

**Alger CD Board of Director Minutes**  
**For the regular meeting of the Alger Conservation District Board**  
**Tuesday, January 14th, 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:** James DeDecker, John Highlen, Rowan Bunce, Hans Eriksen and Hilary Ludecke. **Board members absent:** None.

**Associate board members present:** Barb Isom.

**Associate board members absent:** Charlie Todd.

**Staff present:** Alex Kolton, Eryn Grupido, Sara Kelso, Misa Cady, and Kyler Hanson.

**Staff absent:** Olivia Engelhardt, Elise Desjarlais, Amy Frye, Landen Tetil and Holly Wendrick-Moss.

**Guests:** None

**Public comment:** None

**Approve agenda:**

Motion by Bunce, seconded by Eriksen to approve the agenda with the addition of two new items; review of NRCS contracts and Approval of the Technology Migration/Budget Amendment. All in favor; motion carried.

**Approve minutes of November 12th, 2024, Regular Meeting and the December 10th, 2024, Regular Meeting:**

Motion by Bunce, seconded by Eriksen to approve both previous minutes with one amendment included to the November minutes by Kolton. 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 highlighted the Farm Bill of 2018 has been extended for another year and will not be up for renewal again until September 30, 2025.

b. **FAP FORESTER: Report received.** Kelso highlighted that among many meetings throughout the season everything is going smoothly.

d. **PRODUCE SAFETY: Report received.**

e. **L2L CISMA: Report received.**

f. **ACD DD: Report received.**

g. **ACD DC: Report received.**

h. **MDARD: Report received.**

Guth drew attention to the funding accomplishments and highlighted the amazing turnout in outreach and volunteers. Announced that the first annual Upper Peninsula Managers Retreat will be held in Marquette at the end of the month. Congratulations were expressed to the two new managers and to former district manager Butterfield joining MACD as an Upper Peninsula staff member.

i. **MAEAP: Report received.**

**Meeting Reports:** None

## **Old Business:**

### **a. Munising Overlook Bay Update**

Kolton reported that our application for funding has been officially approved. Current status is to wait for legislative funding appropriations before moving forward. The next step will be networking with our project partners to create the community planning team and a formal maintenance plan.

### **b. Conservation Needs Assessment Update**

Kolton presented the updated assessment with a new title to engage residents and announced it should be released on February 15th with the opening of Tree Sale and will run until next year's Tree Sale. The updated assessment includes more questions than previous assessments but will include all residents, not just landowners. The procedure for delivery was discussed to reach as many as possible within the county. Feedback was given to edit the initial question to not just landowners and to add conditional format that will direct those living outside the county to express what their interest and stake in Alger County natural resources and what feedback they would give the district. Further discussion on incentivizing residents to take it with some kind of gift or Tree Sale discount concluded the update.

### **c. Tree Sale Update**

Kolton announced that staff are completing the finishing touches on informational resources and the county mailer and should launch the sale on time. This year we are not seeking sponsors for the mailer as we are using that space to announce the CNA and showcase our own programming.

### **d. Annual Meeting Date**

The venue chosen for the annual meeting has a conflict on our chosen date; It has been moved from March 20th to March 21st to correct this. Discussion included who to invite as a speaker for this year with suggestions of the 4H garden club, Pileated Farms, or Abbey Palmer and the LIFT-UP program.

### **e. Board Elections, Nominations Certifications**

Hans Eriksen and Rowan Bunce have submitted their nominations for reelection to the board.

## **New Business**

### **a. MDARD Ops Review: Board Governance (R.Guth)**

Guth led the board through the Board Governance Element provided by MDARD to self-assess how the board operates in various categories. Overall, the board ranked above the median, and there were no concerns about compliance. The board discussed the value of creating a liaison on the board for district staff to go to in case of staffing issues, hiring a bookkeeper to segregate accounting tasks, and engaging with training opportunities provided by MACD, NACD, or other conservation-related organizations.

### **b. Policy Review: Substance Abuse**

Kolton presented the current Substance Abuse Policy for review. Discussion followed in considering editing the policy to showcase that the individual is also a risk to themselves, that the district reserves the right to test, and to consider changing the wording to under the influence vs. in their system and remove specific substance names to just impaired—suggestions to outline the procedure for testing and what to do if positive drug screens were identified.

### **c. Technology Migration/Budget Amendment**

Kolton requested the reallocation of appropriated budget funds from printing, postage, the audit, and CNA to update office technology and internal drive to back up data to keep the district up to date, and secure. Reallocated funds are from areas in the budget that will not affect operations. A plan for instances of building fires and drive security was discussed.

Motion by Ludecke, seconded by DeDecker. All in favor; motion carried to approve budget amendment and proceed with technology migration and updates.

**d. NRCS, Contract Review (M. Cady)**

Cady presented six new contracts for review, 3 needing signatures. Questions over contracts were solely to confirm residency and all signatures were collected.

**Accept Treasury Report; pay bills**

Kolton presented ACD financial statements as of January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The board reviewed the report and requested a correction to remove previous years' Japanese Knotweed funding from the budget line as it no longer applies.

Motion by Eriksen, seconded by Bunce, to accept the Treasury Reports and pay the bills with the correction. All in favor; motion carried.

**Public comment**

None.

**Adjourn**

Motion by Rowan, seconded by Dedecker, to adjourn at 7:02 pm. All in favor; motion carried.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING: February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 5:00 pm**

**Grupido has transcribed these minutes.**

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

APPROVED:  DATE: 2/11/2025

John Highlen, Chairperson      OR      Rowan Bunce, Vice Chair