

Meeting Minutes
For the regular meeting of the Alger Conservation District Board
Tuesday, April 8th, 2025, 5:00 pm * MSU Research and Extension Center, Chatham

Call to order: On the above date, Chairperson John Highlen called the ACD's regular meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Board members present: Hans Eriksen, Hilary Ludecke, James DeDecker, John Highlen, Rowan Bunce.

Board members absent: None

Associate board members present: Barb Isom, Charlie Todd

Associate board members absent: None

Staff present: Alex Kolton, Elise Desjarlais, Eryn Grupido, Misa Cady, Sara Kelso.

Staff absent: Amy Frye, Holly Wendrick-Moss, Kyler Hanson, Landen Tetil.

Guests: None

Public comment: Isom related the compliment of a friend and former board member that attended the annual meeting: it was elegant, the food was great, and they enjoyed the knowledge and enthusiasm of every speaker. They also mentioned being happy to see the District doing so well and loving the direction it is headed in.

Correspondence: Passed around; one piece on pesticide certifications.

Approve agenda:

Motion by Bunce, seconded by Ludecke to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor; motion carried.

Approve minutes of March 4th, 2025, regular meeting:

Motion by Eriksen, seconded by Bunce to approve previous minutes as presented. All in favor; motion carried.

Board and Staff Reports: review written reports

Written reports were reviewed by the board and highlighted by staff.

a. NRCS SC: Report Received

Cady announced that of the 21 applicants for the EQIP Act, 15 were selected, 5 from Alger County. Of the 18 applicants to the EQIP Classic, 9 were selected, 2 from Alger County. Updated that staff have been reinstated and they are hopeful future funding shifts will assist with covering the loss of the IRA.

b. FAP FORESTER: Report Received

Kelso reported that weather has called for rescheduling but that rescheduling the tree pruning workshop was successful and it will be well attended.

c. PRODUCE SAFETY: Report Received

d. L2L CISMA: Report Received

Desjarlais announced that they have received almost all of the MISG funding requests and some will be allocated to the Coast Guard Point Monitoring along with helping hands. They will not be hosting the UP Invasives Conference this year. Proposal agreements are pending with the USFS and they are weighing all options in the case that new agreements are not made.

e. ACD DD: Report Received

Kolton Announced that a student of Burt Township was awarded the Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative from the DNR and that the District will be assisting in their project efforts.

f. ACD DC: Report Received

Grupido announced that the Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative Grant from the DNR has been awarded and they are awaiting the contract for signing.

g. MDARD: Report Received

h. MAEAP: Report Received

Meeting Reports:

Kolton reported on attendance to the Mathias Township Board meeting where they announced the approval of the Stream Monitoring Grant and water quality testing to be performed.

Old Business:**a. Final Revision: Paid Sick Leave Policy**

Updates requested at the March Regular Meeting were presented and the policy was determined clear and compliant.

Motion to accept the Sick Leave Policy as presented by Bunce, Seconded by DeDecker. All in favor; motion carried.

b. Tree Sale Ops/Pickup day

Kolton reported that there is increased participation by residents overall and provided an update on the performance of the mailers. The board was asked to participate in packing and sorting prior to the event and the day of. Kolton presented the idea of having a fall tree and wildflower sale to provide more time for residents to plan and plant. Discussion followed on what details would need to be determined first as well as the timeframe of a second sale but overall feedback was positive to this addition.

c. Budget Review & Recommendations- Q2, 2025

Kolton highlighted recommended changes to the appropriated budget that would reallocate funds from areas that are not in high demand to those that are, such as improvements to the Chatham Community Garden and the purchase of tools for the District to use during projects. Discussion based on tools required and watering supports necessary for garden occurred.

Motion to approve budget amendments as discussed by Bunce, Seconded by DeDecker. All in favor; motion carried.

New Business:**a. Volunteer Liability**

Staff provided a Volunteer Liability Waiver for review and approval.

Motion to accept the Volunteer Liability Waiver as presented and to provide it to an attorney for review and alterations as recommended at a later date by Bunce, Seconded by Ludecke. All in favor; motion carried.

b. District Tool Acquisition

Kolton provided an inventory of current tools and recommended tools for purchasing as well as allocating a discretionary fund to tools annually to ensure the District has those that are necessary to carry out project implementation, based on previous years' projects. Discussion occurred alongside Budget Review and Recommendations.

Motion to approve purchase of recommended tools and discretionary fund for tools by Bunce, Seconded by DeDecker. All in favor; Motion carried.

c. Sign Letters to: Rep. Bohnak, Donation Solicitations Agri-palooza

Letters were passed around for signatures. Staff will mail them accordingly.

d. 2026 Regular Meeting Dates & Annual Meeting

Meeting dates were accepted with one correction to September.

e. Native Planting & Educational Discount Policy

Updates were proposed to the Native Planting & Educational Discount Policy, extending 25% discounts to local government, non-profits, farmers, schools, and educators for purchases up to \$1,500. Discussion over clarity of verbiage ensued.

Motion to accept the updated policy with improved clarity provided by Eriksen, Seconded by Bunce. All in favor; motion carried.

f. Staff Work Agreements

Board discussed renewal of staff agreements alongside review of staff performance and approval of a salary increase for Eryn Grupido, District Coordinator.

Motion to approve work agreements as presented by Ludecke, Seconded by Eriksen. All in favor; motion carried.

Accept Treasury Report; pay bills

Kolton presented ACD financial statements as of April 8th, 2025. The board reviewed the report.

Motion by DeDecker, seconded by Bunce, to accept the Treasury Reports and pay the bills as presented. All in favor; motion carried.

Public comment

No public comment.

Adjourn

Motion by Eriksen, seconded by Ludecke, to adjourn at 7:26 pm. All in favor; motion carried.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Tuesday, May 13th, 2025, 5:00 pm

Grupido has transcribed these minutes.

Submitted by James Dedecker | Minutes are subject to approval until signed below

APPROVED: John Highlen Rowan Bunce DATE: 05/13/25

John Highlen, Chairman

OR

Rowan Bunce, Vice President