

**LUZERNE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
325 SMITHS POND ROAD, SHAVERTOWN, PA 18708  
March 18, 2021**

Item 1

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Timothy Ference, Chairman, called the meeting of the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors to order at 6:02 PM, noting that the meeting was being held via video/phone conference and that it was being recorded.

Ference noted the February meeting was canceled.

**ROLL CALL - BOARD MEMBERS:**

Timothy Ference	Chairman	Present via phone
John J. Wilkes, Jr.	Vice-Chairman	Present via video
Tracey Chonko	Secretary/Treasurer	Present via phone
Leonard J. Burger, Jr.	Member	Present via phone
Walter Griffith	Member	Present via video
John P. Hanish, Jr.	Member	Present via video
Gary A. Moyer, Sr.	Member	Present via phone

**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 via video	written report submitted
Jennifer Lauri, Ag Conservation Specialist		written report submitted
John Levitsky, Watershed Specialist		written report submitted
Joshua Longmore, Executive Director	Present via video	written report submitted
Michael Schlauch, Conservation Specialist (Ag & Roads Programs)		written report submitted

**AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES:**

Andrew Kears	NRCS	Present via phone
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**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**MINUTES:** Submitted by Josuweit.

**\*\*Motion by Griffith, seconded by Burger to approve the January 21, 2021 meeting minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.**

**FINANCIAL REPORTS:** Submitted by Josuweit.

Longmore noted E&S fees are higher than budgeted because of several permit applications for large projects recently submitted, indicating that development activity is continuing in the county.

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

Longmore acknowledged a member of the public, Tom Herbert, joined the meeting via video at 6:05. Ference welcomed him, and Mr. Herbert introduced himself.

**COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS:**

NRCS – Kears provided a written and verbal report.

DEP – Ference noted a written report was included in the board packet.

PACD – Ference noted a written report was included in the board packet.

EPCAMR - Ference gave a summary of EPCAMR's recent quarterly board meeting. He noted staff has been working on the Pennsylvania Clean Water Legislative Briefing Book, which is touted as the state legislators guide to protecting PA waterways for the future. It covers areas of interest to state legislators and identifies many other issues related to protecting PA waterways, including AMD. Those interested can get a copy online. Another item of discussion was the Reclaiming Appalachian Coalition. It is active in Virginia, West Virginia, and Ohio. EPCAMR made application for grant money to become part of that initiative. They developed a site selection tool for potential locations for solar energy projects on abandoned mine land, which identified 18 sites in five counties in PA. They are putting a proposal together for funding to follow up on these kinds of projects.

Ference noted staff reports are included in the board packet.

### **BUSINESS ITEMS:**

#### **Start of the 2021 Mosquito-borne Disease Control Season**

Longmore requested the board's approval to start the 2021 season of the MDC program, which is funded and guided by DEP. He reported that Amber Martin is interested in returning as the Conservation Specialist for the program. After consulting with DEP, he suggested Martin's return to full time, seasonal status on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The district's previous 2<sup>nd</sup> seasonal technician, Ryan Sotelo, was not rehired last season due to the pandemic situation, however Sotelo informed Longmore that he moved out of the area and isn't available for call back. The 2<sup>nd</sup> technician position usually works 32 hours a week, May running through September, and Martin's position typically runs April through the end of September/early October. Longmore asked if the board would like to authorize him to seek candidates for the 2<sup>nd</sup> position, with the executive committee hiring for the position within certain parameters. He noted that a seasonal employee typically begins as a Program Technician, which has a base pay level of \$14 per hour. The option of offering a step or two increase above that could be provided if the candidate has experience or already holds a pesticide applicators license, which is needed for the position.

**\*\*Motion by Wilkes, seconded by Moyer, to hire Amber Martin for the 2021 Mosquito-Borne Disease Control season as outlined by Longmore. The motion carried unanimously.**

**\*\*Motion by Wilkes, seconded Burger to authorize the Executive Committee to make the hire of the second seasonal technician as discussed. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **Phone System Upgrade Options**

Ference noted the present phone system contract is ending soon. Longmore gathered additional information to what was included in the board packet, Item 5b, on proposals for a new system. Longmore explained all the options. He is recommending a new system through Atlantic Broadband, at a cost of about \$3,100 a year. This is a savings from the district's current yearly costs which are close to \$4,900. All the options for new systems would be a cost savings, improve technology, and improve communications among staff and the public. A brief discussion was held.

**\*\*Motion by Wilkes, seconded by Moyer to authorize Longmore to accept the Atlantic Broadband proposal at \$3,156 a year. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **Dallas Township Low-Volume Roads Projects**

Longmore reported that Dallas Township requested the cancelation of the Fern Street LVR grant contract that was approved in 2017. Several issues have and continue to delay the project, so the township returned the advance payment. The township also requested an extension to the end of the year to complete the Jake Moore Road project.

**\*\*Motion by Wilkes, seconded by Griffith to cancel the Fern Street LV Road contract with Dallas Township. The motion carried unanimously.**

**\*\*Motion by Moyer, seconded by Wilkes to extend the contract for the Jake Moore Road LV Road project to the end of the year. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **Update on Countywide Action Plan for Clean Water**

Longmore updated the board on the Countywide Action Plan for PA's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan. This is Pennsylvania's plan for meeting the pollutant reduction requirements set by EPA which includes county-level plans as part of the process. The district has partnered with Lackawanna and Susquehanna County Conservation Districts to hire a consultant to act as plan coordinator. DEP has approved a three-county grant to fund the consultant who will write individual plans for each county. Lackawanna County CD agreed to sponsor the grant which has been fully executed and signed. Longmore has worked with his

counterparts at the other districts on the process of hiring the consultant, and after reviewing five different consulting firms, the three managers agreed on a firm and made a recommendation to Lackawanna County CD Board of Directors. They accepted the recommendation and approved a contract with Larson Design Group as the consultant for writing each county's plan. Joshua Glace is leading the project and is the main point of contact for Larson Design Group. DEP held an internal training for the coordinators and the primary county leads and an initial meeting with the coordinator to plan the first steps in the process. A kickoff meeting is being planned with the county CAP leadership team that will guide this process for Luzerne County. This team includes representatives from the district, the county administration, county council, and DEP's regional office. The board will have opportunity to be involved in the stakeholder meetings once they are set. DEP has an aggressive timeline for this project, and it is written into the agreement with Larson Design Group to have a final plan submitted to DEP by September 30, 2021. A brief discussion was held.

**Additional Items:**

Ference noted that the updated committees/workgroup list that was approved at the January meeting was provided in the board packet. Board members were invited to request any changes. None were requested.

**CORRESPONDENCE & ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- April LCD Board of Directors Meeting – 4/15/21 at 6 PM
- Northeast PACD Region Meeting via Zoom – 4/16/21 at 10 AM
- Statement of Financial Interest Due – 5/1/21

**Public Comment:** Tom Herbert asked about the acronym EPCAMR. Ference explained it was Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation. Pennsylvania it is divided into eastern and western sections, with coalitions for each. These are 501c3 organizations that cover multiple counties, with the primary focus is abandoned mine-related issues. Herbert explained that he was a conservation district board member in Virginia and described the process of being elected and how funding for programs in that state are handled. Longmore stated he added Herbert to the list of stakeholders for the Countywide Action Plan.

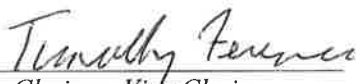
**\*\*Motion by Griffith, seconded by Wilkes to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Deborah Josuweit, Office Administrator.*

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*Approved by action of the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors on May 20, 2021*

  
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Chair or Vice Chair

  
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Treasurer/Secretary