

**LUZERNE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
325 SMITHS POND ROAD, SHAVERTOWN, PA 18708
December 13, 2018**

Item 2

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Timothy Ference, Chairman called the meeting of the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors to order at 6:02 PM at the district's office and noted that the meeting was being recorded to aid in the preparation of the meeting minutes. The meeting began with the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

ROLL CALL - BOARD MEMBERS:

Timothy Ference	Chairman	Present
John J. Wilkes, Jr.	Vice-Chairman	Excused
Timothy J. Connolly, Jr.	Treasurer	Present by Phone
Tracey Stevens	Secretary	Excused
Leonard J. Burger, Jr.	Member	Present
John P. Hanish, Jr.	Member	Present
Chris Maylath	Member	Present
Gary A. Moyer, Sr.	Member	Present
Matthew Vough	Member	Present by Phone

DISTRICT EMPLOYEES:

Benjamin Bailey, E&S/NPDES Conservation Specialist	written report submitted
Heather Graham, E&S/NPDES Program Coordinator	written report submitted
Deborah Josuweit, Office Administrator	Present/written report submitted
Jennifer Lauri, Ag Conservation Specialist	written report submitted
John Levitsky, Watershed Specialist	written report submitted
Joshua Longmore, Executive Director	Present/written report submitted
Michael Schlauch, Conservation Specialist (Ag & Roads Programs)	written report submitted

AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES:

Andrew Kearse	NRCS	Present/written report submitted
Shane Kleiner	PA DEP	written report submitted
Pete Tarby	PA DEP	written report submitted

ORDER OF BUSINESS

(**Denotes motion or action taken by the district board)

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

MINUTES: Submitted by Josuweit.

****Motion by Hanish, seconded by Moyer to approve the November 8, 2018 meeting minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.**

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Submitted by Josuweit.

Longmore noted E&S trended higher than expected over the budgeted amount for 2018.

****Chairman Ference ordered the Financial Reports to be filed for audit.**

ACTION ITEMS:

2019 Health Insurance Renewal

Longmore discussed the information provided in the board packet on the present insurance policy and the 2019 health insurance plan renewal. Highmark proposed a 3.85% increase for the existing plan in 2019, which is a modest increase compared to what he has heard from other districts. He researched several different options to find the best coverage for the best value. Longmore is confident that the district's "grandmothered" pre-ACA plan is a better value than any other plans available on the market today. He recommended that the board continue with the current Blue Care Custom PPO plan with a \$2,500 deductible.

Health Insurance Deductible Coverage Policy Revision

Longmore reminded the board that this was the 2nd year after switching to the higher deductible plan. The district was faced with a sizable premium increase a few years back, and the change was made to maintain the pre-ACA plan at a more affordable cost by significantly increasing the deductible. By retaining lower premium rates, the district was able to achieve sizable cost savings while still covering the deductibles for staff using the Payroll Liability Reserve Fund. This approach saved the district approximately \$10K to \$15K over the past 2 years. In researching plans, Longmore learned more about potential out-of-network deductibles and co-insurance costs necessitating a few amendments to the deductible coverage policy to make it clearer and to protect the district from extraordinary expenses. This policy amendment will still allow the board discretion to consider unique circumstances and how to handle them. Generally, staff are expected to try to receive service from in-network, preferred providers when possible and to seek assistance from Longmore if needed.

****Motion by Burger, seconded by Hanish, to approve the Blue Care Custom PPO \$2500 health insurance plan for 2019. The motion carried unanimously.**

****Motion by Hanish, seconded by Moyer, to adopt the revised Health Insurance Deductible Coverage Policy as provided. The motion carried unanimously.**

2019 District Budget

Ference noted the 2019 draft budget within the board packet. Longmore explained that the draft in the packet is similar to a revised version he presented at the meeting. His approach was to maintain the status quo for district operations with programs continuing as they're currently run and no intention to add or cut positions. He doesn't anticipate any significant income changes to state and federal programs, and he estimated E&S/NPDES fee income based on the trend over the past 12 months. On the expense side, the budget will maintain the current staff levels. It has been the district's longtime practice to consider Social Security Cost of Living Adjustments each year, and if the finances allow to adjust the pay schedule accordingly. Since the finances are healthy, he included a 2.8% COLA in the wages category, and he also assumed that the district would continue with the current health insurance plan at the previously discussed renewal rates. The payroll taxes and retirement plan are percentages based on set amounts. Besides employee costs, other expenses for administrative, building and grounds/utilities, education/outreach, travel training and other miscellaneous expenses are based on the trends over the last 12 months. The main difference between the draft in the packet and the one presented is an allocation of \$12,000 to the Capital Improvement Fund with the anticipation of a new vehicle purchase within the next year. Other minor adjustments were made, with the biggest for general maintenance and repairs and technology to upgrade security in the office.

****Motion by Moyer, seconded by Hanish, to accept the 2019 District Budget as presented. The motion carried unanimously.**

Contract Issue with Princeton Hydro (Frances Slocum Lake Project)

Longmore explained that no action will be taken on the item at this time. He is waiting for Princeton Hydro to call him back. The issue is related to invoices for the floating wetland islands at Frances Slocum Lake. The company didn't include the actual purchase cost of materials for the islands themselves in the contract with the district, but they billed us for them because DCNR couldn't purchase the items directly. Longmore is hoping it's just a misunderstanding that can be sorted out. It may necessitate approval of a change order at a future meeting, but it still needs to be resolved before action can be taken.

