Prior to the meeting being called to order, Linda Thomas of Crystal Lake, took the oath of office as read by Attorney Rock.

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 5:10 p.m. by President Scacci on the evening of Thursday, September 19, 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
John Henning, Treasurer
Carolyn Campbell, Secretary
Patrick Fritz, Trustee
Bill Cook, Trustee
Linda Thomas, Trustee

Counsel & Staff Present: James D. Rock, Legal Counsel
Elizabeth S. Kessler, Executive Director
Andy Dylak, Director Administration & Finance
Ed Collins, Director Land Preservation & Natural Resources
Wendy Kummerer, Director of Marketing & Communications
John Kremer, Director of Operations & Public Safety
Anne Basten, Executive Assistant
Laura King, Police Chief
Perry Weborg, Sites & Fleet Manager
Amy Peters, Planning Manager
Shawna Flavell, Director of Development/Executive Director

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

5.0 REVIEW OF FOX BLUFF CONSERVATION AREA MASTER PLAN
Planning Manager Peters explained the role of landscape architecture and the qualifications of the planning staff before explaining the purpose of the Master Planning process. She included the layers of information that are gathered during the site analysis process before the major site objectives are determined. The Master
Plan specific to Fox Bluff was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2015 and includes a Right-of-Way (ROW) held by the County for a future bridge over the Fox River. The actual alignment of the ROW has yet to be determined. It was noted that any buildings that might be built and end up in the actual ROW when it is delineated will be lost with no reimbursement by the County. The County provided $1,000,000 for the acquisition of the ROW.

Planning Manager Peters then talked about some of the ideas proposed for the site and the location of the three remaining historical buildings and their current status.

The progress to date through the Planning Department on the entire Fox Bluff Conservation Area includes: updated existing amenities and trailhead on the north end; development of approximately 2.5 miles of nature trail; pond management and stabilization done mostly through volunteers from Trout Unlimited; commissioned and received an Illinois Historic American Buildings Survey; removed 25 buildings; removed the pool; cleared trees and vegetation from around the Pioneer Center barn to allow access for stabilization work; and, commissioned preliminary plans for the adaptive reuse of the Board of Trade Recreation Hall. Prior to this, additional buildings were removed through the Facilities Maintenance Department.

The future Fox Bluff Master Plan actions include: protecting the integrity of the three historic buildings; expanding the existing trail system; providing public access to water recreation opportunities; and, restoring natural communities through seeking creative funding sources.

6.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION
At 5:47 p.m., a motion was made by Vice President Brandt, seconded by Treasurer Henning, to go into Executive Session pursuant to Exception 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: Fritz-yes, Cook-yes, Brandt-yes, Thomas-yes, Campbell-yes, Henning-yes, Scacci-yes.
Motion passed unanimously.

7.0 RECONVENE
The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the McHenry County Conservation District was reconvened to order at 6:49 p.m. by President Scacci on the evening of Thursday, September 19, 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
John Henning, Treasurer
Carolyn Campbell, Secretary
Patrick Fritz, Trustee
Bill Cook, Trustee
Linda Thomas, Trustee

Counsel & Staff Present: James D. Rock, Legal Counsel
Elizabeth S. Kessler, Executive Director

Committee of the Whole Minutes 9.19.2019
8.0 NEW BUSINESS

8.1 Strategic Discussion: Private Ventures on Public Lands

The discussion began with existing private ventures on public land such as farm leases where the farm has almost exclusive use of a particular parcel of land and expects to make a financial profit. The District does get a large portion of their revenue from the ventures however, related leasehold property taxes are also paid out of that income.

L.L. Bean has a Use Agreement, with the District receiving a small percentage of the revenue derived from them teaching outdoor recreational activities on District property.

The discussion then turned to whether there was an existing policy to cover private ventures on public land. Staff shared that such a policy had been discussed in the past and it was discovered that it was difficult to write based on the type of land the District holds compared to a Park District with ballfields, etc. Further discussion resulted in a broad statement that the Board of Trustees and staff would like the public to use the land and to have a personal investment in the public property. If it keeps getting cut up into private leases, the tax payers who paid for it, will have less to use.

The consensus was that each proposition will need to be reviewed on its own merits and that a policy is not needed at this time.

8.2 Review of the September 24, 2019 Regular Meeting Agenda Items

Item 7.2 - Illinois Association of Park District’s (IAPD) Best of the Best was brought forward by President Scacci. He invited members of the board to the event. The District has space for two board members. Vice President Brandt stated that he would like to attend.

Secretary Campbell brought up the McHenry County Economic Development Commission’s Annual meeting in November and find opportunities to work in that space. There was discussion about table sponsorship in the future as one way to get our name out there.

Item 10.1 - Board Assignments was brought forward by President Scacci and he announced that he would be speaking to board members about which other meetings they might want to attend. Trustee Fritz volunteered to cover the McHenry County Farm Bureau. President Scacci stated that he would be attending the Foundation meetings but would not be the official board delegate.

