

**MICHIGAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND BOARD MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES**

January 31, 2020

**Michigan Corn Office
13750 South Sedona Parkway, Suite #5
Lansing, Michigan**

Board Members Present:

Laura Braun, RD Fund Board Member
Justin Horvath, RD Fund Board Member
Peter Anastor, chaired on behalf of Director Gary McDowell, MDARD

Board Members on Phone:

Fred Taccolini, RD Fund Board Member

Board Members Absent:

Margaret Minerick, RD Fund Board Member

Other Attendees:

Heather Throne, MDARD
Sherri Goodreau, MDARD
Matt Preisser, EGLE
Karl Jones, Jones Farm Market
Ron DeCook

The meeting was called to order by Peter Anastor at 1:33 p.m.
Peter welcomed the Board to the meeting and gave an introduction. All present gave introductions.

MOTION: Laura Braun, moved to approve the August 14, 2019 meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Justin Horvath. Motion carried.

Heather Throne gave an update on the 2017, 2018 and 2019 funded grant projects, noting two of the 2017 grants remain open, there are 15 open grants for the 2018 round and Jones Farm Market was one of the first grants to close for the 2019 round.

Heather gave an update for the 2020 grant cycle. She stated 110 applications were received, which has been the largest to date. The Joint Evaluation Committee had a total of 18 reviewers to respond to the large number of applications. The MDARD Director approved 20 projects totaling more than \$1.4 million in funding. The grant cycle will run from February 19, 2020 to August 30, 2021.

A press release will be sent out announcing the awardees.

Project and Partner Updates:

Matt Preisser, Michigan Department of Energy, Great Lakes and Environment (EGLE), discussed the island communities in the great lakes. He is a member of the Great Lakes Island Alliance and he discussed the obstacles facing communities in rural areas.

Karl Jones, Jones Farm Market, thanked Heather and the grant team for helping him through the grant process. This was his first time applying for a grant and Heather walked him through the steps, answering questions and guiding him every step of the way. The grant provided money to expand the slaughterhouse facility to meet the demand of increased business. Jones Farm Market is a 5th generation, USDA inspected facility. The 6th generation is coming into the business. The grant is helping farmers create extra income to their farms by way of providing meat for sale at farmers markets.

Public Comment:

Ron DeCook spoke about his work with Drummond Island on their rural development application. He will be working with the department to get feedback on the application scoring.

The board asked the grants team to research location for the August 13 meeting in upper peninsula. The meeting will include a tour of past grantees.

MOTION: Laura Braun moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:51 p.m. Seconded by Justin Horvath.