1.0 CALL TO ORDER
The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the McHenry County Conservation District was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by President Scacci on the evening of Thursday, October 17, 2019 at the Brookdale Administrative Offices, 18410 US Highway 14, Woodstock, Illinois 60098.

2.0 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
President Scacci led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3.0 INTRODUCTORY ROLL CALL
2.1 Roll Call
Trustees Present: Vern Scacci, President
Dave Brandt, Vice President
Carolyn Campbell, Secretary
Bill Cook, Trustee
Linda Thomas, Trustee

Trustees Absent: John Henning, Treasurer
Patrick Fritz, Trustee

Counsel & Staff Present: James D. Rock, Legal Counsel
Elizabeth S. Kessler, Executive Director
John Kremer, Director of Operations & Public Safety
Andy Dylak, Director Administration & Finance
Ed Collins, Director Land Preservation & Natural Resources
Wendy Kummerer, Director of Marketing & Education
Anne Basten, Executive Assistant
Laura King, Police Chief
Chris Zientko, Facilities Manager

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

5.0 NEW BUSINESS
5.1 Review of the October 22, 2019 Regular Meeting Agenda Items
Executive Assistant Basten reported that Trustee Campbell had provided corrections for minutes identified in 12.1b and 12.1c of the Regular Meeting Agenda and that those corrections have been made and revised copies of those minutes were available for review with a link provided by email.

Item 12.5 - Building Assessment report on Prairieview Education Center and the recommended upgrades was pulled for further discussion by Vice President Brandt. Director of Operations and Public Safety Kremer responded that staff is
recommending the implementation of only a few of the needed upgrades to prevent further degradation of the facility. These include the replacement of the roof to be done by others, as well as the improvement to the ventilation and insulation of the envelope to be done by staff in order to postpone other work for another 3-5 years. These repairs should prevent further ice dam creation during the winter months. Director Kremer will create a revised wording for the motion for October 22, 2019 to clarify that staff is asking for acceptance of the report and implementation of only certain recommendations at this time.

Item 12.12 - Authorization for an RFQ for an Attitude and Interest Survey was brought forward by President Scacci. He asked if this item could be postponed. Executive Director Kessler responded that this item has already been delayed by a couple of years and was budgeted for this Fiscal Year at $24,000 and is ready to move forward. President Scacci asked if the funds would be better spent on Conservation Congress and Executive Director Kessler explained that monies were already budgeted for Conservation Congress 2020 and staff does not expect to spend more than the budgeted amount with any additional needs met from sponsorship funding.

Trustee Cook asked additional questions verifying that the RFQ will be seeking qualified providers for the survey and asked that additional questions be included related to governance.

Item 12.7 - Policing position paper was brought forward by President Scacci. He stated that he was not comfortable sending out a position paper without hard numbers from the County Sheriff’s Office and requested that the issue be tabled. Chief King responded that the District’s budget figures were provided to the Sheriff and his financial staff who then responded that the Sheriff’s Office personnel costs for the equivalent patrol positions already exceeded the District’s cost without even looking at the cost of equipment, uniforms, etc. The Sheriff stated to her that he can’t provide the level of service to the public as they are currently receiving from our police staff. Chief King will reach out the Sheriff upon his return and to attempt to get additional information in writing and provide a revised document.

Item 12.6 - First Amendment to Liberty Prairie Foundation agreement was brought forward by Secretary Campbell for clarification. Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources Collins provided clarification that the District is providing in-kind consulting services to the grant funder in exchange for funding supporting the additional work needed by the GIS person to complete the project. Secretary Campbell supported the work being done as valuable data on farmland and soil management to be shared with the public. Director Collins stated it will also allow for the farmed sites to have greater soil health at the time they are taken out of production with the hope of faster restoration potential.

President Scacci then asked for any questions related to items under New and Unfinished Board Business on the Regular Meeting Agenda.

Item 13.2 - Agricultural Leases was brought forward by Trustee Cook who asked what the percentages meant. Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources Collins explained the formula used to determine the actual lease rate to be paid by the licensed agricultural operator.
Item 13.4 - 360 Degree Assessment clarification was brought forward by Trustee Cook. President Scacci responded that it is an internal review of executive leadership which is usually done by an outside professional. President Scacci stated that this item, as well as the discussion on RFQs for professional services in item 13.3 are at his request and are his priorities as President. He encouraged all Trustees to look at what a 360 Assessment is. He will provide a link to Executive Assistant Basten to be shared with the Trustees prior to the regular October 22, 2019 meeting.

Item 13.3 - Discussion regarding RFQ for Legal, Engineering and Hospitality Services was brought forward by President Scacci. President Scacci stated that he wants the District to know about all of the vendors who are out there to make sure we are getting good service. Trustee Cook stated we don’t need to do them all at once.

5.2 Strategic Discussion: Election of Trustees

Attorney Rock reviewed items related to conflicts in the legislation that would not currently allow this Conservation District to have an elected board of trustees or for this agency to have control over their own budget even if elected by the general public. The changes needed are considered somewhat minor but would take approval of the full legislature. He then spoke about the steps needed and that the soonest the change to an elected board would be January unless local legislators took it to veto session if that is the desire of this board. Provided everything happened that needs to, the soonest an election of trustees could be held is November 2020.

President Scacci stated that he had spoken to County Board Chairman Franks who requested a resolution from this board supporting the legislative changes needed. Since there were two trustees missing from the discussion with no clear consensus of those present, President Scacci asked that the item continue to be discussed at the November meeting. He then went on to state that he would like to see Trustees stay on the board longer than a single term for consistency.

