1.0 CALL TO ORDER
The Regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the McHenry County Conservation District was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by President Pro Tempore Barrett on the evening of Thursday, July 20, 2017 at the Brookdale Administrative Offices, 18410 US Highway 14, Woodstock, Illinois 60098.

2.0 ROLL CALL
Trustees Present: Stephen Barrett, President Pro Tempore
David Kranz, Secretary
Pete Merkel, Trustee
Vern Scacci, Trustee
David Brandt, Trustee
John Henning, Trustee Appointee (not yet sworn in)

Trustee Absent: Brandon Thomas, Treasurer

Counsel & Staff Present: Robert “Bob” Nowak, County Board Liaison
Robert K. Bush, Legal Counsel
Elizabeth S. Kessler, Executive Director
John Kremer, Director of Operations & Public Safety
Andy Dylak, Director of Administration & Finance
Ed Collins, Director of Land Preservation & Natural Resources
Wendy Kummerer, Marketing & Communications Manager
Anne Basten, Executive Assistant
Deb Chapman, Educational Services Manager
Sara Denham, Wildlife Resource Center Manager
Jeff Diedrick, Police Chief
Jenny Heider, Human Resource Manager
Amy Peters, Planning Manager
Val Siler, Land Preservation Manager
Perry Weborg, Sites & Fleet Manager
Brad Woodson, Natural Resource Manager
Ben O’Dea, Sites Supervisor
Sarah Rummel, Landscape Architect
Steve Stukenberg, Facilities Maintenance Worker

Others Present: Marti Swanson, Ringwood (arrived at 6:10 p.m.)

3.0 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
President Pro Tempore Barrett led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4.0 CONSERVATION ETHIC
Trustee Brandt read Goal #6 and Secretary Kranz read Goal #4 #3 aloud.

5.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS I
There were no public comments at this time.

6.0 PRESENTATIONS/INTRODUCTIONS
President Pro Tempore Barrett introduced John Henning who has been appointed by the County Board to fill the vacancy left by Trustee Heinsohn. Mr. Henning then shared that his family has been farming McHenry County for over 140 years and that he has sold property to the District in the past and is looking forward to serving on behalf of the residents of McHenry County.

7.0 READING OF OATH & ELECTION OF OFFICERS
7.1 Inaugural Ceremony - Oath of Office
President Pro Tempore Barrett administered the Oath of Office to Trustee Henning.

7.2 Nomination for President, Gift Ban Act Officer & Ethics Officer
   A motion was made by Secretary Kranz, seconded by Trustee Brandt, to nominate Stephen Barrett to serve as President of the Board of Trustees. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote gave the following results: Henning-yes, Brandt-yes, Scacci-yes, Merkel-yes, Kranz-yes, Barrett-yes. Motion passed unanimously.

7.3 Nomination for Vice President
   A motion was made by President Barrett, seconded by Trustee Scacci, to nominate David Kranz to serve as Vice President of the Board of Trustees. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote gave the following results: Scacci-yes, Kranz-yes, Merkel-yes, Henning-yes, Brandt-yes, Barrett-yes. Motion passed unanimously.

7.4 Nomination for Treasurer
   A motion was made by Trustee Scacci, seconded by Trustee Brandt, to nominate Peter Merkel to serve as Treasurer of the Board of Trustees. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote gave the following results: Brandt-yes, Henning-yes, Scacci-yes, Kranz-yes, Merkel-yes, Barrett-yes. Motion passed unanimously.

7.5 Nomination for Secretary
   A motion was made by Treasurer Merkel, seconded by Vice President Kranz, to nominate Vern Scacci to serve as Secretary of the Board of Trustees. There being no other nominations, a roll call vote gave the following results: Kranz-yes, Henning-yes, Brandt-yes, Merkel-yes, Scacci-yes, Barrett-yes. Motion passed unanimously.
7.6 **Standing Committee Appointments**

President Barrett appointed Treasurer Merkel to chair the Finance & Administration Committee with Vice President Kranz and Secretary Scacci to serve as committee members.

