



# Dickinson Conservation District

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## Dickinson Conservation District BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday August 20, 2020 | 5:00 pm (CT)  
VIA: Zoom

### MINUTES

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed By: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER: Chairman B. Rice called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm. Board members in attendance were Bill Rice, Mark Rossato, Sue Pope, and Sarah Blanzky. Also, in attendance were Tom Berndt (NRCS) and Amber Butterfield (DCD).
- 2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA: With the following additions, S. Blanzky moved to accept the meeting agenda. S. Pope supported. Motion carried.
  - a) Plat Book Ad. under line item 5c.
- 3) PUBLIC COMMENT: None
- 4) CONSENT AGENDA: The consent agenda, containing the following items, was presented. With the correction of the September Board Meeting date, M. Rossato moved to accept the consent agenda as presented. S. Blanzky supported. Motion carried.
  - a) Meeting Minutes of July 16, 2020
- 5) OLD BUSINESS:
  - a) FY20 Audit: A. Butterfield informed the Board that she had spoken with the auditor regarding the FY20 Audit. She said the District had several options regarding their audit this year. They could forgo their audit this year and resume with their audit for FY21. She stated that this would cost the Dickinson Conservation District 50% more on their audit for next year. She said they could also do a simpler audit that would consist of going through the numbers and cleaning them up and inputting the journal entries. This would come with a verbal report and would cost the District 60% of their audit cost. If the District wanted a written report on this it would cost 70% of the audit cost. The last option the Auditor gave A. Butterfield was to proceed with the full audit. A. Butterfield alerted the

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Board that the Auditor did not recommend forging an audit because there would be two (2) years' worth of numbers to go through. B. Rice suggested that doing a smaller audit may be the best approach, and M. Rossato stated that the District would save 10% if they waited until FY21 audit to perform the audit. S. Pope asked A. Butterfield if she was okay with a decision of not having an audit performed for FY20, and A. Butterfield stated that she was nervous overall and did not know the best approach to this situation. S. Blanzly inquired how A. Butterfield thought A. Hruska would feel about the decision. A. Butterfield stated that she thought A. Hruska would be concerned due to all the refund checks that were made after cancelling the Spring Tree Sale. After further discussion S. Pope motioned to defer the FY20 audit until 2021. M. Rossato supported. Motion carried.

- b) COVID-19 Update and Office Re-Entry: A. Butterfield let the Board know that the District staff had started making the transition to having one (1) staff member in the office, when the concern of her having come in contact with COVID-19 had arose. She stated that since the concern had past, she had spoken with T. Berndt and he stated he was comfortable with one (1) DCD staff member being in the office at a time. A. Butterfield informed the Board that the she would re-enter the office on alternating weeks beginning the week of August 31, 2020 and that A. Walker would then be in the office on the opposite weeks. She said that the District staff needed to be in the office because they were missing opportunities to meet with incoming visitors. S. Blanzly asked if the office was opened to the public yet and what other conservation districts were doing. A. Butterfield said that she had not heard further if the office was allowed to be open to the public and that as far as she knew, it was still by appointment only and that the majority of other conservation districts were either rotating staff or still working remotely. T. Berndt spoke that he had been in the office a majority of the shutdown due to inconsistent internet connection at his home but that he resolved the issue and was able to work from home more often now. He stated that himself and M. Paling would be rotating in the office as well and that there would only be two (2) personnel in the office at a time. A. Butterfield stated that she would rather be in the office and that she was uncomfortable with the status of the world, but she did not know how to best handle this situation. She wanted the Board to know that she was working to the best of her abilities and wanted them to be confident in the decisions she was making regarding COVID-19. B. Rice responded that he thought work matters were being handled well to the best of the Districts abilities given these uncertain times. He stated that at this time the District needed to continue working hard and moving forward until there was more of a clear path.
- c) Plat Book Ad: A. Butterfield stated that she had received an email asking if the District wanted to purchase an advertisement in the upcoming Dickinson County Plat Book. A. Butterfield felt uncertain if the District should go ahead at this time due to financial constraints. T. Berndt alerted A. Butterfield that the American Bird Conservancy may be interested splitting the cost of this advertisement. He suggested A. Butterfield reach out to M. Paling and FAP to see if they would be interested in collaborating on the ad. A. Butterfield said if the Board felt comfortable with splitting the cost, that she would reach out to M. Paling the following day. After further discussion the Board approved of the District continuing their ad and splitting it amongst other agencies and grants to reduce the overall cost.

