



Dickinson Conservation District

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Dickinson Conservation District BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday April 16, 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 5:01 pm. Board members in attendance were Bill Rice, Sarah Blanzky, Sue Pope, and Kurt Lehmann. Also, in attendance were Lindsay Peterson, Amy Walker, Katherine Mentel, Mark Rossato, Ann Hruska, Rachael Guth, and Amber Butterfield.
- 2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA: S. Pope moved to accept the meeting agenda, as amended with the update from MDARD moved to directly after the Approval of Agenda. S. Blanzky supported. Motion carried.
- 3) MDARD: R. Guth notified the Board that she submitted her monthly report, though it is not as elaborate as normal due to “Stay at Home” Order. She expressed her sadness that DCD had to cancel their Spring Tree Sale due to COVID-19 but expressed that she believes that DCD made the right decision to cancel. R. Guth also notified the Board that MDARD was talking with MDNR on their decision to pause all MISGP Grants. She stated that 40 full time staff and 70 seasonal staff would be affected by the lack of funding. R. Guth said that with District employees being considered “critical infrastructure workers” that they should have continued funding to complete the projects and programs that the grant supplies. R. Guth also informed the Board that GLRI is accepting grant applications for tree planting and forest health. She stated that she had written a grant for Marquette CD and they had implemented it. She said these funds can be used to plant trees in riparian areas and shoreline habitat, to reduce stormwater runoff, or to improve shorelines on Dickinson County rivers.
- 4) PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.
- 5) CONSENT AGENDA: The consent agenda, containing the following items, was presented. S. Pope inquired about whether DCD had received their deposits back from the nurseries. A. Butterfield informed her that Newaygo Nursery was refunding their deposit and that Evergreen Nursery was holding their deposit to apply it to the Fall Tree Sale. A. Butterfield also stated that all other nurseries were not refunding their deposits. S. Blanzky moved to accept the consent agenda as presented. S. Pope supported. Motion carried.

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a) Minutes of April 2, 2020 Special Meeting

6) NEW BUSINESS:

- a) FY20 Overlook for the District: A. Butterfield told the Board that her, A. Hruska, and L. Peterson had been discussing whether WRISC would be able to hire any Summer Staff with the MISGP grants being put on pause. L. Peterson spoke that after going over the financials that the DCD team felt that financially they would be able to hire one Summer Staff member but that she didn't know if she felt confident that future issues would cause the seasonal position to be cut short, due to lack of funding. L. Peterson notified the Board that their grant through the EPA was able to pull requests for reimbursement at any time which was unique compared to WRISCs other grants that only allowed to request reimbursement on a quarterly basis. A. Hruska spoke that the remaining active grants had quick turn around when a reimbursement was requested. She stated that when she worked up the numbers for the cash flow, she used different scenarios. With MISGP ultimately taking a while to send reimbursements, the account will be tight towards July 15, 2020 when the next round of reimbursements will start to come in. L. Peterson let the Board know that another option for WRISC was to work with the current fulltime staff at technician wages in order to not throw the grant deliverables and budgets off. She also said that she would be willing to go down to part time employment to ensure that Kyle Hafeman and Katherine Mentel would not lose their hours or employment. She said she was concerned on what the best course of action was, as WRISC had already offered the summer positions to two applicants, prior to the pause of the MISGP grants. A. Butterfield then asked the Board if they had an opinion in the summer hiring. K. Lehmann stated that he is concerned of the longevity of several businesses during COVID-19. In his experience, he said, people are being reserved and conservative due to their concerns of not being able to withstand the current financial times. He spoke that he thinks DCD and WRISC should remain aggressive and that if the staff has evaluated the numbers and remains confident in hiring an additional employee, that they should do so. A. Butterfield thanked him for the recommendation. A. Butterfield then asked K. Lehmann and the Board if they knew if DCD qualified for an SBA Loan. She stated that S. Pope had spoke previously about looking into an SBA Loan in case DCD needed the assistance in the future. K. Lehmann said that there are several different loan options available and was uncertain whether DCD qualified for any and that maybe R. Guth could speak more on the qualifications of conservation districts and the loans. R. Guth said that she was joining in on a team meeting tomorrow and would address this topic, and that she would let the DCD staff and Board know what was discussed. The Board agreed that they would keep this option in their minds while progressing through FY20 and the consensus among the Board is to proceed cautiously with hiring for 2020.
- b) Grant Suspension: L. Peterson stated that she had already discussed the status of grants, that were currently paused. She spoke that GLRI and EPA had given the 'go ahead' to continue spending on those grants. She then notified the Board that WRISC was entertaining the idea of requesting extensions on some of their grants. She spoke that WRISC could try and extend the EPA grant but was uncertain if that would be approved due to most of their deliverables already being met, but that WRISC could try and extend the grant through the winter. She said that she could try and do the same thing with MEF CCC. L. Peterson mentioned that she spoke with the MISGP contact, Ryan Wheeler, regarding the 30-day notice written in the grant contract. She was told that due to the MISGP grant being paused and not cancelled that this notice did not apply. R. Wheeler notified L. Peterson that because MIGSP funding is part of the state budget, in their general fund, that WRISC would know the status and future of their grant by September of 2020 at the latest.



