplan, Segorski, VandeWater, Brockman & Ross voted for VandeWater; VandeWater was elected.

Public Comment on Agenda Items: None.

Approval of Agenda: Brockman motioned to approve the draft agenda; VandeWater seconded; motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Segorski motioned to table all previous minutes; Brockman seconded; motion carried.

Approval of Treasurer Report (July): Segorski motioned to table the Treasurer report; VandeWater seconded; motion carried.

County Commissioner Report: Barron update on county forest easement & Ashley Young has a new contract.

Board Member Reports: VandeWater made statements: he would like to expand the Districts involvement with the public; he has a concern that there may be potential District liability resulting from questionable accounting practices from this District as well as contractual agreements that haven't been scrutinized by legal council on behalf of the District and therefore motioned to have the District employ the services of the State of Michigan and/or special council to conduct a forensic investigation of all administrative activities and advise the board of any action that should be taken; Segorski seconded; discussion ensued that added "special legal

counsel and or AG assistance”; Roll Call: Ross abstained; Brockman abstained; Segorski voted NO; Kaplan abstained; VandeWater voted YES; Motion failed.

CEO Report: Updated board on current park issue of removing campers that don’t follow the rules and/or causing problems in the campground. Meeting was held with County Administration, Prosecutor & Sheriff to determine the best way to handle the situations.

Old Business

Lease of District Property: After discussion Brockman motioned to table; VandeWater seconded; motion carried.

FOIA Policy: After discussion Brockman motioned to table; VandeWater seconded; motion carried.

DLA Early Payout: Mattson had requested an early payout of his DLA account. After discussion Brockman motioned to deny request per policy which requires separation of service; VandeWater seconded; motion carried.

New Business

Establish New Committees: Kaplan explained under the Open Meetings Act (OMA) a quorum of the board cannot meet outside of a public meeting to discuss District business. Under a Committee structure board members can be empowered meet, discuss, and take direction. Committees are limited to two board member but could include others outside the board. Committees would allow board members to represent the board to work with staff, outside council, advisors, etc. Mattson added that the District has always had Personnel and Finance Committees.

New Committees Continued: Kaplan asked the board who would like to be on each committee:

Personnel: Kaplan & VandeWater

Property & Equipment: Brockman & Segorski

Records: Kaplan & VandeWater

Finances: Segorski & Ross

Parks & Forests (ad hoc until December 32, 2023): Brockman & Kaplan

Kaplan motioned to accept the slate of Committee members as listed and if team members have consensus report to the rest of the board and identify which staff is accountable to each committees. Discussion continued about specifics (i.e. firewood and park equipment). Kaplan restated the motion to accept the Committee assignments as presented and Committees have full authority to investigate and make recommendations to the full board, if necessary. VandeWater seconded; additional discussion by Steve Wery on interfacing with the County during the transition of parks back to the county. Roll Call: Kaplan, Segorski, VandeWater, Brockman & Ross - YES.

Proposed Future Agenda Format: A proposed future agenda form was passed out by Kaplan that moves MDARD, NRCS, staff up on the agenda before old and new business. Segorski motioned to accept the new format for future meeting ; Brockman seconded; motion carried.

Insurance Policy: Kaplan contacted Fisher Insurance, the District's agency to discuss optional insurance coverage such as Directors and Liability insurance. Brockman motioned, Segorski seconded to move ahead to explore insurance options. Kaplan will work with staff and Fisher Ins. to get costs associated with these optional policies. Roll Call: Kaplan, Segorski, VandeWater, Brockman and Ross – Yes.

Review Open Contracts: Motion by Brockman to table until Rory puts the list together; seconded by Segorski; motion carried.

Personnel Policy Changes: Brockman indicated that Rory's title of CEO is unique among District and with a progressive board the CEO position is not needed and that the District will rely on a District Manager. Brockman motioned that the Board no longer recognize the CEO position and recognize Rory as the District Manager and he will be succeeded by a District Manager and change policy where the Manager supervises the staff but all decisions regarding personell is vested in the Board. Seconded by VandeWater. Mattson explained that the CEO position was unique because Rory was also the Forester so his position was funded through MDARD and the District Manager is supported through operations. Roll Call: Ross-Yes, Segorski – Yes, VandeWater, Brockman – Yes, and Kaplan – Yes.

Communications:

- i. **Website Updating** – Portions of the website are outdated. Mattson will update.
- ii. **Website posting meeting agendas** – Kaplan as chair will be responsible and will share with staff.
Manager will provide recommendations.
- iii. **Website posting meeting minutes** – post per OMA including signing and date approved.
- iv. **Recording Meetings** – Kaplan would like future recording for archived records. Kaplan will talk with the administration of county to setup. Mattson informed the board that the room is controlled by Michigan Works. Kaplan to talk with Michigan Works and also NRCS for room information.
- v. **District Liaison to the public** – Kaplan wanted to work with partners, not the staff for contact. After discussion Kaplan tabled this item.
- vi. **Staff Response to Board Email Inquiries:** Kaplan would like quicker responses.
VandeWater responded that he doesn't know staff and would like to meet with the staff and get to know what they do and what are their qualifications.
- vii. **MACD Emails for Board Members:** Kaplan suggested that all board members should get MACD emails.

All items under District Communications – no motions were made

Operations & Succession Planning:

- i. **MDARD Guidance** – Guth gave update for MDARD and recommended review of onboarding materials.
- ii. **Operations Review** – Suggested subcommittee would do or hold public workshop (Kaplan & VandeWater).
- iii. **Element 1-4 Review** – Tabled to a later date.

- iv. **Professional Services (legal, accounting, auditing, insurance):** VandeWater motioned to discharge the responsibilities to the chair; Brockman seconded; Roll Call – Ross, Segorski, VandeWater, Brockman & Kaplan voted – YES.

v.

Fred Niquette SESC: Mattson discussed a complaint associated with the dynamiting of a bluff on the Stonington. Rory relayed that the violation is now the jurisdiction for the complaint is the Corps & Egle and the District has no current role in the matter.

Easement Agreement Cornell Forest – Kaplan shared concerns of Rory using his position for personal gain when he negotiated to purchased private property adjacent to the Cornell Forest, a Michigan Natural Resources project, when he employed by the District and while representing Delta County on the project.

Kaplan motioned to seek legal services from the AG to look into the matter of the easement across Rory Mattson's property adjacent to the Cornell Forest purchased by the county through the Natural Resources Trust Fund; Segorski seconded; During discussion Ross left due to health issue's; Roll Call – Brockman, VandeWater, Segorski & Kaplan voted – YES.

Staff Correspondence: None.

MDARD Correspondence: Guth informed the board of her monthly email called Partner Report and gave brief updates.

NRCS Correspondence: None.

General Public Comment: Several individuals from the public made comments to the board.

CD Directors Comments – Several board members made comments.

Next Meeting: Tuesday August 29th, 2023, at 2 p.m.; place to be determined.

Adjourned - *Adjourned at 5:09 P.M.*

Respectfully submitted by Tina Vanderlinden & Rory Mattson: Additional edits by Joe Kaplan.

These Minutes Approved 27 September 2023


Glenn VandeWater Secretary