Item 12.9 - Tax Rebate requested by the City of McHenry for Jessup Manufacturing was brought forward for discussion. It was stated that the County
Board had agreed to rebate 50% of the additional taxes generated by the new construction on the facility. The consensus was that the County Board set the precedent and we don’t need to give everything away.

Vice President Brandt stated that he would be pulling this item from the consent agenda for a separate motion.

Item 12.5 - Administrative Policy change regarding participation by the Leadership Team at Board meetings. There was discussion about the need for the Trustees to ask questions in advance so that the Directors have the answers or it will continue to slow down the process if staff is not there to answer the questions at the meeting. It was noted that the District has a different culture than the County or other organizations where leadership staff wants to know what the Board thinks about issues. President Scacci stated that he is the one who pushed for the change when he began as President and will attend the next Leadership Team meeting to explain his rationale.

Item 13.2 - 2019 Property Tax Levy Extension. The proposed levy includes the reduction of $140,000 from the PTELL levy as requested through President Scacci and Treasurer Henning.

Item 13.3 - Request through Village of Algonquin for a bike path connection across District property. It was explained that staff time will be needed to work with the Village who has apologized for the grant submittal by their consultant without first completing the meetings with the District staff.

8.3 Strategic Discussion: Election of Trustees
This item was moved to the October meeting.

At this time, the Board continued their discussion regarding FY 2021 Budget direction.

They focused on the Capital Items list.

Trustees Henning and Fritz stated that they did not think that the Marengo Ridge road repair and resurfacing needed to be completely redone and that maybe patching of the worst areas would be able to stretch the life of the roadway until additional funding becomes available.

The discussion then turned to looking longer term and the projected deficit in the coming years before the bond debt is paid off and the pending Pichen Installment Agreement final payment. It was noted that the presentation on the options for the Pichen Installment Agreement payment is planned for October discussion.

Trustee Cook emphasized that the obligation of the Board of Trustees is to get rid of debt and he suggested stopping all capital projects that were not funded by outside sources and instituting a hiring freeze. He noted that it’s not the Board’s role to decide where the asphalt goes but to oversee the finances and get the fiscal house in order and keep the taxes down.

President Scacci stated that he trusts the recommendations of staff and what they do. He is concerned about the deficits projected for FY 2022 and that by FY 2023 that the reserves will not be able to be maintained at the 25% level. He noted that of the list of 27 Capital Projects on the list for FY 2021 have seven that are carryovers from the current year. He, too, would like to freeze all new projects and finish the projects that are already started.
The consensus of the Board of Trustees was to add continued discussion on the Capital Projects for the meeting on September 24, 2019 after staff completes the review as assigned at the Finance Committee meeting from September 16, 2019.

Additional clarification consensus was that the projects funded through the Dedicated Fund can move forward but to review the items funded through CIP Fund and General Fund.

Secretary Campbell asked if the intention was to pay off the Pichen Installment Agreement with Reserves to which Trustee Cook stated “yes”. Treasurer Henning wants to make a decision this year, with this board, on the Pichen Contract before it gets pushed on to future boards again.

The consensus of this board was to postpone the discussion on the three-year CIP until the next meeting.

Treasurer Henning asked if he could meet with Executive Director Kessler and Director of Administration and Finance Dylak in advance of the next meeting to clarify some information.

Executive Director Kessler asked if the new consensus was to try and reduce the Pichen Installment Agreement debt by at least 50% in Fiscal Year 2021 and the response was yes. Staff will move forward with this information.

Treasurer Henning then asked why the reserves are set at 25% of the operating budget to which Director of Administration and Finance Dylak responded that the Governmental Finance Officers Association (GFOA) minimum standard is enough to cover three (3) months expenses. If the reserve percentage is reduced below this figure, it will be more difficult to issue debt and increase the interest rates on any borrowing. It would also affect the bond rating negatively. He also noted that he needs to know sooner rather than later if there is a shift in the board direction for FY 2021 in order to produce the budget documents on schedule. We need additional operational funding.

Trustee Cook stated at this point that he would support the compromise to reduce the Pichen Contract debt by at least 50% after listening to the discussion. He would also like to see the Capital Asset Management Plan expenses reduced for FY 2021.

There will be more discussion on this topic at the September 24, 2019 meeting.

8.4 Future Strategic Discussions & Selection of Meeting Dates
8.4a Pichen Installment Agreement - October/November 2019
8.4b Current Farming Practices - January 2020
8.4c Other Sources of Revenue - March 2020

9.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT
Executive Director Kessler had nothing additional to report.

10.0 OTHER
There were no additional reports at this time.

11.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS II
There were no public comments.
12.0 ADJOURN

A motion was made by Trustee Fritz, seconded by Trustee Thomas, to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote resulted in all ayes.

Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m. September 19, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Campbell, Secretary

10-22-19

Date