

LUZERNE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
325 SMITHS POND ROAD, SHAVERTOWN, PA 18708  
November 21, 2019

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Timothy Ference, Chairman called the meeting of the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors to order at 6:06 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.

Ference recognized Rob Sax, DEP’s new Northeast Regional Local Government Liaison, who replaced recently-retired Bob Pitcavage. Sax introduced himself and offered his assistance to the district, when appropriate.

**ROLL CALL - BOARD MEMBERS:**

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

**DISTRICT EMPLOYEES:**

Hunter Bednarczyk, E&S/NPDES Program Technician	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:**

Robert Sax, Local Government Liaison	DEP	Present
--------------------------------------	-----	---------

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**MINUTES:** Submitted by Josuweit.

**\*\*Motion by Hanish, seconded by Wilkes to approve the September 12, 2019 meeting minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.**

**FINANCIAL REPORTS:** Submitted by Josuweit.

Brief discussion was held on the balance of the general account. Longmore noted that the general account balance is dipping as previously reported. This correlates with the large balance of open invoices due because money has been paid to contractors while the district awaits reimbursement of guaranteed grant and program funds from the state.

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

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**2020 Draft Budget Presentation**

Ference noted the 2020 draft budget within the board packet. Longmore presented an overview summary of his proposed budget. 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 new funding sources, and he doesn't anticipate significant expense increases or new categories. On the income side, state and federal income are accounted for through agreements and grant applications. He requested a \$5,000 increase from the county to help offset the costs of administering the Farmland Preservation Program, which has been included in the county manager's proposed budget. The UGWF allocation will see a small CPI increase. A transfer from the Education Fund has been included, and E&S/NPDES Program fee income is based on 12-month trend which is about 6.2% lower than the 2019 budgeted amount. On the expense side, the wages include a 1.6% COLA increase using the 2020 Social Security increase. Also included is anticipated performance-based step increases on anniversary dates. Health Insurance includes the 3.7% increase for the current high deductible plan, with the continuation of district's deductible coverage policy out of the Payroll/Benefits Liability Reserve account. This approach continues to result in considerable savings over the previous plan. A payroll tax percentage increase from 10% to 10.9% was included to reflect the current trend. Operational expenses are generally estimated based on 2019 usage. The 2019 budget included a transfer into the Capital Reserve account, but that hasn't been done yet this year due to the decline in the E&S fees. This will be discussed next month.

**\*\*Motion by Wilkes, seconded by Moyer to approve the proposed 2020 draft budget as presented. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **2020 Health Insurance Renewal**

Longmore noted the health insurance renewal information that was provided in the board packet. Highmark is proposing a 3.7% increase to the district's current Blue Care Custom PPO plan with a \$2,500 deductible. A brief discussion was held.

**\*\*Motion by Wilkes, seconded by Connolly to approve the 2020 renewal of the district's current pre-ACA health insurance plan, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Pre-pay 2020 Invoices for Memberships & Services**

Ference noted a proposal to prepay invoices for memberships and services. Longmore explained that the district receives invoices from the middle to the end of the year for items that are typically paid at the beginning of the new fiscal year. Those bills usually include business/auto insurance, PACD dues, NACD dues and an Envirothon scholarship fund donation. It is the recommendation of Longmore to pay these bills now, which will show a double payment for the current year and will appear as a deficit in those categories in the 2019 audit. Otherwise this won't affect the district's current financial condition but will alleviate the concern of having bills unpaid for up to six months. Longmore noted that since it would technically be an over-expenditure in the current fiscal year budget, action would be needed to authorize these payments if the board is comfortable with doing so.

