

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Alger Conservation District Board

Tuesday, August 8th, 2023 at 5:00 pm

MSU Research and Extension Center, Chatham, MI

The regular meeting of ACD was held on the above date. The meeting was called to order at 5:01 pm by Chairman Highlen. Board members present at roll call: John Highlen, Rowan Bunce, James DeDecker. Hilary Ludecke and Hans Eriksen. Associate board members Charlie Todd and Barb Isom present. Staff present: Matt Watkeys, Christy Foye, Alex Kolton, Misa Cady, Sara Kelso, Kelly Sippl. Staff absent: Landen Tetil, Holly Wendrick-Moss.

Guests: None

Public comment: None

Correspondence: Watkeys passed around correspondence.

Approve agenda: DeDecker asked to add agenda item (f) under New Business: Seed Drill. Motion to approve agenda as amended by Bunce, seconded by Ludecke; All in favor, motion carried.

Motion to approve minutes of the July 11th, 2023, regular meeting by Ludecke, seconded by Eriksen; All in favor, motion carried.

STAFF REPORTS: Written reports reviewed by board and highlighted by staff.

- a. NRCS DC: Report received. Cady highlighted the MDARD report congratulating Landen Tetil on her new food safety teaching certification.
- b. NRCS SC: Report received.
- c. FAP FORESTER: Report received. Kelso reported that she will be hosting FAP foresters for their annual meeting. She also met with the new MSUE Forestry Educator, Anna Ellis, and they are collaborating.
- d. PRODUCE SAFETY: Report received.
- e. L2L CISMA: Report received.
- f. DM: Report received. Watkeys highlighted cost share funds available through Landen Tetil for food safety investments on UP farms.
- g. CONSERVATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR: Report received. Foye highlighted the CISMA report on invasive species, which featured ACD projects and Alger Co.
- h. ACD AmeriCorps VISTA: Report received.
- i. MDARD: Report received.
- j. MAEAP: No report received.

MEETING REPORTS: None

Old Business:

- a. OTHER GRANTS & FUNDING UPDATE:
 - DHIPI: Watkeys shared that ACD is working on site prep with tillage, lime and fertilizer for fall plantings.
 - MISG JAPANESE KNOTWEED: Watkeys reported that the third round of JK herbicide applications are underway this week.
 - MISG HIMALAYAN BALSAM: Watkeys reported that surveying is underway to identify or confirm potential new balsam locations.
 - MISG SURVEY & TREATMENT: Watkeys reported that work has been focused on baby's breath sites.
 - CLEAN BOATS CLEAN WATERS, CHATHAM COMMUNITY GARDEN: Watkeys reported that signage is up and successful boat wash events were held at two locations last Friday.
 - SCRAP TIRE: Watkeys reported that planning is underway for scrap tire collections in Onota and another location September 15-16.
 - URBAN AGRICULTURE: Watkeys and Kolton reported that the community garden funds are largely spent down and the project has been completed. Some deliverables shifted slightly, but were within the original project scope.

- **AUTRAIN FISH HABITAT:** Watkeys reported that there is around \$50K left to spend. He is therefore seeking a no-cost extension and looking to add more woody debris next year, with lots of room to achieve the desired density. Outreach is planned for Aug 30th, 4-7pm at Au Train Hall. UPRCD is planning a donation to AuTrain Onota Robotics to support on-going ROV monitoring in year two.
- b. **AGRIPALOOZA DISCUSSION:** Foye reported that presenter invites went out 2 weeks ago, with about 15 confirmed so far. She also reached out to Embers regarding possible sponsorship. DeDecker reported that MSU administrators and a UP State Representative may attend the event and tour UPREC.

New Business:

- NRCS CIVIL RIGHTS UPDATES AND REVIEW:** Cady led a discussion regarding priority resource concerns in Alger Co. Watkeys mentioned recycling service. Bunce mentioned land succession and fragmentation. DeDecker mentioned blight and dumping. Eriksen mentioned climate change. Ludecke mentioned PFAS in water etc. Highlen mentioned tourism, traffic and resource damage. Sippl passed around updated civil rights statements and posters for board signatures.
- NRCS CONTRACT APPROVALS:** Sippl presented new Conservation Stewardship Program contracts for board approval. DeDecker asked if planting vs forest management projects are priority. Sippl and Cady described how projects follow basic timelines from planning to management to enhancement, including new plantings.
- ACD FY24 BUDGETING:** Watkeys presented a draft budget for FY24. The Alger Co. Soil and Sediment program will be incorporated by ACD in 2024. The Outreach Coordinator budget line reflects June through the end of FY24 after Kolton finishes his AmeriCorps position. Foye suggested pivoting from electronics recycling to household hazardous waste disposal. DeDecker asked about projected grants revenue, which Watkeys explained is 10% F&A.
- ACD FOIA POLICY REVIEW:** Watkeys presented a draft FOIA policy based on Alger County's current policy. The board discussed implementing a flat fee for FOIA requests vs line item billing. The item was tabled until the next meeting pending board review.
- MACD REGION 2 MEETING AT HIAWATHA SPORTSMAN'S CLUB:** Watkeys shared that the meeting will be Aug 24, and he plans to attend representing ACD.
- SEED DRILL:** DeDecker asked about the possibility of ACD purchasing and leasing a no-till seed drill or lime spreader. Watkeys noted that we own a tree planter, which is loaned out informally. Highlen noted the liabilities and maintenance associated with owning equipment.

ACCEPT TREASURY REPORT/PAY BILLS: Watkeys presented financial reports for the month and year-to-date. He noted long-term loan interest that needs to be reallocated in our budget. DeDecker noted increasing health and other insurance costs that need to be incorporated in the FY24 budget. A motion was made by Bunce and seconded by DeDecker to accept the treasury report and pay bills. All in favor, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Isom noted the value of ACD work related to climate change mitigation in the area.

Motion made by Ludecke; seconded by Eriksen to adjourn at 6:50pm; All in favor, motion carried.

Submitted by James DeDecker, Secretary

These Minutes are subject to approval until signed below.

APPROVED: John Highlen, Vice Chair Date: 09/12/23
 John Highlen, Chairman OR James Dedecker, Secretary