OTTAWA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan

Minutes
Regular Meeting, USDA Service Center, Grand Haven MI
7pm, Tuesday May 4th, 2021

ATTENDANCE:
Megan Boos, Executive Director
Lexie Kasper, Administrative Specialist
Ben Jordan, Watershed Technician
Heather Varboncoeur, NRCS District Conservationist
Dave Pyle, Chairman
Tim VanDyke, Vice Chairman
Doug Grotenrath, Treasurer
Callie Melton, Director
Lester Langeland, Director

CALL TO ORDER Time: 7:02 PM

- **Invocation:** Lester Langeland

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Regular Board Meeting:** April 6th, 2021
- **Motion to approve minutes:** Callie Melton **Second/Support:** Doug Grotenrath **Vote:** Passes

PUBLIC COMMENT

- No public comment

STAFF AND PARTNERING AGENCY REPORTS

Megan Boos, Executive Director- Report given

- Tree sale took up a large portion of the last month, along with HR work.
- HR work included:
    - Posting the Forest Tech position
    - Interviewing and hiring ecological technicians
    - Beginning interviews for MAEAP techs
    - Annual Reviews for HWA crew
    - Onboarding for Joe Vander Yacht
- Grant management was another large portion of the month.

Lexie Kasper, Administrative Specialist – Report attached
Heather Varboncoeur, NRCS District Conservationist –Report attached
Katie Droscha, CTAI Soil Conservationist - Report attached
Ben Jordan, Conservation Technician- Report given

- Overview given on the Bass River/Deer Creek:

- 2020 was really successful for the BRDC program. Over 4000 acres of cover crops were funded and there may be additional funding to the grant this year for getting that many acres funded again.
- The septic portion of the grant is not seeing as many applications as years past, so the district would like to see a larger influx of applications this year. Ben has increased outreach efforts to attempt this. If we aren't seeing the septic applications we want by the fall, it may be possible to move some of this funding into the agricultural portion of the grant.
- We are currently weighing the pros and cons of having a phase four of this project.

- The District is still waiting for an official announcement on the Crockery/Sand Creek 319 grant.
- The Pigeon River Watershed Management Plan project is still going well and on track.
- Discussion ensues on if farmers will stop doing cover crops is we don't keep grant funding in the BRDC watershed. The consensus is that farmers have been funded for 3 years now, and data shows that typically they will be in the habit of doing it on their own because by this point, they are seeing their soil health improve. It is also noted that the purpose to cost-sharing cover crops is to allow farmers to try this practice and see it for themselves, while reducing the financial risk of trying something new but not to perpetually fund them. Discussion ensues on what requirements are in place for producers to get funding for cover crops, using cover crops with conventional tillage vs. no tillage systems, educating the public these practices, and the pros and cons of farmland preservation.

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

Highlighted program: Pigeon River Management Plan, NOAA- B-Wet project & RCPP (Frank Schroyer)

- This program highlight has been deferred to next month and Ben Jordan's program highlights were presented instead.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Tree Sale Update:** *You will find our final profit and loss in your board packet*
  - Revenue for tree sale was over $13,000 and the district sold out. It was a very successful tree sale.
- **Native Plant Sale Update:** *You will find our order form, catalog and profit and loss in our packet*
  - The sale is going well, the district's funding goal for both the spring and fall sales is $5000 total and we are around $3500 right now so that goal should be met.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Financial:**
  - **Financial Statements: April bank reconciliations and bill payment:** *See financial packet for our profit & loss, balance sheet, and account reconciliations.* (Vote)
  - Megan Boos presents this month's financial packet and how the "close the door" fund is calculated. Discussion ensues on the MAEAP advance that the district received (all district's receive this) and if that will affect us because we don't currently have a MAEAP technician. The consensus is that hypothetically it could affect us but it most likely will not. Even if it takes a long time to get a MAEAP tech, they are very open to working with the district and would probably be able to push it to the next fiscal year. Questions are also answered about the purpose of the groundwater funding from the county, the purpose of which was to expand capacity to assist the county with their Groundwater

Sustainability Initiative. Discussion ensues on how the financial documents could be labeled more clearly, and Megan's goals to have the existing tables fully updated by next month, as well as future plans to break the financial reporting down even more for clarity. Further discussion takes place on how to balance the growing grant management and financial responsibilities of the district.

  - **Motion to approve bank reconciliations and bill payment:** Callie Melton **Second/Support:** Doug Grotenrath **Vote:** Passes

- **Human Resources**
  - **Forest Pest Technician:** *You will find their annual reviews and updated work agreement in your board packet*
  - **CISMA Coordinator:** *You will find Joe Vander Yacht's bio and work agreement in your packet*
  - **Ecological Technicians (4):** *We have hired our strike team for the summer. You will find their work agreements in your packet*
    - **Motion to pass all listed work agreements:** Doug Grotenrath **Second/Support:** Callie Melton **Vote:** Passes
  - **MAEAP Technician**: Update given by Megan Boos, interviews are taking place
- **MACD:** *Virtual training for both staff and board*
  - Summer training is coming up in June. Megan and office staff will be attending. Any board members are also welcomed to attend.
- **Grant Update**
  - **RCPP announcement**: *You will find the news release in you board packet. We will also discuss the next steps in the process*
    - There is a not a lot of information for this grant yet. Megan and Frank will be attending an entrance call on Thursday, and then Frank will be here next month to give the board more information.
  - **MISGP CORE IS20-8002:** Execution, *you will find the grant documents in your packet*
    - Megan executed this grant; it is solely to pay Joe.
  - **Pending:**
    - Crockery Creek and Sank Creek 319 (700,000, Federal) Pending
    - Watershed Counsel (40,000, Federal) Pending
      - Discussion ensues on when we will hear about these grants, other potential options for funding, and what these grants are written for. No action items are discussed.

CORRESPONDENCE: N/A

ADJOURN – **Time:** 8:03 PM

Motion to adjourn: Tim Van Dyke **Second/Support:** Lester Langeland **Vote:** Passes

Next Meeting: 7:00 PM, June 1st, 2021

Sign: Date: