

**LUZERNE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
325 SMITHS POND ROAD, SHAVERTOWN, PA 18708  
August 19, 2021**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Tim 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 in-person and via video/phone conference and that it was being recorded.

**ROLL CALL - BOARD MEMBERS:**

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

Ference noted Tom Herbert was in attendance.

**DISTRICT EMPLOYEES:**

Hunter Bednarczyk, Conservation Specialist (E&S/NPDES Program)	written report submitted
Heather Graham, E&S/NPDES Program Coordinator	written report submitted
George Jones, MDC Program Technician	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/written report submitted
Michael Schlauch, Conservation Specialist (Ag & Roads Programs)	written report submitted
Owen Sprau, MDC Program Technician	written report submitted

Longmore presented the board with a revised draft of the agenda and noted the only change was the addition of the appointment of Tom Herbert as an Associate Director on the board.

Ference noted that the July meeting was canceled due to lack of business.

**AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES:**

Andrew Kearse	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 Moyer, seconded by Hanish to approve the June 17, 2021, meeting minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.**

**FINANCIAL REPORTS: Submitted by Josuweit.**

Ference noted the financial reports in the board packet. Longmore stated that the E&S service fee income continues to exceed the budgeted amount.

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

### **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.

Ference noted staff reports were included in the board packet under item 4.

### **BUSINESS ITEMS:**

#### **Appointment of Thomas Herbert as an Associate Director on the Board**

Ference noted Herbert's willingness to serve as an Associate Director. Herbert stated he was glad to volunteer to support conservation efforts and mentioned his prior experience as a conservation district board member in Virginia.

**\*\*Motion by Moyer, seconded by Burger to appoint Thomas Herbert as an Associate Director on the Luzerne Conservation District Board. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **Review of Sunshine Act Changes**

Ference noted that the State Conservation Commission (SCC) provided a summary of recent amendments to the PA Sunshine Act, which was included in the board packets as item 5a. Longmore explained that the state legislature recently revised the Sunshine Act, which governs public meetings. It gives guidelines related to posting meeting information, locations, and times. The district abides by the requirements by posting meetings in local newspaper legal ads and on the district's website. Of the recent changes, the only one that would cause a change to prior practice is the requirement that the final agenda must be set and posted online and at the physical location 24 hours before the meeting. After that, agendas can't be changed other than for a specific purpose such as an emergency, unless a board member makes a motion to amend the agenda at the beginning of the meeting, the reasons for the change are announced before the vote, and the motion is passed by the board. That amended agenda would then have to be posted online and at the district's office on the next business day.

#### **FY 2021/2022 CDFAP UGWF Allocation Acknowledgments**

Ference noted the need for the board to acknowledge the use of certain state funding allocations. Longmore explained the allocations from the Unconventional Gas Well Fund (UGWF), funded by severance fees on natural gas wells, are distributed by the SCC and the Pennsylvania Utility Commission (PUC). The PUC block grant, in the amount of \$61,921.62, was received in early July. The SCC has allotted \$27,874 in Administrative Assistance Funding for the current state fiscal year. The SCC asks districts to formally identify on a worksheet how they will use those funds. Districts can either allocate the funds for various staff positions or to cover administrative expenses. Longmore's recommendation is to continue using the funds to cover general administrative expenses. An acknowledgement by the Board is needed to submit a worksheet to the SCC documenting the district's intentions for the use of the funds. Longmore also requested acknowledgement of the PUC block grant, which is included in the 2021 budget and is used for staff costs that are not covered by state or federal reimbursements. Ference stated for the record the board's formal acknowledgement of the receipt and use of the PUC block grant and the FY 2021/2022 CDFAP UGWF allocation from the SCC.

#### **Additional Landscaping Projects**

Ference acknowledged the attractive landscaping work that has been completed on the district's grounds and introduced additional work that Longmore would like the board to address. Longmore stated that since he was pleased with the work that of Foltz Landscaping completed, he requested a quote to replace the deteriorating capstones on the retaining wall alongside the driveway. Foltz's estimate is \$1,710. He did not pursue any other estimates but would do so if the board requests it. Longmore also informed the board that mowing the steep hill on the opposite side of the driveway has been a longstanding concern, and he feels it is a good time to address the issue. He contacted Native Creations, a company that does native planting site restorations, to provide some options which would be easier to maintain. Once he receives a proposal, he will bring it to the board for consideration. Ference suggested approving the capstone replacement work at a price not to exceed \$2,000.