7) REPORTS:

a) Finance Committee Report:

- a. Approval of Treasurer's Report: A. Butterfield notified the Board that S. Pope had gone into the office to look over the treasurer's packets from February and March, and that A. Hruska would be looking into the few questions that she had regarding the packets. A. Hruska spoke that she was about finished with refunding tree sale orders and that she had transferred \$9,600 to our PayPal to complete the tree sale refunds and that she expected PayPal to reflect a balance of \$1,000 when she was done. She stated that we were still receiving reimbursements from GLRI and that she expected them to be in soon, as GLRI has a quick turn around on their reimbursements.
- b. Approval of Bills: A. Butterfield notified the Board that there were two bills for advertising that she was going to talk to the businesses involved and discuss their amounts before approving the invoices to be paid. The Board did not approve the Treasurer's report or financials due to the inability of everyone being able to review them. The Board gave a consensus regarding the financials providing there were no major issues reported by S. Pope after her full review.

b) Administrative Report:

- a. Grants Update: None
- b. Sales/Projects: Spring Tree Sale & Calendar Sales: None

c) Partner Reports:

- a. FAP: A. Walker gave an update to the Board that she was familiarizing herself with the files left by the previous forester, contacting landowners, speaking with Ben Schram and Matt Wattkeys, as well as scheduling site visits.
- b. WRISC: None

8) MEETING REPORTS: None

9) RESOURCE ISSUES: None

10) BOARD PRIVILEGE: K. Lehmann spoke that he thinks this is a great opportunity for DCD to focus on outreach. He stated that Loyal to Local is doing wonderful things for the community and is on top of their outreach and online presence. He has noticed a lack of social media presence on behalf of DCD and suggests the DCD team put focus on that and their outreach. A. Hruska notified the board that the DCD Wildflower Sale was coming up. L. Peterson told the Board that A. Butterfield and she were going to spend time actively advertising the sale as well as giving an online option for ordering. A. Butterfield informed the Board that City of Norway had reached out for DCD to do stream monitoring and Milfoil surveys for them again this year. She stated that A. Hruska is working up a quote to present to City of Norway and that DCD is waiting to hear back from the township on whether DCD would get the contract. B. Rice thanked M. Rossato for joining the DCD Board Meeting and inquired if M. Rossato had any questions. M. Rossato asked R. Guth

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what her role was and the definition of the acronym of MDARD. M. Rossato then asked what grants were put on hold. L. Peterson explained that these grants were from the Michigan DNR.

11) ADJOURN: Next meeting May 21, 2020 @ 5pm. K. Lehmann moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:53pm. S. Blanzly supported. Motion carried, meeting adjourned.

Minutes compiled and submitted by A. Butterfield.

