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, September 9th, 2025

Matthew Hehl
Sept 23, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: 6:04
Invocation: Matt Hehl provides a short invocation

ROLL CALL:
Rivka Hodgkinson- present
Tim VanDyke - Present
Doug Grotenrath - Present
Becky Huttenga - Present
Matt Hehl - Present

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Motion to approve minutes: Tim VanDkye **Support:** Doug Grotenrath **Vote:** Vote passes

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Motion to approve: Becky Huttenga **Support:** Doug Grotenrath **Vote:** Vote passes

PUBLIC COMMENT
Public Comment from Gerald Miller from Kent County/MACD President
Public Comment from Catherine Ristola Bass from Holland, MI.

STAFF 2 MIN HIGHLIGHTS
Staff give brief program updates 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 *(Missing)*
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 - CTAP/MAEAP Coordinator Ben Savoie, Forester - Report
Annaleese Rasanen - Bookkeeper Report
MDARD - Report
NRCS -Report

PARTNER UPDATES

NRCS Update - Worked on obligations for CSP and EQIP (over 300k for this fiscal year). Two ACEP/ALE applications in progress. 2k paid out in August. NRCS attended several meetings. Lots of applications coming in - working on modifications and approvals before end of fiscal year.

Ottawa Conservation District o 16731 Ferris Street, Grand Haven, MI 49417

Phone: (616) 846-8770 x5 o Fax: (855) 701-4370

Executive Director Report - Jamie Rye

Jamie has been working on appropriations & cash flow for FY2026, planning and strategizing around NACD grant applications coming out and other possible funding streams for programs. Most staff evaluations are complete, new work agreements have been created, and his 90 day review is on the calendar. Looked at/planning for the end of year donation campaign and annual business plan. Auditor planning/prepping for audit and working with MACD to highlight districts that are doing great work, great strategies, etc.

Partner Highlight: CTAP/Regen Ag - Alex Svoboda MDARD

Alex Svoboda - Field coordinator for Regenerative Ag Program

The goal of the program is to provide tools/resources so farmers can adopt more regen ag practices. MDARD developed a soil health assessment w/partners across the country (Cornell, MSU extension, NRCS) which looks at different soil health principles and different metrics in the field & tested it out at the Soil Health Field Day. There is a grant rfp coming out this fall that would help promote regen ag and several demo sites around the state.

- **Financial:** (Finance Committee)
  - Finance Committee Meeting (REPORT)
    - Doug - A lot of discussion on the annual budget, work agreements, staff contracts & grants. Most of what you'll see from the finance committee resulted in the existing draft of the appropriations.
  - August 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:** Rivka Hodgkinson **Support:** Doug Grotenrath
    - **Discussion:** Annaleese mentions that the 93k in monthly expenses is mostly coming from water quality monitoring. Tim asks about a mileage reimbursement from the ED and it is explained that this is based on the federal mileage rate.
    - **Vote:** Becky - yes, Doug - yes, Tim - yes, Rivka - yes. Vote passes
  - Cash Flow Forecast - Explanation (Annaleese)
  - Draft Appropriations Budget Discussion
    - Public Comment on Proposed Budget (Motion to Open/Close)
      - **A special meeting will be held Sept 23th at 7:00pm for public hearing & vote on appropriations budget.**
    - Board Discussion of Proposed Budget
      - Rivka asks what our balance forward/cash flow position is going into FY26. Jamie and Annaleese explain the number. Several line items are discussed at length including a proposed increase to district wages to cover possible raises for Jamie & Annaleese, and a raise for board training from $100 to $1,250 ($250 per person) to cover trainings and conferences. Discussion continues about the merits and need for these increases, the possibility of amending the budget in the future rather than increasing the amounts now, etc. Discussion eventually closes and the special meeting to vote on appropriations is decided to be held on Sept 23 at 7pm.

- **Human Resource: -** (H/R Committee)
  - o HR Committee Meeting (REPORT)
    - Most of the staff reviews are done and they are working on setting up the MDARD operations elements review, picking up policies to sustain single audit, and Jamie's 90 day review. **The board decided to hold off on voting for work agreements until the special meetings on Sept 23, so they have time to review all agreements.**
    - Executive Director (90 Day)
    - Jamie Rye - ED - Work Agreement Pending Review
    - MDARD Operations Elements Review - To be completed
  - o Work Agreements
    - Morgan Anderson - Produce Safety
    - Meghan Bannick - RCPP Project Manager
    - Andrew Booher - CTAP Technician
    - Sarah Bowman - Watershed Technician
    - Murielle Garbarino - WMCISMA
    - Benjamin Jordan - Watershed Coordinator
    - William Latham - Invasive Species Specialist
    - Annaleese Rasanen - Office Administrator
    - Tracey Weatherwax - Conservation Specialist
  - o Policy

- **Operations:**
  - o N/A

- **Grants:**
  - o **Preparing:**
    - Technical Assistance
      - NACD TA Collaboration w/ NRCS - $27M available - RFP in process
  - o **Pending:**
    - Watershed Program
      - County Proposal (Monsanto Fund) - $4.7M available - County Wide Investment in Watershed Health, Point Source Prevention and Land /Water Improvements. A holistic approach to watershed improvement and sustainability. Will include staffing funds (Ben, Sarah, Annaleese, Tracey(?) and district administered cost share that gives the community access to implementation funds. Potential ask of **$699,899K over 2years**.
    - Technical Assistance
      - NFWF - Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Conservation Fund (MBPCF) - This grant will develop a technical assistance program and shovel ready implementation project for the high need, high demand county wide

desire for a pollinator and native plant support program. The project is a collaboration between the County, ODC, Parks, Local Churches and Nonprofits. The project will fund Tracey W. and Annaleese(.25). for 2 years. **Requesting: $299,865.50 Indirects @ 14% = $42,000.00** (Notice expected Dec.)

- NFWF - Conservation Partners Program (CPP) - This grant will extend our technical assistance support with NRCS by maintaining a staff member that can help local farmers/producers learn about and engage EQUIP and CSP programs. The project will fund Meghan B. for 3 years and offset some of Jamie R. and Annaleese R. salary expenses. In the event NFWF MBPCF is not granted Jamie and Annaleese R. funds can shift to Tracey W. **Requesting: $547,418.09 Indirects @ 14% = $67,226.78 - Additional Inclusions: $41,406** (Software/Computers/Cell Phones) - (Notice expected Dec/Jan.)

▪ 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 2026)
- Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) - 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.** (Notice expected in September/October 2025).

o Executing:

▪ 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. Funds to support watershed staff, monitoring supplies, and landowner cost share. **Requested $99,673.48, received $68,385.**

o Not received:

▪ N/A

Board updates: (2 minutes)

Hehl, VanDyke, Grotenrath, Huttenga, Hodgkinson

RIvka - MACD is actively engaged in advocacy for revenue sources districts.
Tim - HR committee will work to schedule meeting and reviews

CORRESPONDENCE:

PA 116:

- Zeeland Township - Farmland Agreement

ADJOURN – next meeting: October 14th , 2025, 6 PM

Ottawa Conservation District o 16731 Ferris Street, Grand Haven, MI 49417

Phone: (616) 846-8770 x5 o Fax: (855) 701-4370

Special meeting will be held Sept 23, 2025, 7pm

Motion to adjourn: Rivka Hodgkinson **Support:** Tim VanDyke **Vote:** Passes

Ottawa Conservation District o 16731 Ferris Street, Grand Haven, MI 49417
Phone: (616) 846-8770 x5 o Fax: (855) 701-4370