2019 Board Meeting Schedule

Ference addressed the schedule for 2019 meetings and asked for the board members' opinions on the matter.

****Motion by Burger, seconded by Moyer, to keep the meeting days and times the same as in the previous year and to publicize them in the local newspaper. The motion carried unanimously.**

Additional Items

Ference noted that the federal Farm Bill Conference Committee was concluded this week, and the bill will be voted on by the House and Senate within the next few days and then sent it to the President for his signature. PACD provided updates on some of the relevant programs: RCPP funding is significantly increased and allows for additional partnership agreements; EQIP has an increase in funding – it will be \$1.75 Billion for 2019 and forward from there; the CRP acreage cap is up for 2019 with details to come; CREP was included in the Senate bill and retained with additional elements dealing with riparian buffers, technical assistance and cost share; and AECF will be funded at \$450 million per year for 2019 to 2023. Additional information can be found through PACD. Ference noted the work of Senator Casey and Rep. Van Hollen for their work on the bill.

Glen Oakes Emergency Stream Work

Ference reported on the previous discussions held regarding funding for the Nescopeck watershed project. Longmore noted that Levitsky met with DEP officials for an emergency permit on this project. DEP will allow the emergency work to be done, and they will also allow the overall project to be completed under the emergency permit. The emergency work would include removing debris from the channel to make it passable for storms and ice melt in the near future. Longmore and Levitsky propose, if the board agrees, that Levitsky would attempt to get 3 quotes from contractors who have successfully performed stream work for the district in the past: Neal-Lynn who did the Coal Creek project and others, Columbia Excavating who did the Johnson/Koval project, and Rosencrance Excavating did work during the Emergency Watershed Protection Program in Salem Twp. Longmore noted they all did great work on the projects. Levitsky will meet on-site with the contractors and request written quotes. Longmore requested the board's approval to select the lowest bid, not to exceed \$15,000, to move forward with the emergency portion of the project. It will be made clear to the successful bidder that this contract doesn't guarantee them the overall, larger-scale project, but they will be welcome to submit a bid for that as well at a later date. The regular bidding process will be followed for that portion of the project, and the contract will be awarded by the board at a future meeting. Ference mentioned that the homeowners in this development have been trying to cope with the flooding issues themselves but haven't been successful. Connolly asked if this funding is grant money already on-hand, and Longmore reported it is.

****Motion Hanish, seconded by Connolly to authorize Longmore to evaluate the three quotes when they are received and to accept the lowest bid. The motion carried unanimously.**

Ference noted that this project was thought to be on the Little Nescopeck Creek, but through research it was found there are two Little Nescopeck Creeks within the Nescopeck watershed - A and B. This project is on Little Nescopeck A.

Staff reports included in the Board packet

COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS

NRCS – Kears provided a written and verbal report.

PA DEP – Kleiner provided a written report.

PA DEP – Tarby provided a written report.

PACD – A written report was provided in the Board Packet. Ference noted that the PACD office move has been completed and they will be holding an open house on 12/18/18 from 2:00-4:00 PM with refreshments. More information is available in the office.

CORRESPONDENCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- January LCD Board of Directors Meeting – 1/10/19 @ 6:00 PM. Swearing in of new board members will take place along with committee appointments.
- PACD Directors training, which is a new initiative to get more information to the district directors, will be held 3/5/19 at Genetti's in Wilkes-Barre. More information will be provided in the near future.
- PACD/SCC winter meeting will be held 1/30 and 1/31 at Toftrees Resort. Last day to register will be 12/28/18.
- PA Farm Show Public Officials' Luncheon will be held Wed., 1/9/19. All board members are invited to attend at no cost. Parking fee will be covered by the district.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The board entered executive session to discuss personnel issues at 6:40 PM.

RETURNED TO REGULAR SESSION:

The Board returned to the regular meeting at 6:55 PM. Ference requested a motion to approve the following bonuses for district staff members in recognition of continued outstanding work: Heather Graham - \$900.00, Ron Jesse - \$250.00, Debbie Josuweit - \$800.00, Jen Lauri - \$400.00, John Levitsky - \$600.00, Josh Longmore - \$2,000.00, and Mike Schlauch - \$600.00.

****Motion by Connolly, seconded by Hanish to approve the bonuses as discussed. The motion carried unanimously.**

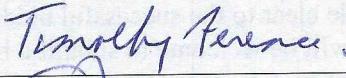
****Motion by Hanish, seconded by Moyer to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.

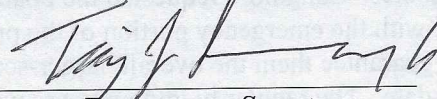
This meeting was recorded on a digital recorder to assist in the preparation of the official written minutes.

Respectfully Submitted by: Deborah Josuweit, Office Administrator

Approved by action of the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors on January 10, 2019.



Chair or Vice Chair



Treasurer or Secretary