**\*\*Motion by Moyer, seconded by Connolly to authorize payment of the 2020 invoices for memberships and services. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **New Vehicle Purchase**

Ference reminded the board of the district's practice for replacement of fleet vehicles. Longmore provided a list of the district's 6 current fleet vehicles. The two oldest ones are the 2012 Chevy Colorado with 49,000 miles and the 2013 Jeep Patriot SUV with 41,000 miles. Longmore noted the Jeep was used out of the NRCS office for district Ag Program staff, but it was brought back to the district office since it hasn't gotten much use in the last year. NRCS was assigned another vehicle that can be used by district staff for most of their work. Longmore suggested looking into trading in the Jeep and Colorado and purchasing one new truck. He hasn't started the process but has looked at COSTARS Program listings for crew cab pickups which range in price from \$26,000 to \$30,000. Discussion was held on the possibility of also replacing the 2 MDC Program trucks and the Chevy Equinox. Longmore will look into the scenarios of replacing 2 or 4 vehicles while trading in up to 5 current vehicles and bring the information back to the board at a future meeting.

### **Change Bank Account Type for Clean Water Fund**

Ference noted that the board approved changes to bank account types at a previous meeting, but the Clean Water Fund account was not changed at that time. Longmore explained that most changes were for grant-specific saving accounts that are opened when we get new grants and closed when the grants are completed. After talking with the bank, they suggested moving these accounts over to preferred interest checking accounts that earn significantly more interest. At that time, Longmore didn't look at changing the Clean Water Fund account, but while working on the budget he saw how much interest the other accounts were earning. He checked the

delegation agreement with DEP for any account type requirements, and there are no stipulations on the type of account this fund, only that the funds are deposited within ten days of receipt.

**\*\*Motion by Connolly, seconded by Wilkes to authorize Longmore to change the Clean Water Fund from a savings account to a preferred interest checking account. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Employee Step Increase Notification**

Ference informed the board that Levitsky successfully achieved a step increase within the district's Employee Pay Schedule.

**Additional Items:**

**COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS:**

PA DEP – Sax reported that the Growing Greener Grants deadline is December 20<sup>th</sup>, Kleiner is the contact.

PA DEP – Kleiner forwarded a written report from DEP's Central Office.

PACD – Provided a written report. Brenda Shambaugh asked managers to announce that PACD is looking for district director participants to serve on the following PACD committees:

1. District Employees Committee - 2
2. Education and Outreach Committee - 1
3. Legislative Committee - 2
4. Operations Staff Opening - 1
5. Ways and Means Committee - 2

If anyone has any questions on the positions, please contact Longmore or PACD.

**CORRESPONDENCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- PACD/SCC Winter Meeting is scheduled for January 22-23, 2020 at Wyndham State College, Boalsburg
- Levitsky received an email from Mike Mack, Dennison Township Supervisor, thanking him for the work on the Glen Oaks project.
- December LCD Board of Directors Meeting – 12/12/19 @ 6:00 PM.

Wilkes asked if there are director reappointments for this year. Longmore explained that a request was made to County Council to reduce the size of the board to seven, which will affect the positions of Connolly and Maylath who have both expressed interest in retiring after this year. It was discussed at Luzerne County Council's Authorities, Boards and Commissions Committee on 11/12/19. The committee referred it to County Council, which will discuss the request at their work session on 11/26/19 and then vote on it at their 12/3/19 meeting. If approved, it will go to the SCC for a final decision at their December or January meeting.

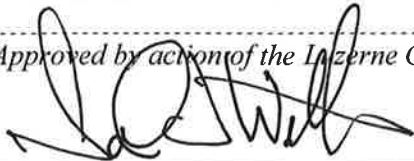
Hanish reported he saw former employee Shawn Rybka, who told him to say "hello" to everyone.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 PM.

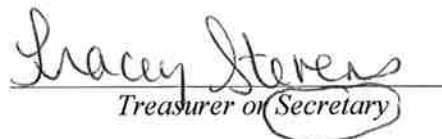
*This meeting was recorded on a digital recorder to assist in the preparation of the official written minutes.*

*Respectfully Submitted by: Deborah Josuweit, Office Administrator*



*Chair or Vice Chair*

*Approved by action of the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors on December 12, 2019.*



*Treasurer or Secretary*