

## AGENDA

For the special meeting of the Alger Conservation District Board  
Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 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 5:00pm 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: Matt Watkeys and Alex Kolton. Staff absent: Misa Cady, Sara Kelso, Eryn Grupido, Helena Moleski, Elise Desjarlais, Amy Frye, Landen Tetil and Holly Wendrick-Moss.

### Board members absent:

#### Staff absent:

Guests: None

Public comment: None

### Approve agenda:

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

### New Business

#### a. Resignation of District Manager, Matt Watkeys

Watkeys expressed his thanks to all ACD Directors, staff and partners for a good experience as ACD DM. Highlen and the board expressed their thanks for Watkeys' work and leadership. Watkeys shared that he is resigning from his position with ACD to get back to forestry through a Forest Marketing and Utilization Specialist position with MI DNR. He has 48.99 hours of PTO remaining with 40 hrs payable according to his work agreement. Motion by Bunce, seconded by DeDecker, to accept Watkeys' resignation effective July 7, 2024 (last day of work July 2, 2024). All in favor; motion carried.

Watkeys shared that MDARD has a succession plan template, which Watkeys has completed. He has also populated grant work plans and will make himself available for questions. Eriksen asked if the board should be more involved during this transition period and Kolton agreed. DeDecker suggested board members take-on specific roles/tasks to assist Kolton and other staff.

#### b. Interim District Manager, succession plans

Highlen asked Kolton about his comfort moving forward in an Interim District Manager role. Kolton responded that he is interested in the role and Watkeys is actively training him on critical tasks, which is moving in a positive direction. Watkeys reported that MDARD Representative Guth suggested posting the DM position, though a public posting is not technically required. The board agreed that posting the position would be good for transparency, equity and due diligence. Ludecke noted that candidates other than Kolton could potentially backfill a Program Coordinator vacancy, if Kolton was successful in the DM search. Watkeys suggested increasing Kolton's pay to match his DM wage during the interim period. Ludecke suggested paying Kolton DM benefits retroactively, if he is successful in the DM search. Motion by Bunce, seconded by

DeDecker, to appoint Kolton as Interim District Manager at the current DM wage. All in favor; motion carried.

All directors volunteered to serve on a hiring sub-committee. Our search timeline will be to advertise by July 5<sup>th</sup>, close by July 19<sup>th</sup>, review by email and in sub-committee, and bring hiring recommendations to the August regular meeting.

Kolton suggested that the board consider increasing Eryn Grupido's wage due to increased responsibility during the transition period by \$1-2/hr. Kolton and Highlen noted that the pesticide applicator certification pay incentive could be used to justify this change. Motion by Ludecke, seconded by DeDecker, to appoint Grupido as Senior Conservation Technician at \$18.50/hr. All in favor; motion carried. Kolton will draft an updated position description to share with Eryn and the board.

DeDecker asked the board to consider what happens to Kolton and Grupido's positions (title, wage), if Kolton is not successful in the DM search. Kolton acknowledged interim DM position, title and wage are limited term, only until a permanent DM is hired.

**c. Position Description, if needed (MDARD)**

Watkeys and Kolton will share the current DM position description for board review prior to posting. Kolton will advertise to position in multiple media outlets.

**d. Assistance from MDARD Regional Coordinator**

Guth has offered assistance in the form of a succession plan template, draft position descriptions, etc.

**Public comment**


Isom and the board congratulated Watkeys on taking his next step professionally. Watkeys shared his willingness to serve as a future ACD board member.

**Adjourn**

Motion by Bunce, seconded by Eriksen to adjourn at 6:33 pm. All in favor; motion carried.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING: July 9, 2024, 5:00 pm**

*Submitted by James DeDecker, Secretary      These minutes are subject to approval until signed below*

APPROVED:  Date: 7/15/24  
John Highlen, Chairman      OR      James DeDecker, Secretary