Secretary Campbell stated her issue with the current board being considered a dysfunctional board and that she considered the people on the board not the problem but outside influences making it rough on top of not having all board members in place at one time in July. She noted that the County took out debt at the same time as the District, but they have other resources of revenue not available to the District to meet those obligations. She also voiced her concerns about changing what the district is and is about by having an elected board. Several members stated they have no interest in paying to run for political office and the office could become a career position and possibly become a paid position.

Executive Director Kessler clarified that it was her understanding that the request for a change per statute has to come from the County Board but that it was that the County would like us to put the language together.

President Scacci stated for the record that it is not Chairman Franks forcing this issue but that he does support the public making the decision.

Executive Director Kessler stated that once a decision is made by this board, the board and staff cannot support or oppose the action at all, either verbally or in written correspondence, etc. We can only put out the facts, similar to a referendum. Putting out facts takes a lot of staff time and financial resources to ensure the voters are informed regarding the ballot question.

President Scacci again asked for the item to be placed on the November agenda for a decision.
5.3 Police Department Budget and Approach Changes

Several questions were asked of Chief King regarding the suggested changes and the recently implemented changes. Chief King explained how the ten-hour shifts and the absence of a fourth Sergeant have affected supervision of the patrol officers. Currently there is a portion of one shift that is left unsupervised and that she is concerned about liability. The staff recommendation is to provide additional training for an existing staff member to serve as acting supervisor and that this is a standard succession planning tool with established training and protocols existing outside of this agency. She also stated that the staff is liking the switch to 10 hour shifts so far.

There was continued discussion about getting something from the McHenry County Sheriff’s Office regarding their position on taking over the work of the Conservation District police, in a written format, that can be included in the white paper which is expected to be shared with members of the County Board.

5.4 Great Outdoors Beer Trail - 3 Year Progress Report

Director of Operations and Public Safety Kremer reviewed the three-year history of the event with the original goals of targeting 20 to 30-year olds, getting users to a site they normally would not go to, and to make money. The revenue for the 2019 event was significant and Director of Marketing and Education Kummerer expressed that she thought some additional changes could be made. It was noted we might be reaching capacity for the event in the next year.

6.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Executive Director Kessler stated that Glacial Park had been very busy the previous weekend with multiple tree planting events by various groups, the Big Sit with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Friends of Hackmatack, and a cooperative bus tour of conservation sites within the county working with several partners. Additional tree plantings would continue throughout the month of OAKtober including Marengo Ridge the following weekend.

Executive Director Kessler shared that a survey for community stakeholders identified by the Vision Engagement Influencer staff members was almost ready to be sent out on a limited basis.

The Conservation Congress 2020 Steering Committee met and the topics of the discussions will include: the pursuit of healthiness, reciprocity and conservationist continuum, and will include and ending action request.

Audubon released their Survival by Degrees interactive website and noted the work being done by District staff on the study of grassland birds being recognized by National Audubon.

Executive Director Kessler then shared information on water/flooding issues that have come up in several areas of Ringwood. She has been in touch with Village President Mack. Trustee Cook shared his insight into some of the issues in his area and noted that some of the issues were due to a change in a culvert under Barnard Mill Road and the need to maintain field tiles in the area.

Additional information will be shared on October 22, 2019 regarding changes affecting water/flooding in Section 31 of Marengo Township when all board members should be present.
Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources Collins reported that his staff found no significant impact to vegetation of any significance related to the request from the Village of Algonquin for a connection to the Prairie Trail South.

Director of Operations and Public Safety Kremer noted that the Village will need some significant engineering to connect to the path and it will involve additional fill. He will make sure that there is no liability on the part of the District for this trail connection.

Executive Director Kessler shared that the RFP for the extension of the Brookdale Multi-use Trail south of Deep Cut road had come back just $3,000 more than budgeted and with additional modifications to the farm license being accepted by the farmer to avoid a wet area, and that the work would begin next spring with a potential opening in the Summer/Fall of 2020.

The consensus of those present was to move forward with the changes.

Executive Director Kessler reminded those present of the invitation to gather on November 5, 2019 with the US Army Corps of Engineers at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the completion of the Nippersink 206 project.

Executive Director Kessler alerted the Trustees that there was still space for one more Trustee to attend the IAPD Best of the Best Gala on November 1, 2019 if anyone was interested. Vice President Brandt was attending so far.

7.0 OTHER
There were no other items to report.

8.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS II
There were no public comments.

9.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION
At 7:15 p.m., a motion was made by Vice President Brandt, seconded by Secretary Campbell, to go into Executive Session pursuant to Exception 2C2 (Collective Bargaining), 2C5 (Real Estate), 2C6 (Lease of Real Estate), and 2C21 (Review of Closed Session Minutes) of the Open Meetings Act. A roll call vote gave the following results: Cook-yes, Brandt-yes, Thomas-yes, Campbell-yes, Scacci-yes.

Motion passed unanimously.

10.0 RECONVENE
The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the McHenry County Conservation District was reconvened to order at 7:41 p.m. by President Scacci on the evening of Thursday, October 17, 2019 at the Brookdale Administrative Offices, 18410 US Highway 14, Woodstock, Illinois 60098.

7.1 Roll Call
Trustees Present: Vern Scacci, President
Dave Brandt, Vice President
Carolyn Campbell, Secretary
Bill Cook, Trustee
Linda Thomas, Trustee

Trustees Absent: John Henning, Treasurer
Patrick Fritz, Trustee

Committee of the Whole Minutes 10.17.2019
A motion was made by Trustee Thomas, seconded by Trustee Cook, to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote resulted in all ayes.

Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m. October 17, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Campbell, Secretary

Date

11-26-19