

**MACD State Council Meeting
February 22 & 23, 2018**

**Treetops Resort
Meeting Minutes - Approved**

Thursday, February 22

State Council Meeting Welcome

Pelon called the meeting to order at 1:00pm, welcoming members and guests.

In attendance: Paul Schroeder, Nancy Szikszay, Jane Bishop, Carol Hart, Elaine Brown, Clark Humrich, Larry Nowak, Jerry Miller, Art Pelon and Lori Phalen. Guests: Deena Bosworth, Garry Lee, John Switzer, Jim Pawlowicz and Tom Clement.

Approvals

State Council Agenda – additions/corrections Pelon

Szikszay, support by Schroeder to accept the agenda as written. AYES-CARRIED.

Consent Calendar: Pelon

September and November Council Minutes

Motion by Szikszay, support by Bishop to accept the September minutes as written. AYES-CARRIED.

Motion by Nowak, support by Humrich to accept the November minutes, with the correction of Larry Nowak's last name spelling. AYES-CARRIED.

Staff Reports

Motion by Nowak, support by Hart to accept the staff reports as written. AYES-CARRIED

District Program Presentation

Tom Clement, Antrim CD, provided an overview of millage campaign and the programs that are now being provided by the District.

Committees/Projects/Programs

Legislative Advocacy Program Phalen/Bosworth

Deena Bosworth, Director of Governmental Affairs at the Michigan Association of Counties shared her background. She joined MAC in 2011 and became director in 2013. Prior to joining MAC, Bosworth served as director of legislative relations for the Michigan Attorney General's Office, as assistant county administrator with the Charlotte County Board of Commissioners in Florida and as legislative director and senior policy adviser for the Michigan House Republican Caucus. She has a B.A. in anthropology from Western Michigan University.

The 2018 MACD contract with MAC provides legislative advocacy with a major focus on establishing state funding. The FY2017 contract focused specifically on building understanding with legislators as to what districts are, their relationships, their goals, why they are important and establishing the understanding of the need for state support. Activities included the establishment of the workgroup, which compiled data and investigated other entities opinions of Conservation Districts. Common questions from that process include what is the base standard and what is the accountability structure for Districts? Agency leaders noted the need to identify the funding source and voiced the understanding that Quality of Life departments have an obligation to support base funding.

In 2018, activities have expanded to include the expansion of the workgroup and establishment of the legislative committee. The legislative committee is responsible for the review of newly introduced legislation, determining a position on bills of interest based on MACD policy. The goal is to get MACD and Districts in front of legislators to increase visibility. The committee will not get involved in legislation if it puts us in a difficult position.

Legislative Committee

Bosworth provided two legislative committee models:

1. MAC's model: Define platforms based on policy, with committees focusing on topic areas. Legislative staff follow the platforms, with some going to the committees for discussion. Committee recommendations then go forward to the full board for concurrence.
2. Michigan Association of Drain Commissioners Model: A smaller organization model that utilizes a legislative committee to make the decisions.

Pelon noted that obtaining State Council approval on introduced legislation via email is not practical. If decisions are only made once per quarter at meetings, we will miss out on opportunities. The State Council can give the legislative committee power to make decisions on its behalf.

Pelon asked if the State Council wants to give the legislative committee the power to make decisions, or do they want all decisions to come before the full Council?

Motion by Schroeder, support by Miller to give the legislative committee the power to make decisions based on Deena Bosworth's recommendations.

Discussion:

Humrich – trusts in the ability of the legislative committee to take into consideration all areas of the state.

Hart is comfortable that legislative committee members provide representation from across the state.

Pelon called for a vote: AYES-CARRIED

MACD Workgroup

The workgroup is developing the funding proposal, including accountability structure and deliverables. The workgroup will bring the proposal to the legislative committee for feedback. The final proposal will go before the State Council and then will go before the Assembly.

Workgroup membership and time commitment: It is the responsibility of the president to appoint workgroup members. Meetings are held every other month, with a time commitment of 4-6 hours per month, plus the bi-monthly in person meetings.

