OTTAWA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan

OTTAWA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes

Regular Meeting, USDA Service Center, Grand Haven MI
6 pm on Tuesday, April 8th, 2025

Matthew Hehl 5-13-2025

CALL TO ORDER: 6:01
Invocation: Tim VanDyke
ROLL CALL:
Becky Huttenga - Present
Rivka Hodgkinson - Present
Tim VanDyke - Present
Doug Grotenrath - Present
Matt Hehl - Present

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES
APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Motion to approve minutes and agenda as presented: Becky Huttenga **Support:** Tim VanDyke
Vote: Passes

PUBLIC COMMENT

STAFF 2 MIN HIGHLIGHTS
Staff provide quick highlights on their programs for the month.

QUESTIONS ON BOARD REPORTS
Murielle Garbarinos- CISMA Coordinator – Report
Will Latham- Invasive Species Specialist - Report
Morgan Anderson- Produce Safety Technician - Report
Forest Pest Technicians - Report
Ben Jordan, Watershed Programs Coordinator - Report
Sarah Bowman, Watershed & Conservation Specialist - Report
Meghan Bannink, RCPP Project Manager - Report
Tracey Weatherwax, Soil Conservation Technician - Report
Andrew Booher, MAEAP/CTAP Coordinator - Report
Ben Savoie, Forester - Report
MDARD - Report

PARTNER UPDATES
Ibrahima Kane provides an update on NRCS programs, active applications and contracts, etc.
Jack has provided a partner report for MDARD

Executive Director Report - Interim Team

Monthly Program Highlight: None

- **Operations:**
  - Annual Meeting Budget and Attendance (Update)

- Sarah provides a quick update on the annual meeting budget, and mentions with registration fees and sponsorships we ended up with a budget surplus of $141.

- Oath of Office Acknowledgement (Recognize receipt of Oath of Offices)
  - Minor edits to the oaths of office were made to the expiration dates
  - Board recognizes receipt of the Oaths of Offices
- Election of Officers (Nominations and Votes)
  - **Matt Hehl opens the floor for nominations for Chair**
    - Tim VanDyke nominates Matt Hehl
    - Rivka Hodgkinson nominated Becky Huttenga for Chair
    - Roll call vote:
      - Becky Huttenga votes for - Becky Huttenga
      - Rivka Hodgkinson votes for - Becky Huttenga
      - TIm VanDyke votes for - Matt Hehl
      - Doug Grotenrath votes for - Matt Hehl
      - Matt Hehl votes for - Matt Hehl
    - **Matt Helh is voted in as chairman**
  - Vice Chair
    - Doug Grotenrath nominates Becky Huttenga for Vice Chair
    - Roll call vote
      - Doug Grotenrath votes for - Becky Huttenga
      - Tim VanDyke votes for - Becky Huttenga
      - Rivka Hodgkinson votes for - Becky Huttenga
      - Becky Huttenga votes for - Becky Huttenga
    - **Becky Huttenga is voted in as Vice Chair**
  - Secretary/Treasurer
    - Tim VanDyke nominates Doug Grotenrath as Treasurer
    - Roll call vote
      - Becky Huttenga votes for - Doug Grotenrath
      - Rivka Hodgkinson votes for - Doug Grotenrath
      - Tim VanDyke votes for - Doug Grotenrath
      - Doug Grotenrath votes for - Doug Grotenrath
    - **Doug Grotenrath is voted in as Treasurer**
- Board Committees
  - HR Committee - Sit on hiring committees, assist with policy writing
    - **Matt appoints Tim VanDyke and Becky Huttenga. Both members accept.**
  - Finance Committee - once a month finance meeting
    - **Matt appoints Doug Grotenrath and Matt Hehl. Both members accept.**
  - MAEAP/PST Advisory Member - participate in goal setting and MDARD Advisory
    - **Matt appoints Becky Huttenga for this position and she accepts.**
- Truck (Update)

- Sarah gives an update on the vehicle search. It's becoming more of a priority with the field season starting. The board discusses options with the current budget, possible financing, etc.
- **Motion to give the finance committee final decision to authorize a vehicle purchase up to $17,000 out the door:** Tim VanDyke **Support:** RIvka Hodgkinson **Vote:** Passes

- Tree & Plant Sale (Update)
  - Sold the most garden kits ever (107) this year. Sold roughly 9300 bare root trees and 130 potted trees. Sale is next week - volunteer wrapping day is the 16th from 9am - 4pm