## 7) REPORTS:

- a) Finance Committee Report:



- a. Approval of Treasurer's Report: The Board reviewed the financial documents presented from July. S. Pope inquired about the difference in credit card balances between the P&L and the Balance sheet. A. Butterfield stated that it she had sent the Balance sheet to the Board before the updated one was sent to her, and that they do match and there should be no concern. S. Blanzly inquired about the charge made under Accounts Payable, and A. Butterfield notified her that it was the District's rent payment. M. Rossato moved to place the Treasurer's Report on file. S. blanzly supported. Motion carried.
- b. Approval of Bills: Upon review of the bills, S. Blanzly asked about the charges made for DASH hardware, and A. Butterfield informed her that it was odds and ends needed for the DASH Unit. S. Blanzly moved to accept the Approval of Bills. S. Pope supported. Motion carried.

b) Administrative Report:

- a. Grants Update: A. Butterfield gave an update on the current grants. She stated that the MISGP IS16-1005 was approved to resume and that L. Peterson and herself were working together to get the grant back up and running. She also informed the Board that L. Peterson was requesting a longer extension for this grant to alleviate the financial strain the grant expenditures could put on the District. A. Butterfield stated that WRISC would be asking for an extension on their EPA grant as well, and this will allow them to get another field season out of this grant. She then informed the Board that she and R. Guth were set to have a meeting to discuss the excess of funding that would be left in the FAP Grant. T. Berndt suggested that A. Butterfield investigate purchasing a new laptop for the District forester. A. Butterfield said she would bring that up in the meeting the following day. A. Butterfield wrapped up her update by telling the Board that the grants were on track for spending and that everything was going well.
- b. Sales/Projects: Fall Tree Sale: A. Butterfield informed the Board that so far, the District had made \$2,182.50 on the 2020 Fall Tree Sale. She stated that the sale was running smoothly, and she was surprised at how many people were ordering the potted trees. She said the last day to order for the tree sale was September 9, 2020 and that they would hold the sale the same as the Wildflower Sale and run from September 25-October 3, 2020.

c) Partner Reports:

- a. FAP: A. Butterfield notified the Board that A. Walker was on a site visit that prevented her from attending the meeting and then reviewed A. Walkers report. She informed the Board that A. Walker had performed her daily duties, such as, setting up site visits, checking and responding to emails, and that she had been receiving a lot of phone calls regarding tree diseases and pests. Also, during the past month A. Walker had also conducted 6 site visits, verified 6 properties, and became American Tree Farm certified.
- b. WRISC: None
- c. MDARD: A. Butterfield touched on several points of the update that R. Guth had provided them. She went over the funding opportunites and notified the Board that State of Michigan workers were no longer on a mandatory layoff and that R. Guth had resumed her normal work hours.



- d. NRCS: T. Berndt updated the board that the NRCS was busy pushing contracts and getting them obligated before September 14, 2020. He stated that they have 60 out of the 62 contracts obligated, and that 38 or 39 of them were Forest Management Plans and the rest were Qualified Forest Program. He also alerted the Board that L. Lindberg from Iron Baraga Conservation District is retiring and are looking for a new forester. He also informed the Board that Gogebic Conservation District had applied for grant through NACD, received the funding and now was looking to hire a technician. He updated the Board that M. Paling had done some advertising mailing and had several site visits in Ontonagon County. He impressed upon the Board that M. Paling had been very helpful. T. Berndt wrapped up his update by informing the Board that he had been attending a lot of meetings and that he had two (2) more the following day.

8) MEETING REPORTS: M. Rossato stated R. Guth had provided an onboard training for himself and K. Lehmann and that he was grateful for the opportunity and that the training was extremely helpful.

9) RESOURCE ISSUES: T. Berndt stated that he had spoken with the forester from Gogebic and that there was rising concern with Verso Paper conducting a shutdown for several weeks and that they were only taking contracted work. He stated that the market had been dropping for timber sales and that it was going to be tough on loggers and landowners who had established land management plans. He expressed that to get trees removed it would take more work. S. Blanzky stated that it was not ideal, and that work was being rerouted due to the shutdown.

10) BOARD PRIVILEGE: M Rossato stated that R. Guth had provided him with five (5) year plans that other conservation districts had devised. He said he had looked at them and thought A. Butterfield would be interested in looking at them. A. Butterfield thanked M. Rossato and asked that he forward them along to her.

11) ADJOURN: Next meeting September 17, 2020 @ 5pm. S. Pope moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:52pm. M. Rossato supported. Motion carried, meeting adjourned.

*Minutes compiled and submitted by A. Butterfield.*

