OTTAWA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan

Minutes
Regular Meeting, Zoom
7pm, Tuesday January 5th, 2021

ATTENDENCE:
Megan Boos, Executive Director
Lexie Kasper, Administrative Specialist
David Pyle, Chair
Todd Bowen, Vice Chair
Douglas Grotenrath, Treasurer
Callie Melton, Director
Lester Langeland, Director
Heather Varboncoeur, District Conservationist
Tim Van Dyke, Public Attendee
Erik Nordman, Public Attendee
Jack Knorek, MDARD Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER Time: 7:01 PM

- Invocation: Dave Pyle

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Regular Board Meeting: December 1st, 2020**
- **Motion:** Lester Langeland **Second/Support:** Todd Bowen **Vote:** Passes

PUBLIC COMMENT

- No public comment

STAFF AND PARTNERING AGENCY REPORTS

Megan Boos, Executive Director- Report given

- Had MACD conference last month, as well as GLEXPO.
- Between holiday time the district has been focused on wrapping things up and getting prepared for new projects.

Lexie Kasper, Administrative Specialist – Report attached
Heather Varboncoeur, NRCS District Conservationist –Report given

- No longer acting as temporary DC for Allegan county.
- Have been working on getting applications funded and been out certifying practices. Much work was paused last year due to change in cost, will resume this summer and be very busy.
- Ottawa is getting a summer student trainee.
- Currently have: 9 EQIP applications, 2 easement applications, CRP applications. Huge shoutout to Sara Bronkema who has helped get people to the EQIP program.
- Partnering with Eastmanville Farm park on a grazing project. This project is very slow moving.
- Organizing training for Conservation Desktop for Feb.
- EQIP deadline for 2021 applications is January 22nd.
- NRCS office at phase 0 for covid, means no one in the office.
- Question: Are the projects resuming this year already approved? Answer: Yes, these are already contracted and funded.

Sara Bronkema, MAEAP Technician – Report attached
Drew Rayner, WMCISMA Coordinator- Report attached
Ben Jordan, Conservation Technician- Report attached

- Question: In reviewing past Sand Creek grant and future Crockery Creek grant, what stance does the board have in reviewing contracts and ensuring that projects are fiscally responsible? Answer: Board should review grants as they are presented in the board packet. Megan will put extra focus on any future construction projects we are involved in. If we receive the grant, Crockery creek will not involve engineering projects as it closely models the work we do in Bass River/Deer Creek.

Frank Schroyer, Watershed Technician- Report attached
Ben Savoie, Forester-Report attached

OLD BUSINESS

- Natural Resource Assessment- Conservation Needs Assessment
    - Name updated by MACD to Conservation Needs Assessment. Currently in the process of putting this document together. Goal of having it written by the beginning of summer. After that it will be used to come up with the strategic plan. Will be trying to update and guide the 5-year plan yearly by providing more survey and focus group opportunities.
- Grant application update: Urban Forestry
    - Were not awarded this grant. Reached out for feedback on how to reapply for success this year. Does not change anything we are currently offering as services. Other recipients were entities not doing as much outreach because outreach is harder to fund right now.
- COVID update

- USDA office building is level 0 so we do not enter the building unless necessary. We will return to the office on 1/18 on a rotating schedule so there is not a lot of exposure in the office. After a month we will revisit the rotating schedules to see where we stand. We may be able to have a small in person board meeting next month.

NEW BUSINESS

- Financial:
  - Financial Statements: December bank reconciliations and bill payment (Vote)
    - **Motion:** Doug Grotenrath **Second/Support**: Callie Melton **Vote:** Passes
  - Discussion took place on if Douglas Grotenrath would be allowed to sign minutes in cases where Dave may be unavailable or to reduce person to person contact during these times. The motion is for both Dave and Doug to be able to sign minutes.
    - **Motion:** Todd Bowen **Second:** Doug Grotenrath **Vote:** Passes
  - Vehicles: Expiration of lease on Trax
    - Trax was a 3-year lease, the lease is ending in April. We paid the whole lease up front through a grant. It would be $11,000 to buy it outright when the lease ends. Will probably not buy it out. The district is looking to replace 2 vehicles and will keep the board updated as they search.
  - Annual insurance payments review
    - This time of year, all insurance payments are due. Financials will reflect those payments over the next few months. District pays insurance, not grants.
- Human Resources:
  - Work agreements & position descriptions
    - Additions to Lexie Kasper's position. Would go from 25 hours a week to 30 hours.
      - **Motion:** Callie Melton **Second:** Doug Grotenrath **Vote:** Passes
  - Forest Pest Technician Position
    - Drew has continued to find funding for the invasives work. We need 2 Forest Pest Technicians added to the team. This will increase our FPT team from 4 to 6. Have enough funding to have a team this size for the next 2 years.
    - Question: Will we need vehicles for additional crew? Answer: If we do need them they will be paid for by WMCSMA work. Question: What work will FPTs be doing; diseases or invasives? Answer: They will be working with HWA and assisting in the work that we are doing for West Michigan.
  - Workman's compensation claims
    - A FPT did get bone bruise from an incident in Oct. Will be returning this month after following all protocol from medical professionals.
- FY21 Board Election update
  - 2 seats this year
  - 3 individuals running
    - Doug Grotenrath
    - Tim Van Dyke
    - Erik Nordman
  - Will be getting bios and meet & greet info from candidates

- Currently planning annual meeting, will update board as we come to decisions
  - March 2nd
- How will in person voting go if we are zooming?
  - Megan has been discussing ideas with other districts on how to hold safe voting, such as drive up voting.

- MACD fall training
  - Was held virtually. Sessions were still very beneficial.
    - New operations manual unveiled. Exciting update as it gives a great framework for the district.

CORRESPONDENCE:
P.A. 116: N/A
PUBLIC NOTICE: *N/A*
ADJOURN – Time: 8:00 PM
Motion: Doug Grotenrath **Second/Support:** Todd Bowen **Vote:** Passes
Next meeting: 7:00 pm, February 2nd, 2021

Sign:_____ Date:_____