



St. Joseph County Conservation District
693 E. Main Street
Centreville, MI 49032
(269) 467-6336 x5

Board Meeting Minutes for December 2025

3:00 pm Call to Order by Board Vice Chair Dan Blasius

Directors Present:

Dan Blasius, Vice Chair

Todd Hironimus

Carol Higgins, Member

Director Absent

Chad Clark, Board chair

Mike Sherman, Member

Associate Board Members:

None

Staff Present:

Carolyn Grace

Ashley Waltke

Introductions / Visitors:

Chris Yunker

Public Comment: none

Additions / Deletions to Agenda: none. Higgins motion to accept the board agenda. Hironimus second. Motion passed

Approval of Board Minutes:

Higgins moved to approve the agenda with a correction, and the motion was passed. Grace will fix and Blasius signed. Additionally, a spelling error was corrected from "he" to "the." Hironimus second, motion passed.

Treasurer Report: Hironimus explained he looked over the financials and felt we are in good shape for the first quarter of FY26. Higgins motioned to accept the treasurer report to be placed on file, Hironimus second. Motion passed

Correspondence Reports:

- **Administrator:** Written. Grace briefly gave an overview of the report, nothing to note.
- **CTAP:** Mike shared his report for the past two months and explained he has been keeping busy during shutdown
- **CTAI:** Written.
- **CISMA:** None
- **EGLE:** Written

- **MDARD:** Written.
- **NRCS:** None.
- **Board:** Higgins spoke about MI Link and suggested others should check that our for some information about connecting farmers with people who may want to use a small portion of land for their farming.
- **MACD Conference Takeaways** Higgins summarized key sessions, including Michigan Farm Link, Legislative Day on March 11, 2026 in Lansing, the Doe Derby hunt benefiting veterans and those in need, and MACD state awards. Allegan County Conservation District was named District of the Year, the Kalamazoo manager received Emerging Leader of the Year, and a Pontiac farm was recognized as Partner of the Year. The Michigan Farm Link flyer is attached to the board packet.

Finally, Higgins spoke about the NACD summer conference at Amway in Grand Rapids. Board members will be allowed to apply for a type of grant scholarship to attend. Higgins said that all board should attend.

Old Business:

- **Conflict of Interest:** None

New Business:

- **Review of the Handbook Investment policy.** After a short discussion Higgins motioned to adopt the Investment policy that Grace presented.
- **District Meeting time change:** Higgins proposed moving the District Board meetings back to 6pm starting January 17, 2026. Hironimus second. Motion passed
- **Grant Signatures for Accepting New Grants:** Following a brief discussion and the correction of one grammatical error, Higgins moved to adopt the policy presented by Grace. stating that the Chair and/or Vice chair may sign new grant as the District representative. Hironimus second. Motion Passed. Dan Blasius, the Vice Chair, will be added to sign as a District Board representative for new grants for FY26.
- **Waltke Maternity Leave/work from home and Renehan extra hours:** Grace proposed keeping the CTAI grant within the \$61,000 limit by reducing the employee's annual hours from 2080 to 1944 while maintaining the \$24 hourly rate. During maternity leave, up to 136 hours of lost pay will be covered by the NACD grant instead of the CTAI grant, ensuring we stay within budget. Starting Monday December 22nd Waltke will be working from home and then begin leave after the baby arrives. Grace discussed needing 400 hours of District Op time for Renehan and other employees during the winter. Higgins made a motion to accept the CTAI hours, NACD hours and 400 hours for other employees. Hironimus second. Motion passed.
- **MiClass:** Grace informed board members that she will be moving the county appropriated money into the MiClass savings account.
- **Administrative New Hire :** Grace informed the Board of Directors that she would like to step down as the Administrator and begin the process of hiring a new Manager. She hopes to have interviews in late January and then Clark and Hironimus do final interviews in Feb with a start date mid to end of April. At the end of July Grace would like to trade positions with the new hire and stay on as a summer employee or on am as needed until Dec 2026. It also depends on the District's workload.
- **Capital thinning of equipment:** Grace ask the board if she could purchase the old computer and replace it with a new computer for the new hire. No action taken at this time. Hironimus asked if the board would consider downsizing equipment that the district no longer uses. After a brief discussion, Grace will look into the rental of some equipment.

PA116: none

Adjournment: Hironimus motioned to adjourn at 4:36 pm, Higgins second, Motion carried.

Next Meeting: January 21, 2026 will be held at the St. Joseph County Conservation District Offices at 6:00pm.

Board Chair Signature: Chad Clark

Date: 1-21-2026