**\*\*Motion by Hanish, seconded by Moyer to accept the quote from Foltz Landscaping for the retaining wall capstone replacement work and to authorize Longmore to spend up to \$2,000 for the project. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Spotted Lanternfly Control Project Funding Request**

Longmore reported the PA Department of Agriculture (PDA), through the SCC, has offered conservation districts a one-time grant of up to \$10,000 for outreach related to the control and mitigation of the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF). Funding would be for local education/outreach efforts and possibly the identification of some high-risk transmission areas within Luzerne County, and the grant period is from July 1, 2021 through May 30, 2022. He suggested keeping one of the seasonal MDC Program employees working through the fall to accomplish some of the scope of work. PDA and USDA would continue doing SLF control and surveillance work. Based on previous board interest in being involved in invasive species control, Longmore sent a letter of intent to the SCC (item 5d in the board packet), but board approval is needed to submit the formal application.

**\*\*\*Motion by Moyer, seconded by Hanish to authorize Longmore to submit the grant application to the SCC for the Spotted Lanternfly Control Project. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Update on Countywide Action Plan (CAP) for Clean Water**

Longmore explained that the district's consultant, Josh Glace from Larson Design Group, compiled the input that was received from the stakeholder focus groups and submitted an initial draft listing of the proposed projects and efforts for entry into the computer model to determine the impact they would have on meeting the pollution reduction goals identified by DEP. He also developed the first draft of the Priority Initiatives and Programmatic Recommendations, which are the main components of the CAP, and submitted them for DEP's review on July 30<sup>th</sup>. The draft plan focuses on four main sectors that were identified through the planning process: Agriculture, Urban and Developed Stormwater, Wastewater, and Watershed Health. Longmore also did a thorough review of the draft document and offered comments and suggested some changes.

Longmore went on to report that from DEP's analysis of the initial information provided by Glace, Luzerne County is vastly exceeding the nutrient pollution reduction goals set by DEP. It is noteworthy to mention that the current Chesapeake Bay model only accounts for projects done up to June 30, 2019. The work that has been done since then has not received credit in the model, so the CAP effort included quantifying as much of that recently completed work as possible, along with identifying projects that could be done in the next few years. With that data input into the model, it is projected that Luzerne County will exceed the nitrogen pollution reduction goals by 301% and phosphorus goals by 249%. This information confirms that partners within Luzerne County are doing a great job of cleaning up local waterways. Glace and Longmore will present the draft plan to Luzerne County Council on August 24<sup>th</sup>. Longmore invited the board's input on the draft plan and noted a final draft will be provided for review and consideration for approval at the September meeting, since the board will be the approving entity. Longmore proceed to give an overview of the draft Priority Initiatives and Programmatic Recommendations and some discussion was held.

### **Alternative Health Insurance Reimbursement Benefit**

Longmore explained that an employee's spouse is now eligible for Medicare and has the option to take Medicare instead of receiving coverage through the district's health insurance plan. This would be a significant savings to the district because the difference between couple coverage and single coverage is over \$700 per month. If the district reimbursed or compensated to offset the direct costs to the employee and their spouse, it would still save over \$400 per month. Longmore has done some research but wants to verify the best way to accomplish this. He wanted to verify that it would be the will of the board to pursue this and make it work for the benefit of the district and the employee. The board members indicated a consensus to do so.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- September LCD Board of Directors Meeting – 9/16/21 at 6:00 PM

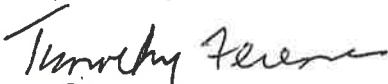
### **PUBLIC COMMENT: None**

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

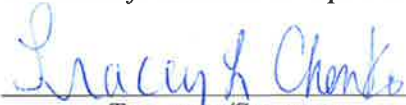
The meeting adjourned at 7:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Deborah Josuweit, Office Administrator.

Approved by action of the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors on September 16, 2021



Chair or Vice Chair



Treasurer/Secretary