

AGENDA

**For the special meeting of the Alger Conservation District Board
Tuesday, July 30th, 2024, 5:00 pm * MSU Research and Extension Center, Chatham**

Call to order:

A special meeting of ACD was held on the above date. The meeting was called to order at 5:07pm by Chair John Highlen.

Board members present:

Staff present:

Board members present at roll call: John Highlen, Rowan Bunce, James DeDecker, Hilary Ludecke and Hans Eriksen. Associate board members present: Barb Isom and Charlie Todd. Staff present: Alex Kolton. Staff absent: Sara Kelso, Misa Cady, Elise Desjarlais, Eryn Grupido, Helena Moleski, Amy Frye, Landen Tetil and Holly Wendrick-Moss.

Board members absent:

Staff absent:

Guests: None

Public comment: DeDecker asked Kolton to recuse himself from the District Manager hiring conversation. Highlen and Kolton agreed.

Approve agenda:

Eriksen asked to amend the agenda to show the next regular meeting date as August 13th, 2024. Motion by Bunce, seconded by DeDecker to approve the agenda as amended. All in favor; motion carried.

New Business

a. Discuss and vote on District Manager interview team recommendations

Kolton left the room. Highlen reviewed the DM search process. The search committee consisted of Highlen, Guth and Ludecke. Two candidates applied and were interviewed, Kolton and one external candidate, Olivia Engelhardt. Both interviews went well with the candidates demonstrating different strengths in business (Kolton) vs. conservation (Engelhardt). Highlen contacted the external candidate's references. The search committee recommended hiring Kolton as DM due to his business management experience, and the remaining board members concurred. The board discussed the need for long term succession planning.

Motion by DeDecker, seconded by Eriksen, to accept the search committee's recommendation to hire Kolton as District Manager effectively immediately at the compensation rates previously paid to Matt Watkeys. All in favor; motion carried. Kolton returned and the board congratulated Kolton on his new position and work to-date.

b. Review and approve adding new DM to bank signatories

The ACD DM used to be the second signatory at the bank. Watkeys still needs to be removed as a bank signatory, per the minutes of the last regular meeting. Motion by Bunce, seconded by Ludecke, to remove Watkeys as an ACD bank signatory. All in favor; motion carried. Motion by DeDecker, seconded by Eriksen, to add Kolton as an ACD bank signatory. All in favor, motion carried.

c. Review and approve QuickBooks principal changes, remove resigned DM, and add new DM.

Kolton shared a principal change form to remove Watkeys and add Kolton to the ACD QuickBooks account, which was signed by the board.

d. **Discuss additional full-time staff along with associated**

Eryn Grupido was originally hired through late Sept as a seasonal temp, but is interested in long-term employment. Watkeys had proposed a built a three person full time staff, but we are currently back to one. Kolton shared projected budget scenarios highlighting different staffing models with 1, 2 or 3 full-time staff. Kolton recommended the 2 person model, which is projected to result in a net profit in FY25. DeDecker asked if the proposed 2 full-time and 1 part-time staffing model would have the part-time position as seasonal, which Kolton confirmed would be recommended to control fringe costs and offer short-term staff training opportunities. Both Eryn and Olivia would be qualified for the second full-time position. The pay rate would be \$19.50 if/when the candidate passes the MDARD pesticide applicator exam. Eriksen and Kolton suggested offering the second full-time Outreach Coordinator position to Eryn with a mid-Sept start date. Motion by Bunce, seconded by Ludecke, to hire Eryn Grupido as a full-time ACD staff member beginning Sept 2nd, 2024 at her current interim rate of \$18.50/hr with benefits of a \$125 health insurance credit and 3-5% MERS retirement. All in favor; motion carried.

e. **Michigan Land Trustee Meeting, Traverse City, August 14th, 9AM**

Kolton shared that the Munising Overlook community forest project is it its final stages of approval. Kolton and the Munising City Manager were asked to present to the DNR Trust Fund committee on Aug 14th. The project is highly rated and likely to be approved. ACD is negotiating for, and may possibly receive, some portion of the property's timber rights or timber revenue.


Public comment

Kolton asked to move the next regular meeting to Aug 20, 2024.

Adjourn

Motion by Bunce, seconded by Ludecke to adjourn at 6:22 pm. All in favor; motion carried.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: August 13 20, 2024, 5:00 pm

NAME: Rowan Bunce 

DATE: 08/20/24

TITLE: VICE CHAIR ACD