President Barrett appointed Trustee Brandt to chair the Outreach & Advocacy Committee with Trustee Henning and the next Trustee appointed by the County Board to serve as committee members. Until another Trustee is sworn in for a new term, President Barrett will serve in their place on this committee.

### 8.0 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS & REPORT

#### 8.1 Trustee Reports on Conferences & Meetings Attended

**8.1a Fox River Ecosystem Partnership**

Secretary Scacci was not able to attend the recent group picnic and the next meeting will be touring Gladstone Fen in Bull Valley.

**8.1b Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)**

Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources Collins was not able to attend the most recent meeting of the group.

**8.1c Chicago Wilderness**

Executive Director Kessler reported that Executive Committee had met earlier in the month and the Ad-Hoc Transition Group made a presentation with recommendations on how the alliance should move forward. The awards event for the Excellence in Ecological Restoration Program (EERP) and the Force of Nature programs would be occurring the following week at the Chicago Botanic Garden as a Cookie-Pot-Luck. The restoration work at the Lake in the Hills Fen will be accredited Platinum level award.

**8.1d Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Commission**

This position is vacant at this time.

Executive Director Kessler asked the Board to consider if there were any other groups this board should be connected to. At this time, Secretary Scacci asked to be removed from serving as Liaison to the Fox River Ecosystem Partnership.

**8.1e IACFPD/IAPD/NRPA**

The IACFPD will be meeting on August 23, 2017 in Lake County and will talking about ecosystem benefits research. Secretary Scacci offered to attend this meeting with Executive Director Kessler.
8.1f  McHenry County Conservation Foundation  
Trustee Brandt reported that he had neglected to report that the Village of Twin Lakes has paid the Foundation a sum of $8,000 in damages and will supply new buoys and signage identifying the Illinois State Nature Preserve for vegetation that had been killed in Lake Elizabeth several years ago. Additional damages are pending from Stantec Consulting Services out of Elkhorn, Wisconsin.

8.1g  McHenry County Council of Governments  
President Barrett was not able to attend the recent event and asked if anyone else was interested. Secretary Scacci volunteered to be an alternate.

8.1h  Green Drinks Crystal Lake  
Vice President Kranz reported that he had not been able to attend the program by Jordon Parker on Bring Your Own Bag Chicago.

8.1i  Conservation Congress 2018  
President Barrett reported this item was on the Consent Agenda for later this evening and a steering committee will be formed.

8.1j  Other  
There were no other reports.

8.2  Finance & Administrative Committee  
8.2a  Summary of items discussed at the meeting held on July 20, 2017  
Treasurer Merkel reported that there had been no major discussion items. There was a current surplus in the income column due to the timing of the taxes. They are watching the cash investments. There was a consensus to recommend approval or acceptance of all items on their agenda.

8.3  Outreach & Advocacy Committee - Scheduled Meeting Cancelled  
8.3a  Summary of items discussed at the meeting held on July 20, 2017  
Vice President Kranz reported that the committee recommending acceptance of the minutes and approval of the Intergovernmental Agreement with Marengo Township Road District for road salt.

9.0  COUNTY BOARD LIAISON REPORT  
County Board Liaison Nowak reported that the County Board met Tuesday evening and hosted the Marengo Softball State Champs. The flooding on the Fox River had been discussed and the resulting cleanup will be a lot of work. The Planning, Environment & Development Committee of the Board will be meeting the first Tuesday of August to interview applicants for the District Trustee position. There are six candidate applications.
10.0 BOARD BUSINESS - CONSENT AGENDA

10.1 Approval of Minutes
   10.1a June 22, 2017
   10.1b June 29, 2017 - Special Call

10.2 Board Committee Minutes to be Received and Placed on File
   10.2a Finance & Administration Committee Minutes for June 22, 2017
   10.2b Outreach & Advocacy Committee Minutes for June 22, 2017

10.3 Motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report for June 30, 2017 as presented.

10.4 Motion to adopt Resolution #17-22 designating Depository Financial Institutions for the District.

10.5 Motion to authorize the destruction of listed verbatim recordings of Executive Session meetings between July 2015 and December 2015, in compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

10.6 Motion to authorize the release of the listed Executive Session meeting minutes to the public domain in compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

10.7 Motion to adopt Resolution #17-24 amending the District 457 Deferred Compensation Plan through Nationwide to include a loan provision.

