



Eaton Conservation District
551 Courthouse Drive, Suite 3
Charlotte, MI 48813
(517) 543-1512 x 5

www.eatoncd.org

Chairman Montgomery called the October 25, 2022 regular board meeting of the Eaton Conservation District (ECD) to order at 6:02 pm in the MSU Extension basement conference room at 551 Courthouse Dr., Charlotte. Those present: Debra Montgomery, Holly Shaeffer, Jim Droscha, Mark Sweatman, and Paul Malewski. Others present: Sue Spagnuolo, Rachel Cuschieri-Murray, and Cait Carpenter.

AGENDA:

1. Agenda Additions and Changes – None.
2. Minutes of previous meeting – A motion was made, supported and approved to approve the minutes as presented.
3. Financial reports – Sweatman noted that there were no negative percentages on the reports and asked Spagnuolo if she had any recommendations for changes to the FY23 budget based on the close of the FY22 financials. Spagnuolo stated that the biggest change would be the difference in the MADA grant, but that had already been factored into the budget. She said she had no recommendations for changes. A motion was made, supported and approved to approve the financial reports as printed.
4. Public Comment (limit to 3 minutes per person) – No public comment
5. Business
 - Welcome Rachel Cuschieri-Murray – Spagnuolo announced that Murray accepted the position of Executive Director and started October 11th. Murray was welcomed. Droscha asked if Murray could be added to the bank account immediately. Spagnuolo explained the bank requires the announcement at the board meeting to be reflected in the board minutes and approved at the next meeting. Once the minutes are approved on November 29th, Murray can be added to the bank account.
 - Personnel Policy – The Personnel Policy edits were reviewed. Sweatman noted the changes to page 15, 21.0 Resources and expressed his approval. Reviewing the policy from the beginning, Sweatman noted that “District Manager” should be changed to “Executive Director” and everyone agreed. All changes were unanimously approved on page 1. On page 2, Murray explained the recommendation to remove language that she felt may be in conflict with ADA. It was discussed and agreed to remove it altogether. Droscha asked where the replacement language came from about Equal Opportunity Employment. Murray explained that it was copied for the federal government’s EOE website while incorporating additional classes that were protected under the ECD policy being edited, specifically political or union affiliation, sexual orientation and gender

identity. All changes were unanimously approved on page 2. All changes were unanimously approved on pages 3-6. In reference to the sexual harassment policy, Murray noted that the policy states that the Board receives “training” so ECD is not in compliance with the policy because the Board has never actually received any training. Spagnuolo offered that, in the past, annual review of the policy by the Board was considered to be the “training”. Droscha said that he received training through other board membership. Schaeffer said that training could be as simple as watching a YouTube video. Spagnuolo suggested that board members could watch a video and signing and dating a statement of completion to place on file. Sweatman said that there are training modules available that would issue a certificate of completion. Murray said that she would research all options and present them at the next meeting for the Board’s review. All changes were unanimously approved on pages 11- 12. On pages 13 and 14, there was discussion about the addition of the “at will” language, where it would be most effectively placed, and whether it conflicts with the language around discipline. Schaeffer suggested moving the language to section 8.0 Classification of Employment and everyone agreed. There was discussion around section 4 of 19.0 Progressive Discipline Procedure and whether it was punitive in nature or conflicting with the “at will” nature of the employment. It was ultimately suggested to remove all verbiage from that section down to 20.0 At Will Employment. All other changes were unanimously approved on pages 13 and 14. Sweatman introduced the idea of adding language requesting two week notice being a requirement when an employee leaves. Montgomery commented that it wouldn’t be effective without “teeth”. Murray suggested that payment of accrued annual leave being contingent on providing 2 week notice to ECD. There was some support for this idea. Discussion shifted to the question of whether this policy should be approved with the changes discussed today or if approval should wait until additional changes can be incorporated. Murray commented that the current policy under which employees are working is the 2015 policy. Changes were made in 2021 but Spagnuolo clarified that they had not been formally approved by the Board. Murray therefore recommended that this policy be approved and additional changes be incorporated as they are identified in the future. There was general agreement with this approach among board members. Murray asked if the policy could be approved today based on this discussion. Droscha stated that it cannot. Murray offered to produce a final copy of the Personnel Policy for review by the Board to be approved at the next meeting and also send a copy with suggested changes for a future discussion. Sweatman agreed that this would be helpful and suggested that it be sent as soon as possible to be given plenty of time for review. All changes were unanimously approved on pages 15 and 16. On page 17, Schaeffer suggested “District Manager” be changed to “Executive Director”. All other changes were unanimously approved on page 17.

