

**LUZERNE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
325 SMITHS POND ROAD, SHAVERTOWN, PA 18708  
July 16, 2020**

**Item 1**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Timothy Ference, Chairman, called the meeting of the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors to order at 6:05 PM, noting that the meeting was being held in-person and via video/phone conference and was being recorded to aid in the preparation of the meeting minutes.

**ROLL CALL - BOARD MEMBERS:**

Timothy Ference	Chairman	Present
John J. Wilkes, Jr.	Vice-Chairman	Present
Tracey Chonko	Secretary	Excused
Leonard J. Burger, Jr.	Member	Present
Walter Griffith	Member	Present via phone until 6:22 PM
John P. Hanish, Jr.	Member	Present
Gary A. Moyer, Sr.	Member	Present

**DISTRICT EMPLOYEES:**

Hunter Bednarczyk, Conservation Specialist (E&S/NPDES Program)	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
Amber Martin, Conservation Specialist (MDC Program)	written report submitted
Michael Schlauch, Conservation Specialist (Ag & Roads Programs)	written report submitted

**AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES:**

Andrew Kearse	NRCS	Present via phone
Shane Kleiner	DEP	Present via phone

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Ference noted a member of the public was present to participate in the meeting. Owen Sprau stated he was interested in learning more about the district and decided to attend the meeting. Ference welcomed him.

**MINUTES:** Submitted by Josuweit.

**\*\*Motion by Griffith, seconded by Moyer to approve the June 18, 2020 meeting minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.**

**FINANCIAL REPORTS:** Submitted by Josuweit.

Longmore noted that this is the first report in a few months showing a surplus in the E&S fee revenue. This is due to larger projects being submitted in June and has made up for the deficit that was reported in months.

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

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**Update on District Operations During Pandemic**

Ference noted that Longmore has kept the board aware of adjustments on district operations during the pandemic as requirements and recommendations changed. Longmore said he expected to report on the opening and how well the district is functioning since reopening, but the Governor's July 15<sup>th</sup> order raises questions. He noted that

staff returned to in-office work on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, and on July 1<sup>st</sup> the Secretary of Health issued a universal mask order, which is being followed. On July 15<sup>th</sup>, the Governor issued a new order for businesses, which included a requirement for employees to telework if possible. The order does not address whether it applies to local governments, which were previously exempt from the Governor's COVID-19 orders. Earlier in the year, some conservation districts reported that they spoke with their insurance agents who suggested not re-opening too early, because if an employee contracted COVID-19 in the office setting, the organization's insurance provider may not be able to cover a claim because the district did not follow government guidance. Longmore asked the board for input on whether the district should explore reverting back to teleworking, while still allowing fieldwork since it cannot be done remotely. A discussion was held. Kears stated that Schlauch and Lauri are still able to conduct NRCS in-office work following their established safety protocols and can continue to do field work that cannot be done through teleworking. Longmore will continue to research state guidance and contact the district's insurance agent, DGK, for input. He pointed out that the COOP provides flexibility in dealing with emergency situations as they occur. Longmore will discuss work operations with staff members individually to get their thoughts as well. It was the consensus that the district should continue operating under the re-opening plan, and Longmore will contact Ference and the executive committee for guidance if circumstances warrant.

### **Update on Office Building Maintenance Issues**

Longmore reported on the bat, bat bug, and mold issues. A mold analysis confirmed that several types of mold are present in the attic. Fortunately, they are not toxic varieties, but the report indicated they can cause health problems and should be addressed. He contacted three mold companies for remediation quotes. One said they wouldn't inspect the site until the bat issue is taken care of. The second one, Seitz Environmental, quoted \$3,352 to remove the mold, treat the area, and fog the space with an anti-microbial. Longmore asked about protecting against the mold returning, and they indicated they could coat the interior attic space with mildew resistant paint, for an additional cost of \$1,360 (for a total cost of \$4,712). He is waiting on a third quote.

On the bat and bat bug issue, he has contacted two companies for bat exclusion work. One company inspected the attic and doesn't believe there's a widespread bat infestation. The inspector would like to come to the office at dusk to see if he can pinpoint any entrance points and then provide a quote to address those areas. Longmore is still waiting for that quote. The Terminix quote was high, but it included the replacement of the insulation which also needs to be done. Last month the board authorized up to \$7,000 to deal with the bat/bat bug issue. He would like one more quote for each issue, and then will move forward under the current authorization.

### **Hiring Process for Building & Grounds Keeper**

Ference noted that Ron Jesse, the district's longtime Building & Grounds Keeper, would like to retire but has agreed to remain until a replacement can be hired. Longmore stated that Jesse has been with the District for 16 years and has done a great job. Longmore would like to start the hiring process and asked if the board wants to be involved with the process. A brief discussion was held.

**\*\*Motion by Wilkes, seconded by Moyer to authorize Longmore to start the hiring process for a replacement for Jesse and to provide him with authorization to hire within the district's Program Technician pay scale, with the ability to negotiate if needed. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Vehicle Repair/Replacement Discussion**

Ference referenced item 3d in the board packet, a list of the district's vehicles. Longmore reminded the board of the discussion during last year's budget development regarding replacing a few of the vehicles this year. He anticipated having 3 or 4 new vehicles purchased already, but with the financial uncertainties of the pandemic and only five-months' worth of funding provided in the new state budget, he hasn't moved forward with buying new vehicles. At least 3 of the vehicles require repairs, which will likely exceed that budget line item. Longmore noted that the vehicles are well maintained. Also, for safety during the pandemic, there are enough to assign each staff member their own vehicle. A brief discuss was held and there was a consensus to keep the current vehicles maintained and to revisit the issue in the fall.

### **DGLV Roads Program Quality Assurance Board Recommendations**

Ference introduced the DGLV Roads program for the sake of the public in attendance. Sprau asked about the funding process, and Longmore gave a brief explanation of the program. He then referenced item 3e in the board packet – the minutes from the QAB meeting that was held on 7/10/2020. The QAB made the following recommendations:

1. To approve a grant for the Hollenback Township LVR project with currently available funds, and to approve a grant for the Fairview Township LVR project once the new fiscal year's allocation is approved by the SCC.
2. To approve a grant to fully fund the Ross Township DGR project, and to approve a grant to partially fund the Fairmount Township project with the remaining available project funds once the new fiscal year's allocation is approved by the SCC. If the Fairmount Township Supervisors decide they would like to phase the project, drainage concerns would be addressed in this round of grant funding and priority would be given for a grant for Driving Surface Aggregate placement when the next fiscal year's funds are allocated.

Schlauch spoke with Fairmount Township supervisors, and they would like to phase the project. They submitted an amended application for \$55,690 to address the drainage work. Longmore noted there will likely be enough funds available to proceed with the first phase of the Fairmount Township project along with the Ross Township project.

**\*\*Motion by Wilkes, seconded by Burger to accept the recommendation of the QAB and to fund the projects as stated. The motion carried with Moyer abstaining.**

**COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS:**

NRCS – Kearsse gave a verbal report via phone.

DEP – Kleiner gave a verbal report via phone.

PACD – Ference noted a written report included in the board packet and mentioned that PACD has a COVID-19 information portal on their website.

**CORRESPONDENCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- PACD Employment Law Webinar on 8/5/2020 at 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference - Executive Council meeting web conference on 7/23/2020 at 10:00 AM until Noon
- August LCD Board of Directors Meeting – 8/20/2020 at 6:00 PM


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

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

*This meeting was recorded 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 September 17, 2020.*

  
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 Chair or Vice Chair

  
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 Treasurer/Secretary

