OTTAWA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan

OTTAWA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes

Regular Meeting, USDA Service Center, Grand Haven MI
6:30pm on July 14, 2026

CALL TO ORDER - 6:34pm

ROLL CALL

Rivka Hodgkinson – Present
Kelly Goward – Present
Becky Huttenga – Present
Doug Grotenrath – Present
Tim VanDyke – Present, arrived 6:36pm

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve agenda: Rivka **Support:** Kelly **Vote:** All vote aye, **Vote Passes**

Motion to approve the minutes: Kelly **Support:** Rivka **Vote:** All vote aye, **Vote Passes**

Rivka mentioned during discussion that action items should be incorporated into minutes. They will come prepared with the action items discussed at the June meeting to the August board meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public present

QUESTIONS ON BOARD REPORTS

Murielle Garbarinos- CISMA Coordinator – Report
Morgan Anderson- Produce Safety Technician - Report
Forest Pest Technicians - Report
Ben Jordan - Acting Executive Director - Report
Sarah Bowman, Watershed & Conservation Specialist - Report
Meghan Bannink, RCPP Project Manager - Report
Tracey Weatherwax, Soil Conservation Technician - Report
Ximena Figueroa - CTAP/MAEAP Coordinator
Ben Savoie, Forester - Report
Annaleese Rasanen - Bookkeeper Report
MDARD - Report
NRCS -Report

Rivka asked about the requests in various board reports to spread the word on the farm tours. Sarah went over current numbers of people who signed up. Becky mentioned the staff should bring the Conservation Assessment Needs QR code to the farm events. Sarah updated the number of people who have filled it out, which is around 200.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT (See written report)

No comments

- **Board Governance**
  - Policy update - Internal controls policy draft revision (discussion and vote)
    - Becky read the Internal Controls Policy she updated and said it is open to revision.
    - Sarah asked if Annaleese could be an authorized signer and Doug and Kelly said she already can sign. Doug said it used to be the ED as the signer, then it was Annaleese, then it was two board members after Annaleese was on maternity leave. The discussion continued that Ben should be the authorized signer, since Annaleese creates and deposits the checks. Rivka discussed how the board should approve a new policy tonight and spend more time going through policy items that need to be updated. Rivka provided a change to the policy, Tim suggested to increase the dollar limit and limit the number of times in a month you can do it.

    - **Section 3(f) Proposal reads**: Checks over $1,000 require signatures from both authorized signers. Checks up to $1,000 may be signed by a single authorized signer.
    - **Section 4(f) Proposal reads**: The Executive Director is authorized to approve purchases up to $1000 by check disbursement that are supported in the current budget and approved by the Chair. Disbursements or check purchases over $1000 must receive board approval prior to disbursement.

    - **Motion to approve 3f as written, approve 4f as modified (both above)**: Rivka **Support:** Tim **Vote:** All vote aye, **Vote Passes**

- **Human Resource:**
  - Staff reviews (to be scheduled for August/September)
    - Becky asked if there were any questions and confirmed Ben will be handling staff reviews.

- **Financial:**
  - July bill payment: See financial packet for bills list (Vote)
    - **Motion to approve paying the bills:** Rivka **Support:** Kelly **Vote**: (Roll Call Vote) Rivka Hodgkinson – Yes, Kelly Goward – Yes, Becky Huttenga – Yes, Doug Grotenrath – Yes, Tim VanDyke – Yes , **Vote Passes**
  - July financials & bank reconciliations: See *the financial packet for our profit & loss, balance sheet, and checking account reconciliation*
    - Becky noticed significant improvement on the numbers, Kelly said the consultant who reviewed the accounts to fix old out-of-date payments said the review went faster than expected and the consultants stayed under budget. Kelly said team spoke with ZZZ to see if they could help with mini "audits" to help keep quickbooks organized if needed. Becky asked about how the out-of-date line items in the profit and loss will be cleared out of Quickbooks. Becky has questions about the Balance Sheet and the checking account balance, some negatives were showing but those were due to it being the end of the quarter and waiting on grant reimbursements. Rivka and Becky requested Annaleese be present at the August board meeting. Becky would like the financials presented at month end.

- Cash flow forecast - Explanation (Ben & Annaleese)
  - Becky asked why the "Savings" line item exists if there is nothing on the line. The line is there to show when we do make a deposit to it.
- Bank update (discussion)
  - Kelly said Chase continues to be frustrating to deal with. Becky said she needs to have a zoom meeting with the Chase representative so she can become an Authorized Representative. Kelly said currently the Authorized Representative is Doug and he has the authority to assign Check Signers – Authorized Rep can authorize check signers and give staff access to the accounts. The first step is getting Becky and Kelly added as Authorized users.
  - Tim asked why we can't have a local bank. Kelly said finding a local bank is a high priority. Macatawa Bank and West Michigan Community Bank came highly recommended by other local municipalities to Kelly.
  - Kelly and Doug can add Ben as a signer and remove Annaleese as a signer.
- Draft appropriations (to be discussed in August)
  - Becky recommends that the board looks over the draft appropriations and comes prepared for the August meeting to be a work session. The August Board meeting will start at 6pm.
  - The ED's and Office Administrator's full salaries should be in the District Operations budget of the Appropriations Budget in full as discussed in the finance meeting.
  - Vehicle costs will be going down as loans will be complete soon.
  - Doug said insurance is the biggest expense and going up. Rivka said when talking to Fischer's Insurance, compare what happens when there is a claim. Rivka asked for current insurance policies be given to the Board prior to the next meeting.

