

**UZERNE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
325 SMITHS POND ROAD, SHAVERTOWN, PA 18708  
September 19, 2024**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Wilkes called the meeting of the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors to order at 6:00 PM, noting that the meeting was being held in person and via video/phone conference and that it was being recorded. He then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL - BOARD MEMBERS:**

John J. Wilkes, Jr., Chairman	Present
John P. Hanish, Jr., Vice Chairman	Present
Tracey Chonko, Secretary/Treasurer	Present
Leonard J. Burger, Jr.	Present
Thomas Herbert	Present
Gary A. Moyer, Sr.	Present via phone
Gregory S. Wolovich, Jr.	Present via phone

Tim Ference, Director Emeritus, was present.

**DISTRICT EMPLOYEES:**

Hunter Bednarczyk, Conservation Specialist (E&S/NPDES)	written report submitted
Keith George, Program Coordinator (MDC & Special Projects)	written report submitted
Heather Graham, Program Coordinator (E&S/NPDES)	written report submitted
Lauren Holder, Program Technician (MDC)	written report submitted
Deborah Josuweit, Office Administrator	Present/written report submitted
Jennifer Lauri, Conservation Specialist (Ag)	written report submitted
John Levitsky, Conservation Specialist (Watershed)	written report submitted
Joshua Longmore, Executive Director	Present/written report submitted
Michael Schlauch, Program Coordinator (Ag & Roads)	written report submitted
Michael Skokoski, Program Technician (MDC)	written report submitted

**AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES:**

Dave McCoy	NRCS	Present via phone/written report submitted
Caitlin Skibiell	DEP	Present via phone/written report submitted

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**1. MINUTES:**

**\*\*Motion by Herbert, seconded by Hanish to approve the July 18, 2024, meeting minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.**

**2. FINANCIAL REPORTS:**

Wilkes noted the financial reports that were provided and invited questions.  
**\*\*Wilkes ordered the Financial Reports to be filed for audit.**

**3. COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS:**

NRCS – McCoy provided a written and verbal report.  
 DEP – Skibiell provided a written and verbal report.  
 PACD – A written report was included in the board packet.

**4. STAFF REPORTS:** Wilkes noted that staff reports were included in the board packet.

**5. BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**5a. Retirement System Minimum Obligation for 2025 Acknowledgment**

Longmore provided the district's PA Municipal Retirement System 2025 Minimum Municipal Obligation Worksheet, which he prepared using payroll estimates for 2025.

**\*\*Motion by Chonko, seconded by Hanish to acknowledge the PA Municipal Retirement System 2025 Minimum Obligation Worksheet. The motion carried unanimously.**

**5b. FY 2024/2025 UGWF Allocation Acknowledgement**

Longmore explained that Unconventional Gas Well Fund (UGWF) allocations are distributed by the SCC and the Pennsylvania Utility Commission (PUC). The PUC block grant, \$73,159.19, was received in early July. Those funds are included in the 2024 budget for staff costs not covered by other sources. Additionally, the SCC allotted \$119,721 in CDFAP UGWF Administrative Assistance Funding for the current state fiscal year. Board acknowledgment is needed for the submittal of a worksheet to the SCC documenting the district's intended use of the funds. Longmore recommended continuing to use the funds to cover general administrative expenses.

**\*\*Motion by Moyer, seconded by Wolovich to acknowledge the receipt and use of the PUC block grant as reflected in district's budget and to note the district's intent to use FY 2024/2025 CDFAP UGWF allocation from the SCC for general administrative expenses. The motion carried unanimously.**

**5c. Representation Letter with Blakinger Thomas for PENNVEST Project**

Longmore noted receipt of a representation letter from the Blakinger Thomas Law Firm for services related to the Maylath Farm PENNVEST Ag BMP Project for \$10,000. The fee would be covered by the grant that PENNVEST has approved.

**\*\*Motion by Hanish, seconded by Chonko to accept the representation letter with Blakinger Thomas Law Firm for counsel on the Maylath Farm PENNVEST project. The motion carried unanimously.**

**5d. Update to Right-to-Know Policy to Prohibit Anonymous Requests**

Longmore presented the policy update because website-generated anonymous requests have recently been received by various agencies throughout the state, including the district. Such requests can be burdensome, and the Right-to-Know Law allows agencies discretion on whether to accept anonymous requests.

**\*\*Motion by Wolovich, seconded by Burger to update the Right-to-Know Policy as presented. The motion carried unanimously.**

**5e. Planned Projects for 2025 CAP Implementation Grant**

Longmore provided a list developed by district staff of five proposed projects for the 2025 CAP Implementation Grant request.

**\*\*Motion by Herbert, seconded by Hanish to approve staff's recommendation for the 2025 CAP Implementation Grant proposal. The motion carried unanimously.**

**5f. Alternative Health Insurance Employee Incentive Amount Revision**

Longmore provided the current policy for providing incentive payments to staff members who choose to obtain health insurance coverage through a spouse's employer's plan. It has been many years since the benefit has been adjusted or used, and with a current staff member's interest, Longmore suggested reconsidering the amount offered. Wilkes suggested increasing the amount to \$250 per month.

**\*\*Motion by Moyer, seconded by Herbert to amend the Personnel Policy to increase the employee health insurance incentive amount to \$250 per month. The motion carried unanimously.**

**5g. 2024 CAP implementation Grant Tree Planting Project Contracting**

Longmore explained that DEP requires that 50% of the current year's CAP Implementation Grant be spent by October 31<sup>st</sup>. With the zoning approval delays on the Stevens Ag BMP Project, the district will not be able to meet that deadline. Staff discussed options, and Levitsky proposed a riparian tree planting project on Earth Conservancy's Espy Run Riparian Restoration Project. DEP is in agreement with the proposal. Levitsky presented an estimated cost of \$52,667, and he will seek at least three contractor quotes for the project, if approved by the board. In order to complete the project in time, Longmore requested authorization to accept the lowest qualified quote for the project.

**\*\*Motion by Herbert, seconded by Hanish to approve the 2024 CAP Implementation Grant Earth Conservancy tree planting project for an estimated cost of \$52,667 and to authorize Longmore to accept the lowest qualified quote as long as grant funds are available to cover the cost. The motion carried unanimously.**

**5h. Employee Step Increase Acknowledgment**

Wilkes acknowledged that Merryman has successfully achieved a step increase within the district's Employee Pay Schedule.

**6. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

10/4/24 – PACD NE Regional Meeting at The Lands at Hillside Farms, 10AM-Noon

10/17/24 - October LCD Board of Directors Meeting at 6:00 PM

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

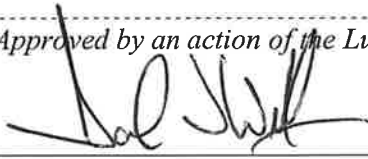
**\*\*Motion by Chonko, seconded by Hanish to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Deborah Josuweit, Office Administrator.*

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*Approved by an action of the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors on October 17, 2024.*



Chair or Vice Chair



Treasurer/Secretary