The Council agreed to send a meeting invite to Garry Lee, USDA-NRCS State Conservationist.

Legislative Activity Dates:

Ag Day at the Capital – March 13

House Ag Sub-committee presentation – March 8

Work Group meeting – March 19 @ 9:00

Legislative Committee meeting – May 18 @ 1:00

Agency / Partner Updates

CDEM - Sherry Blaszak Email Update

No meetings since the Council met in November. One scholarship has been awarded.

MDARD – John Switzer

- Jamie Clover Adams – leaving March 2. Gordon Wenk named MDARD Director.
- Retirements: Kip Miller – last day is February 23; Erik Johnson, April 6 – tentative.
- MDARD will maintain the five Regional Coordinator positions. Currently updating the job description and redrawing the Regional Coordinator map. Chris Savona taking over the SE; Jim Pawlowicz will shift to northern lower. Elaine Brown will be sitting on the interview panel to represent MACD.
- Conservation District Operations Manual – a task force has been established to review and update the manual. Once complete, it will be forwarded to Phalen and select managers for input. The goal is to finalize the manual by the MACD convention.
- FSA Eligibility for CRP/CREP – Have received word from Senator Stabenow's office that the FSA determination of ineligibility has been reversed. Garry Lee noted that a meeting was held with states where 80% of buffer practices are used. Everyone was interpreting the policy the same way. Thanks to MDARD, MFB and Conservation Districts for pushing back.
- Environmental Stewardship Division FY2017 Report – shared the abbreviated report and provided highlights including new director training, value of ESD grants to CDs - \$6.2M.
- ESD Goals for FY18:
 - Reinvigorate communications and transparency with CDs and partners
 - Increase core training
 - Goal setting teams to increase voluntary conservation program implementation delivered through CDs
 - Enhance CD evaluation criteria used to focus capacity building efforts. A tool used internally to determine needs for support
 - Pursue a formalized conservation partnership with key partners
- Food Safety Program – two new grants in place for FY18, housed in Marquette and Blue Water. Current Technicians are in Newaygo, Grand Traverse, Genesee and Van Buren.

NRCS – Garry Lee

- Continuing resolution still in place. Staffing levels are down from 208 in 2007 to the current 152.
- Reorganization of FSA, NRCS and RD is underway. Will be working in unison with FSA on evaluating workload to determine local office changes/closures/consolidations. Have been told that they are not looking to completely merge the entities, only looking to merge the administrative function.
- Cooperative agreements, 20% more agreements will be allocated on a competitive basis. Will also be reducing the number and dollar value of the agreements.
- Districts are very vocal about the importance of the relationship between NRCS and CDs. Those in Washington need to hear more from Michigan.

FSA

Allen

Allen provided an email update: FSA is currently working to reinstate contracts in Lenawee. People across the state are being offered to re-enroll or enroll.

Meeting Recess

Pelon called for recess at 5:15pm

Friday, February 23

Reconvene Meeting

Pelon reconvened meeting at 8:15am

Committees/Projects/Programs, *continued*

Legislative Committee Phalen

The Council Legislative Committee list of bills and statements of position.

Szikszay clarified that MFB only notifies members who are legislatively active to call in support of a bill. They ask that members do not speak out in against a bill that is supported by the organization.

Ag Day at the Capital – Scheduled for March 13 11:30 – 1:30.

MACD will be in attendance, with volunteers participating to host the booth and mingle with event participants (legislators). This well attended event showcases Michigan agriculture products. Commodity groups bring samples of their product, from apple pie to lamb sausage.

MACD State Council Communications Phalen

How to provide MACD communications to directors, directly from MACD or through Region Chairs?

By consensus, the State Council agreed to the following: State Council meeting, Legislative and Work group information sharing: Phalen to send out and regional chairs following with a forward with regional chair comments. All agreed to have further conversation on how best to share information at the next Council meeting.

Switzer sharing monthly talking points to regional coordinators to share during meetings. Chris is sharing via email to board members. John to work with Lori on sharing the update via email to folks during the transition in Regional Coordinators.