- **Human Resource:** - (H/R Committee)
  - HR Committee Meeting (REPORT)
    - Will be reviewing resumes to fill Will's position. Still waiting for a signed agreement for NACD to secure Tracey's position long term. Work agreement with the new ED. Will discuss onboarding with him.
  - Work Agreements
    - Executive Director (VOTE)
      - **Motion to accept ED's work agreement including the approved MERS policy language:** Rivka Hodgkinson **Support:** Doug Grotenrath
      - **Vote:** Passes
    - CISMA Coordinator (VOTE)
    - Executive Team Stipend Extension (VOTE) - three updated work agreements for Ben Jordan, Sarah Bowman, and Annalease Rasanen
    - **Motion to accept CISMA Coordinator and Executive Team Stipend Extension as one item:** RIvka Hodgkinson **Support:** Becky Huttenga
    - **Vote:** Pass

  - Policy
    - MERS Policy (VOTE)
    - **Motion to approve the MERS option 1:** Becky Huttenga **Support:** Rivka Hodgkinson
    - Discussion: To participate there are 3 options with option 1 being voluntary participation from employees. If employer contribution is made on employees behalf, everyone has to participate. Doug asks if this covers all types of employees including grants. Tim asks what the benefit to the district is. Becky & RIvka answer that it gives the district an extra retirement vehicle to offer current and prospective employees. TIm asks if you can direct funding to certain investments/risk pools? Becky answers that you will have a local rep that can be worked with to direct investments.
    - **Vote:** Passes

- **Financial:** (Finance Committee)

- Finance Committee Meeting (REPORT)
  - Finance committee talked about Tracey's employment quite a bit and options to keep her employed. Doug asks Rivka what is happening with NACD. Rivka mentions the funding freeze - no official cancellations but no signed MOU's. Talked about the executive team stipends, lots of conversations about the vehicle purchase. Annaleese will be staying at 32 hours until October and will try to get her to full time.
- March bank reconciliations and bill payment: *See the financial packet for our profit & loss, balance sheet, bill list, and checking account reconciliation.* (VOTE)
- **Motion to pay the bills:** Becky Huttenga **Support:** TIm VanDyke **Vote:** Passes
- Cash Flow Forecast

- **Grants:**
  - **Preparing:**
    - CISMA Funding
      - Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) - Pre-proposal was accepted. Final proposal is due April 22nd, 2025. This grant will fund retreatments of bittersweet, phragmites, and knotweed in specific watersheds in the CISMA service area. This is a continuation and slight expansion of a current project (including one new watershed). **Requesting $293,000.**
  - **Pending:**
    - CISMA Funding
      - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (CWMA)- This grant will continue the surveillance and treatment of European Frog Bit in the West Michigan area as well as increase outreach and education to youth about the spread of this species. **Requesting $82,965.** (Notice expected in March/April)
    - Watershed program
      - Midwest Glacial Lakes Lake Conservation Grant - Two-year grant requesting funds to support a shoreline naturalization technical assistance and cost-share program with accompanying water quality monitoring for Spring Lake and Crockery Lake. **Request for $99,673.48** to support watershed staff, monitoring supplies, and landowner cost share.
  - **Executing:**
    - NACD -Technical Assistance
      - Supports the wages for our Soil Conservation Technician to assist NRCS with CSP, EQUIP, and CODA. **Receiving $72,945.66.**
    - CISMA - Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program
      - Each CISMA is eligible for $70,000 in annual funding to provide education and technical assistance to landowners. There is up to $40,000 in competitive funding available for the survey and treatment of high-priority invasive species - **Receiving $96,200.** - $70,000 for core annual funding and the rest is for competitive survey and treatment objectives. $4,600 more than last year!
  - **Not received:**
    - N/A

Board updates: (2 minutes)

Hehl, VanDyke, Grotenrath, Huttenga, Hodgkinson

Tim - Nothing to report
Rivka - Nothing to report
Becky - Saw comment about the fundraising committee and wanted to discuss at some point in the future. Look into the HR process for high level hiring, second interview/negotiation process.
Doug - Worked with interim ED's and Annaleese on finance things, and worked on looking for a truck/vehicle for the district.
Matt - ED hiring was unique.

CORRESPONDENCE: N/A
PA 116:

- N/A

N/ADJOURN – next meeting: May 13th, 2025, 6 PM

Motion to adjourn: Becky Huttenga **Support:** Doug Grotenrath **Vote:** Pass