



St, Joseph County Conservation District
693 E. Main Street
Sept 20, 2023
Centreville, MI 49032
(269)467-6336 x5

September 20, 2023, Board Minutes

6:04 pm Call to order by Howard Avildsen

Directors Present:

Howard Avildsen, Board chair
Todd Hironimus, vice chair
Dan Blasius, member
Chad Clark, Treasurer
Carol Higgins, member

Introductions/Visitors: Shaun Grace

Additions or Deletions to agenda: Clark motioned to add three items and then accept the board agenda as presented, Higgins second. Motion passed.

Budget Hearing of FY24: Avildsen opened the public hearing about the FY24 Budget at 6:11pm. Discussion was had about the appropriations information sent to the County for their approval. Avildsen closed the hearing at 6:22pm with no other discussion. Roll call approval was yes by all 5 Directors.

Public Comment: None

Approval of August board minutes. Clark motioned to accept August minutes Higgins second. Motion passed.

Treasurer Report:

Clark motioned to file the August financials, Blasius second. Motion Passed.

Correspondence Reports:

Administrator: written. Higgins asked Grace to investigate having hay rides available at the parks. Also made a motion to purchase a kayak to be given away at the Fall color tour on Sunday Oct 8, 2023. Blasius second. Motion passed, and Grace will purchase one.

MAEAP: none

NRCS: none.

CISMA: spoken. S. Grace discussed the road commission achievements, restoration project at Plumb Lake and participation in the writing of grants this upcoming season

MDARD: written.

CTAI: written.

Board: Higgins discussed the possibility of writing a solid waste grant. Grace will investigate and discuss with Pat Kulikowski at the county level. Blasius had a concern about not having the infostructure to proceed.

Clark answered questions about a second round of soybeans and cover crops.

Sometimes planting a second round does not work out as well as the farmer hopes. A great discussion and explanation about cover crops was had.

Old Business:

- **Conflict of interest:**
- **Budget Appropriations:** Grace attended the Sept 19, 2023 County Commissioner meeting and explained that as a District we achieved the \$1,000,000 mark of grants coming into the District!! Mr. Malone joked with Grace at this great achievement and can not wait to hear when the next million will be achieved. Final Decision on the District FY24 budget will be voted upon at the November or December meeting.

New Business:

- **MACD Dues:** Higgins wondered what amount we contributed in 2023 and would like to do \$1,100.00 this FY24. This will be put on the next meeting agenda.
- **CDEM Insurance:** October 10, 2023 an insurance program meeting will be viewed by the entire District staff. Possible enrollment into the Insurance will be discussed at the October meeting. However, a motion was made by Clark to have Grace send all the employee information to the CDEM and Blue Care Network to show board support of District staff offerings. Hironimus second the motion saying it would be good to offer benefits to employees. Higgins motioned to table and wait until after the webinar and place on October board agenda. Blasius second.
- **Color Tour Oct 8** District participation will be helping the parks department to conduct this event and proceeds will be given to the district to support planting seeds and restoration project at Plumb Lake.
- **Raises and work agreements:** Clark expressed as the treasurer that he would like to meet with C. Grace about the budget of each individual grant. Then he would present the possibility of raises for the staff with information directly related to the numbers. He also suggested putting this topic on the August board meeting as a standing agenda bullet so to help the administrator not have to bring up this uncomfortable question each year.
Hironimus and Avildsen will discuss the review process of employees.
The board asked Grace to investigate what the actual cost to the District is for SS, Medicare and other taxes paid through grants and what is paid out of District operations. She will have a spread sheet with that information for Clark for the October board meeting.

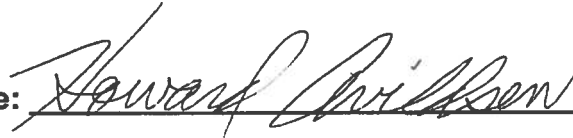
- **Used vs New Vehicle:** Grace sold the Chevy truck to Matt Kauffman for \$500, which was a couple hundred more than the scrap price. Discussion about new or used vehicles was had with the board. Grace was tasked to search local places, MiDeal prices and also with companies that lease or rent vehicles to find the best price and style of vehicle best suited to our needs. Higgins suggested a fundraiser to help offset costs. Grace will continue to do all tasks assigned. A motion by Clark to pursue with Southern Michigan Bank and Trust to apply for a loan through them for the needed vehicle. Blasius second. Grace will forward the board minutes to SMBT to begin the process.

PA116: Clark completed.

Adjournment: Clark motioned to adjourn at 8:19pm pm Blasius second. Motion passed.

Next Meeting: October 18, 2023 at 6pm at the St. Joseph County Conservation District Offices.

Board Chair Signature:



Date Oct 18 2023