- **Operations:**
  - MDARD review documents (discussion)
    - Becky welcomed any Board directors to come to the MDARD discussions with Jack and learn about the review documents. Becky invited all the directors to replace her during these reviews. Becky currently plans to go through it with Jack and Ben.
  - RCPP FY27 Request for Proposals (discussion)
    - Sarah said indirects are not included in this current application. There is a lot of administrative burden with no indirects. Meghan cannot be paid to write the application. Staff does not think we can have two RCPP contracts running at the same time. Staff feel we should pause and wait for FY28 to apply. The old administrator at the state office quit, and the temporary administrator says you cannot just apply for RCPP for only easement, you need to also apply for cost share. Staff would prefer to wait to apply once a new Farm Bill is passed.

- **Grants:** Board comments on grants: Consumers Energy and NFWF need to be added. Clear out old grants that are being executed. Rivka asked how do we represent MDARD farmer network grant on our budget as MDARD doesn't want it to be counted as leveraged funds in our reporting.

- **Preparing:**
  - 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.**

- **Pending**
  - Technical Assistance
    - Central Ottawa Phase 2 (EGLE 319) - Phase 2 for our Central Ottawa Watershed Restoration Program. TA and cost share for Ag & residential practices to reduce NPS pollution. OCD staff is in the process of preparing this application. **Requesting roughly $600,000 over 2 years.**
    - NACD TA Collaboration w/ NRCS - $27M available (Notice expected April-May)
    - MDARD CTAP - Three year grant for CTAP technician. Funding will include wages, mileage, training, admin/overhead and a portion of cost share for landowners. **$260,000 over 3 years.**
  - 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)

- **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.**
    - MiCorps Volunteer Stream Monitoring (MiCorps) - This is a follow up to our MiCorps startup grant. Funding for time, mileage, and supplies to implement a volunteer stream monitoring program throughout Ottawa County. **Requested $19,250.00**
  - CISMA
    - Grand Haven Area Community Foundation Impact Grant - This grant will fund the Invasive Species Specialist position for two years in order to assist municipalities in the Tri-Cities with Invasive species needs. **Requested $34,073.05**
    - EGLE sub-award for European Frog-bit in order to fund treatment over the next two years. EGLE holds the funding for the project but multiple CISMAs are bidding for the sub-award. **Requested $45,567.52**
  - Outreach & Education

- MDARD Regenerative Agricultural Education & Outreach - 1 year grant to help fund outreach events & workshops targeting Ottawa County farmers & producers. Some of this funding will be used for our annual Cultivating Resilience event. **Request and Received $15,000.**
- MDARD Regenerative Farmer Network Grant (MDARD RAP) - This grant is to establish a "farmer network" which will work to incorporate regenerative ag practices into their farms, share resources, hold outreach events and workshops, etc. It involves TA for OCD staff, funding for materials and workshops, and cost share for farmers to incorporate these practices. **$45,000 awarded.**

- **Not received:**
  - Technical Assistance
    - 2026 Planet Award (Consumers Energy) - The goal of the Native Plant Program is to provide technical assistance, cost share, and outreach to landowners in Ottawa County who want to improve their soil, improve biodiversity, and reduce their water usage by planting native plants on their land. TA and cost share would be available for project implementation. **$247,768 over 2 years.**
    - Build Strong (TC Energy) - Funding requested to provide technical assistance to landowners and businesses looking to replace turfgrass or install native landscaping. The purpose of this project is to increase biodiversity, create pollinator habitat, reduce irrigation demand and increase water infiltration. It would cover TA and cost share for native landscaping projects. **$105,625.00 over 1 year.**

Board updates: (2 minutes)

Goward – Macatawa Water Festival 11am-3pm, come to have some family fun, 30 partners will be there. Food trucks, turtle races, Voyageur canoe will be there.
VanDyke – Very dry, need rain.
Grotenrath – Can someone bring a forecast of how much cash on hand will be left at the end of FY26. Is it more than $6,500 listed in FY26 Appropriations Budget. Rivka added is there any money from County or other unrestricted funds that can be moved to other grants to free up end of year money.
Huttenga – Nothing to add
Hodgkinson – Oldest kids having graduation party this month.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

ADJOURN at 8:05pm – next meeting : August 11, 2026 at 6:00 pm