Financial Report

Review of budget and reports

Brown/Phalen

Motion by Brown, support by Humrich to approve the changes to the budget. AYES-CARRIED

Phalen asked the Council how they would like to handle Ogemaw, Oscoda and Isabella who have not yet paid dues.

Humrich motioned, support by Szikszay to send a letter by Ex. Committee to non-paying CDs, giving them the ultimatum of paying dues. AYES-CARRIED.

Schroeder motioned, support by Brown to approved the financial reports as stated. AYES-CARRIED.

NACD Update

Miller and Brown provided the following NACD updates:

NACD Meetings - MACD hosted the NC NACD meeting in GR on January 4/5. Brown, Miller Pelon, Phalen attended. Additional Michigan participants: Melissa Higbee, Larry Lee, John Switzer, Peter Pelon and Garry Lee.

NACD Annual Meeting – Brown scheduled to attend. Has received two scholarships and will be traveled with Kip Miller, therefore expenses were minimal for this meeting.

Legislative Fly-in on March 20 – Brown attending

The 2019 annual meeting is scheduled for San Antonia.

MACD/NC Region Resolution Miller/Brown

The MACD buffer resolution was discussed and approved at the NACD NC Region meeting. It then moved to the NACD annual, was passed in an edited form and is now NACD policy.

Insurance Program Status Update & MACD Employee Dishonesty Coverage Decision Phalen

Motion by Szikszay, Support by Schroeder to request a quote on different coverage levels and allow the executive committee make a decision on coverage.

Discussion: \$25,000 will be the coverage level without the \$200,000 add on.

Called for a vote: AYES-CARRIED.

Conservation Partnership Committee Pelon/Lee

NACD Grants – Received proposal from Kent Montcalm and Lapeer. One year agreements. Kent – asked local FB and they donated \$6,000 to the project.

NFWF – MI NRCS CA is a \$1.3, 1.4 Million agreement exclusive for Michigan. Working through 1st round of funding with five proposals submitted: Mason-Lake, Clinton, Marquette and Huron, and CRA, with a total value around \$900,000. These are 3-year agreements.

Development Committee Miller

Keystone Contract for FY18 is \$13,800 this year. Miller outlined contract activities.

Human Resource – People Matters Phalen

To address the ongoing demand for Human Resource assistance by Conservation Districts, Phalen has looked into options available to provide needed support. Shared a proposal by People Matters, with an estimated cost of \$3,000 to provide consultation assistance to members.

Dues Discussion Pelon

Dues history: Dues levels are defined in the bylaws. Bylaws note that the first year 2012 was in place on a trial basis. There was discussion at the Assembly in 2013, but no resolutions were made to change/update the bylaws.

Brown suggested that 4-5 people get together to come together with options – explore other state structures. Ask other directors to engage in this team.

Volunteers to serve on the committee:

Art appointed Carol Hart and Jane Bishop and John Mitchell to be on the team, resource people – John and Garry. If John Mitchell cannot participate, than Nancy will participate.

Committee outputs:

Develop a member questionnaire. State Council members will be responsible for distribution of the questionnaire on a regional basis.

Team will compile results and develop suggestions for State Council consideration.

Governance Committee Miller

Looking for new representation for Region 4. Schroeder has made contact with the Oceana chair, who is interested in participating as Region 4 chair.

Pelon will send a letter to Thompson and Haulotte thanking them for their support.

MACD Training Program Phalen

- Summer Conference Planning – Lee noted that NRCS plans to participate, depending upon new administration's approval
- Director Training – Working with Patrice Martin, John Switzer and Steve Law to develop
- District Manager Retreat – human resources is the targeted topic

Conservation District Activities All

Regional Chairs and State Council members provided Conservation District Highlights.

- Kalkaska received an award from the Arbor Culture society of Michigan for a fall tree planting project from Michigan ReLEAF.
- Charlevoix – beach grass harvest using senior citizens and school students.
- Region 6 report.
- Clinton CD – March 28 annual meeting at Agroliquid.

Pelon shared condolences to Jerry – and his sincere appreciation of his activities throughout the past year.

Meeting Close

Pelon called the meeting to a close at 12:18pm