10.8 Motion to adopt Resolution #17-23 authorizing the Board President and Executive Director to execute a Joint and Cooperative Purchasing Program Participation Resolution and any other documents for the continued voluntary participation in the Joint Purchasing Program with the State of Illinois until terminated by either party.

10.9 Motion to adopt Resolution #17-27 calling to convene the 2018 Conservation Congress on McHenry County Public Lands for February 10, 2018 and to authorize the creation of a Steering Committee to plan the event, establish protocols, shape the conversation and determine delegate organizations.

10.10 Motion to adopt Resolution #17-25 authorizing the Executive Director to execute an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Marengo Township Road District for the purchase of road salt.

10.11 Motion to authorize the payment of $558.83 to Frontier Communications under protest to close the fraudulent calls matter.

10.12 Motion to authorize the disposal of listed excess equipment through a public on-line auction with Obenauf Auction Services, Inc. of Round Lake, IL.

10.13 Motion to authorize the submission of a grant application to the 2017 Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program for the reforestation efforts at Glacial Park Conservation Area ex post facto.

10.14 Motion to adopt Resolution #17-26 authorizing the Executive Director to execute an agreement with the Union Pacific Railroad Company for Construction and Maintenance of the Ridgefield Trace Union Pacific Railroad At-Grade Crossing if terms are agreeable with the District’s legal counsel and Board President.

10.15 Motion to authorize staff to prepare specifications and let bids for the purchase of native trees and shrubs for various restoration projects.
10.16 Motion to adopt Resolution #17-28 formally acknowledge and regretfully accept the resignation of Trustee Brandon Thomas (2012-2017) effective immediately.

A motion was made by Trustee Brandt, seconded by Secretary Scacci, to approve all Board Business - Consent Agenda items as presented. A roll call vote gave the following results: Merkel-yes, Kranz-yes, Brandt-yes, Scacci-yes, Henning-yes, Barrett-yes. Motion passed unanimously.

11.0 OTHER BOARD BUSINESS
11.1 Approval of Bills Payable for the Month of June 2017
Vice President Kranz asked that Vendor number B7808 Bank Card Processing Center be pulled from the submission of bills for a separate vote.

A motion was made by Treasurer Merkel, seconded by Trustee Brandt, to approve the payment of bills as indicated on the Submission of Bills Pending Report for the month ending June 30, 2017 with the exception of vendor B7808. A roll call vote gave the following results: Merkel-yes, Scacci-yes, Brandt-yes, Kranz-yes, Henning-yes, Barrett-yes. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Trustee Brandt, seconded by Secretary Scacci, to approve the payment of bills to vendor B7808 Bank Card Processing Center as presented. A roll call vote gave the following results: Scacci-yes, Kranz-recused, Merkel-yes, Henning-yes, Brandt-yes, Barrett-yes. Motion passed 5 to 0 with 1 recusal by Vice President Kranz.

11.2 Hollows Conservation Area - Alternative Farming Discussion
Executive Director Kessler explained that the District is looking for ways to get active use on the Pichen Parcel at the Hollows Conservation Area. Staff toured Brunner Farm the previous year which is located within the Kane County Forest Preserve District’s holdings.

Director of Operations and Public Safety Kremer shared that the concept of alternative farming came about from a very early conversation between Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources Collins and the Liberty Prairie Foundation to help landless farmers. Staff then talked to the Forest Preserve of Kane County and farm manager McConville and how the public’s interest in saving some of the existing farm buildings proved to be a good match. Several McHenry County historical groups would like to see some of the Pichen buildings preserved or used.

Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources Collins reviewed the 2015 changes to the District’s agriculture lease policy which added two (2) new goals; provide access to farmland to new and beginning farmers, and to encourage sustainable agriculture on District land. The Board authorized the District to enter into a grant agreement to work with the Liberty Prairie Foundation to add to and upgrade the District’s GIS database with agriculture
data. There was discussion about a farm incubator to train new farmers. The Pichen site is 140 acres with 66 plantable acres.

Director of Operations and Public Safety Kremer shared that the Liberty Prairie Foundation and All Grass Farms has met with staff a few times and looked at the site recently and determined that possible structural needs to implement a similar farm set up included fences for rotational grazing and that both groups are interested in working with the District. The operations under consideration includes rotational grazing of cattle, poultry, and swine as well as possibly vegetables with a potential for an onsite farm store. The Brunner farm also includes once a week farm tours and a farm camp. Rotational grazing can be used as a grassland bird management tool.

Staff requested consideration by the Board and will seek direction to continue discussions and create a Request for Proposals as well as the non-renewal of the existing grain production lease at a future meeting.

Secretary Scacci asked about potential expenses charged to the District. It was shared that the Forest Preserve District of Kane County put $200,000 into the existing barn on the Brunner site but this District has shared that there are no funds to financially support this project and this did not seem to deter interest. Kane County entered into a five-year lease that is renewable for up to twenty (20) years.

Discussion by the board included support for seeing a proposal and Director of Operations and Public Safety Kremer stated that a model agreement exists and the Forest Preserve District of Kane County received 5% of gross sales in the first year amounting to approximately $700/acre in rent. He also noted that the Mr. McConville is interested because it is a short distance from their existing farm and they are not able to produce enough beef for their existing market.

Executive Director Kessler stated that discussions should be held with Mayor Kownick and Village Manager Rife at the Village of Cary.

11.3 Rt. 31 Bike Path - Illinois Department of Transportation

Executive Director Kessler discussed the response from the Illinois Department of Transportation to the District’s letter of February 22, 2017. The project includes a shared-use path and/or sidewalk adjacent to Route 31 between Route 176 and Route 120 that runs parallel to the Prairie Trail which is only a short distance to the west. The District has not been formally asked to maintain the proposed trail; however, it is known that a local agency will need to participate in the cost sharing with 20% construction cost and 15% engineering as the local match on the development of the proposed trail and accept long-term responsibility for the administration, control, reconstruction and maintenance of the shared-use path and/or sidewalk. Discussions with McHenry County Division of Transportation envision the project to be built in about five years. President Barrett stated that maybe this parallel trail could serve as the alternative commuter trail for bicycles rather than the Prairie Trail. This information is provided at this time in order to keep everyone
apprised as a letter was received from the Illinois Department of Transportation on May 24, 2017.

11.4 Village of Algonquin - Streetscape Improvement Project - Request for Utility Easement - Ordinance #17-936

Action on this item was postponed due to documents not being ready from the Village and the District has no statutory authority permanently transfer public land to Utilities or private entities.

11.5 2017 Property Tax Levy Discussion

Executive Director Kessler explained that it was not possible to schedule a special workshop meeting on the Property Tax Levy due to the Board Member’s schedules and therefore staff created a document to use for discussion purposes this evening. She then reviewed the budget process noting that the levy is passed in September of 2017 for the FY 2019 budget.

Director of Administration and Finance Dylak explained that the economy is currently growing although there is a slight decrease in population but increasing home values. Eighty percent (80%) of McHenry County’s EAV is residential which is recovering. The District took a very conservative approach by having a neutral levy for three (3) years which effectively required the District to absorb $1.9 million dollars in inflationary related costs; and amount equivalent to twenty percent (20%) of the current FY 2018 budget. Not all taxing bodies were as proactive.