- Eaton Community Bank – Savings account dormant status notice – Spagnuolo explained the new policy by Eaton Community Bank. Accounts with no activity after 6 months will be considered to be dormant and begin incurring a monthly fee of \$2. Spagnuolo

suggested that the ED can transfer \$5 in or out of the account every 6 months to prevent this from happening. Malewski shared his experience with this fee and clarified that the transaction cannot be automatic. Spagnuolo reassured him that the ED is at the bank(multiple?) often for other business so it will not be a problem to conduct transactions in person.

- Grant updates including:
 - 1. Operations – (no, this doesn't mean anything Grant paperwork has been submitted) for Operations, MAEAP and MWSP. 4th Qtr payments have been received for Operations, MAEAP & MWSP. The signed grant agreements for FY23 were received today
 - 2. MAEAP – no additional discussion
 - 3. MWSP – Murray shared that Hillarie Gibbs has been hired as the new Community Outreach Coordinator. She has not received federal clearance so she is not working in the office yet. She has some relevant experience and has participated in the stream monitoring program.
 - 4. MADA – has been transferred to DNR. It is unknown what the future of MADA will look like. They let ECD keep the money in the savings account to use for Arbor Day activities.
 - 5. MM-CISMA – MM-CISMA is applying for a grant. We will provide match.
 - 6. MiCorps – Stream monitoring collection activities were conducted in the last two weeks and have concluded. Citizen Scientist volunteers are encouraged to join ID night on Thursday, October 27 from 6:30-8:30 pm at the Mott Building, Classroom 104 on Olivet's campus. Board members are welcome to participate.
 - 7. DNR Habitat – We are waiting to hear from EGLE concerning the approval of the MiWaters Wetland Restoration application. Once approved, it is good for 5 years. Members of the public have been using the land for multiple recreation purposes, including walking and not just hunting.

6. Staff reports –

- a. Carpenter presented her report about MAEAP. Sweatman expressed concern that her goals might be too aggressive. Carpenter explained her reasoning in reaching the projected numbers, including the fact that some farms are in the “pipeline” and will be moving through the process in the future.
- b. Murray presented her report about MWSP, MiCorps, and the new ED role. There was discussion around the website game feature. There was also discussion around ADA compliance of the website. Spagnuolo confirmed that ADA compliance was factored into the contract with Ciesa and that the entire website should be compliant. Montgomery expressed concern about the amount of reading involved for small children. Murray offered to contact Kevin at Ciesa to confirm that it is, in fact compliant. Drosha asked the status of an invoice sent to ECD in October that had never been received in 2020. Spagnuolo and Murray explained the background information and noted that ECD is waiting for an invoice with a current date in order to request funding from MDARD since

there is still apx.\$25k available for that purpose. ECD is also waiting for a list of options for the game piece of the website.

- c. Spagnuolo presented her report. Montgomery questioned how long Spagnuolo would stay to work at ECD. Spagnuolo said she would continue only as needed but planned to help in January.
7. NRCS report – No report
8. MDARD –No report . Report was included in the board meeting packet and hard copy
9. Correspondence
 - a. MACD FY23 Dues – Discussion of the difference between Gold and Platinum Levels. It was determined that ECD would not benefit from the additional level. Roll Call Vote – in favor – Montgomery, Drosha, Sweatman, Schaeffer, Malewski – Opposed – none.
Approved for Gold Level
 - b. Forest Forensics, Saturday, November 5 @ Oak Ridge Park, Eaton Rapids - Drosha shared that a woman contacted him about people dumping leaves in the river. Malewski confirmed that this was illegal.
 - c. Next regular board meeting November 29, 2022 @ 6 pm
10. Public Comment (limit to 3 minutes per person) – none
11. Adjourned at 7:28 pm

Sincerely,

Rachel Cuschieri-Murray