Branch County Conservation District

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# December 14, 2023

#  Board Meeting

**Board members present:** Art Doner, Chantal Paxton, Bill Wolf

**Associate Board members present:** Charity Kruger

**Staff:** Kayla Bradford, Jennifer Wortz and Chelsy Wagley

**Guests:** Doug Loveberry

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by Art Doner after a tour of Loveberry’s Tree Farm by Doug Loveberry.

 **Motion by A. Doner to go to closed session** **to discuss district manager’s position, seconded by**

 **C. Paxton Motion passed unanimously**. The board came out of closed session at 5:35.

# Approval of Agenda and Minutes: Motion by C. Paxton to amend agenda and add and add manager compensation as new business. Seconded by A. Doner, the motion passed unanimously. Motion by C. Paxon and seconded by A. Doner to approve October/November minutes, motion passed unanimously.

**Staff Reports:**

**Director’s:** Jennifer shared her monthly board report. Some of the highlights are that we have a new website up and running and have saved the district a lot of money by doing it in house. Jennifer also shared that we are going to do the tree sale pages in house as well, saving us additional funds and allowing us access to change things as needed. Lastly, the trees have been ordered for the spring sale, or at least the initial orders have been placed.

Jennifer is also looking to get another quote on tree harvesting at the district property, she currently has two. Jennifer has also started to research locations for the annual meeting and some guest speakers. The proposed date is March 14th and to have it on location at a local business or event center that would allow us to have a couple educational sessions for people to attend followed by the annual meeting and a meal.

**CTAI/FBB/MAEAP:** Kayla and Chelsy were present and gave their staff reports. Kayla is working on scheduling trainings for this upcoming year that will use all of her training budget. Chelsy is continuing to get her trainings through MDARD and getting access to the MAEAP database to start updating farms. She is going to be delivering Christmas cookies and cards to all the lapsed farmers in the county.

# Public Comment: None

**Old Business:**

1. **Revised Lease Agreement**-The board signed the addendum to the revised lease agreement between the district and A. Doner for hunting.
2. **Forestry management plan-** Jennifer shared the plan with the board that was written in 2020. She also shared the two quotes that varied in price and scope greatly. Bill and Chantal are both going to get Jennifer the loggers they have used previously. The board also wants to know what each logger plans to do with the treetops after logging.

# New Business:

1. **Financial Report: Motion by C. Paxton and seconded by A. doner to approve the monthly financial report as follows.** The board also directed Jennifer to pursue closing the Secondary account or find out why the bank is going to charge us $5 a month for these extra accounts. Jennifer is also going to work with Bill on getting some rates for investment possibilities instead of just a savings account. **Motion passed unanimously**.

 $66,024.94 Primary

 $4,828.05 Secondary

 $1,499.25 Savings

1. **Approve Travel Per-diem: Montion by A. Doner seconded by C. Paxton to set a travel per-diem for Breakfast $10, Lunch $15 and Dinner $20 for staff or $45 a day while traveling.** It was discussed that it is only for annual conferences and some training events that staff will need this. Also, the district does not cover alcohol. **Motion passed unanimously.**
2. The board was in support of Kayla’s (FBB) proposed training events for 2024. Since this amount does not exceed the budget amount of $2000 no action was needed.
3. **Motion by A. Doner, seconded by C. Paxton to set the annual Meeting for Thursday, March 14 at 4:00 with a dinner after.** Discussion was on other possibilities of speakers and setting up a committee for this. Jennifer will work on finding location options. She also gave the board members their paperwork for running for the board. We have one board position still open and two board positions up for re-election. **Motion passed unanimously.**
4. **Conservation District Board positions**- Jennifer reminded the board members that to run for office they need to fill out a form and file 60 days before March 14th. Forms can also be picked up at the district office or emailed to those wanting to run.
5. **Office Coverage-** After the new year the office will be staffed on Friday’s. It was agreed that the MAEAP technician will work in the office on Friday and remote on Monday.
6. **District Manager Compensation- Motion made by C. Paxton, seconded by A. Doner to increase the hourly rate wage to $22 an hour starting after the 6-month hiring anniversary date, which is January 10, 2024. Motion passed 2-1**

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Wortz.

December 18, 2023

Signature Date