Director of Administration and Finance Dylak then reviewed the key forecast assumptions used to demonstrate the impact of various levy reductions. A critical assumption utilized in all of the scenarios was that the maximum levy allowed under PTELL was captured in all years subsequent to the 2017 levy in question.

Director of Administration and Finance Dylak then discussed various expense reductions and impacts through five (5) scenarios from a 2.8% levy increase to a 10% levy decrease for the 2017 Levy. The exercise demonstrated that only an increase or flat levy would result in additional funding for Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) projects or other projects during the forecast period. A ten percent (10%) reduction in the 2017 levy would result in a complete loss of all fund balances including the minimum required by board policy in FY 2020 and the District would be operating at a $1M loss with all of the assumptions in place including taking the maximum PTELL limits beyond 2017.

Potential expense reductions would include elimination of all Capital Asset Maintenance, reduction of public programs and activities.

All of the above assumptions do not take into account a potential statewide legislative two-year levy freeze included in pending legislation.

It was noted that in addition to the already discussed items, there is a decrease in the number of grants available. Treasurer Merkel noted that in past lean years municipalities were able to use sales taxes to cover any cuts because the economies were increasing and the City of Woodstock is currently
discussing a 1% sales tax increase to cover their shortfalls. The District does not have access to other taxing authority such as sales tax, motor fuel tax, hotel/motel tax and does not receive state aid from the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF). County Board Liaison Nowak stated that the County Board is dealing with their levy and budget cuts by moving money from unused and surplus funds and will not be hurt as much as the District's lean funding sources and that every unit of government is different and the District appears to have jumped the gun with holding their levies flat for so many years.

Discussion continued on next steps. Trustee Henning suggested that Executive Director Kessler meet with the County Board Chairman. County Board Liaison Nowak volunteered to attend if needed. The consensus was to try and get some input from the County Board Chairman with whatever configuration of staff and or Board members acceptable to the Chairman.

12.0 PRESIDENT'S REPORT
President Barrett stated he was happy to represent the District as President and understands the tough position and role this will be over the coming year.

13.0 TRUSTEES’ REPORTS
Trustee Scacci had the opportunity in June to attend an interpretive horse tour of Glacial Park and learned a lot and saw things they don't normally see but next time will plan the tour for the fall when it is not so hot. He and his family also enjoyed the firefly program. Trustee Scacci congratulated the staff for pulling together and getting the RTP grant project back up and running once the grants came off hold at the State level.

14.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS’ REPORT
14.1 FY 2016-2020 Strategic Plan - First Quarter Status Report - Year 3
14.2 Project Update: ADA Improvements
14.3 Dashboard - First Quarter FY 2018
14.4 In the News - First Quarter FY 2018

Executive Director Kessler reported that the City of Crystal Lake has reached out and a date after August 8th will be set up for a meeting. Trustees Merkel and Kranz will attend on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Executive Director Kessler brought the Board up to date on the Arnold Engineering/300 West contamination issue where the company was to pay all attorney’s fees and remove the spoils from the sampling. Reimbursement for legal fees is still outstanding for March, April, May, June and soon July. Spoils have not been removed. Special legal counsel representing the District through the District’s insurance provider will be giving notice to the Illinois Attorney General’s office that the license agreement will not be renewed as terms of the agreement have not been met. The current license became effective November 19, 2015 with a term of two years and terminated on or about November 20, 2017.
15.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION
There was no motion to go into Executive Session

16.0 RECONVENE
Did not reconvene.

17.0 ACTION ON ITEMS OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION
17.1 Release of listed Executive Session meeting minutes
This item was released through the consent agenda as there were no questions.

18.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS II
There were no public comments.

19.0 ADJOURN
A motion was made by Vice President Kranz, seconded by Secretary Scacci, to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote resulted in all ayes.
Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m. July 20, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Vern Scacci, Secretary

Date
8/17/17