1.0 CALL TO ORDER
The Special Call Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the McHenry County Conservation District was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Treasurer Henning on the evening of Wednesday, July 24, 2019 at the Brookdale Administrative Offices, 18410 US Highway 14, Woodstock, Illinois 60098.

2.0 ROLL CALL
2.1 Roll Call
Trustees Present: John Henning, Treasurer
Carolyn Campbell, Secretary

Trustee Absent: Patrick Fritz, Trustees

Additional Trustees Present: Vern Scacci, President
Dave Brandt, Vice President

Staff Present: 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, Director of Marketing & Communications

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS
There were no public comments.

4.0 FINANCIAL PHILOSOPHIES
4.1 PROPERTY TAX LEVIES 2020 & 2021
Treasurer Henning led group in a discussion on what they believed to be the likelihood the District could increase its property tax levy in 2020 and 2021. After much discussion, it was the consensus of the group that the increase for the 2020 and possibly 2021 levies would be limited to only the amount available from new development and to plan for this scenario and if the culture/climate changed, the District could adapt to capturing the full allowed PTELL increase. A brief discussion was held on the Pichen Parcel and payment due in FY 2022 and the planned discussion for October.

4.2 SUSTAINABILITY & AFFORDABILITY STANDARDS: QUALITY VS. QUANTITY
Executive Director Kessler presented a matrix of Quality versus Quantity to better understand the Board of Trustee's expectations regarding the District's standards for taking care of the District’s natural areas, public access areas such as trails, campgrounds, restrooms, parking lots and programs/events and customer service. The group recapped recent Strategic Planning discussions on the District’s mission, vision, and values citing: operating safely, deliver quality, ensure fiscal responsibility and strive for excellent in all we do. Discussion was held using various examples to demonstrate quality versus quantity...
standards and what has been occurring naturally and purposefully over the past decade due to absorbing inflationary costs and not taking a property tax levy. The District is managing to acceptable levels and with existing quantity of sites/programs/services; however, staff acknowledges that we are not performing at our highest quality and some operational areas and sites of the District have been impacted more than others as well as user groups/residents and volunteers noting that we are not keeping up with invasive species, etc. Treasurer Henning defined acceptable as roofs not leaking, sites safe and no one getting hurt. Consensus of the group was that we did not want to lower the District’s quality standards below acceptable and if this were to occur we would need to reduce quantity. Examples of the District vacating certain areas, closing sites during the winter, etc. are examples of efforts to reduce quantity. It was also mentioned that the District’s Executive Leadership Team and Leadership Team had initiated a 3D protocol several years ago where items/activities were either Delegated, Deferred or Ditched.

5.0 FY 2021 BUDGET

5.1 PERSONNEL INVESTMENTS

Thoughtful discussion took place regarding the Internal Compensation Study proposed for FY 2020 so that any costs could be incorporated into the FY 2022 Budget. Due to the fact that the District agreed to reduce the 2019 levy and with the belief that the District will not be in a position politically to take the full PTELL increase in 2020 and 2021 levy, the Board of Trustees cannot support paying for an Internal Compensation Study as proposed at this time; however, if inequities become apparent due to market changes, they will be evaluated with recommendations brought forward to the Board of Trustees for discussion and approval.

5.2 OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

Staff provided an overview of the outsourcing exploration done in past years and agreed that it would be appropriate to explore these as a matter of financial stewardship and responsive and responsible government. It was shared that mowing, snowplowing, lease of vehicles were all areas explored. In addition, pricing for brush clearing and biological inventories are done on natural resources management projects. The consensus was for staff to look at alternative pricing for outsourcing mowing with a test project in February 2020 and if pricing is cheaper, to explore the outsourcing further. It was also understood that with prevailing wage and the other tasks performed by the District’s team, that a cost savings may not be realized.

5.3 CAPITAL & NATURAL INVESTMENTS

5.3a BUILDING REMOVAL

Staff reviewed the updated Building Inventory list and the buildings/structures priorities for removal. Consensus of the Board of Trustees to allocate $100k per year to remove buildings from the landscape and to work with the local fire departments to see if cost savings could be achieved. The plan for FY 2021 is to work to remove structures at Glacial Park, Hickory Grove and Rush Creek Conservation Area.

5.3b NATURAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Treasurer Henning shared his support for the Natural Capital Improvement Plan and complimented staff as this is what the Board of Trustees had asked for. The concern was not knowing whether the District could afford to implement the plan as outlined. Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources Collins noted that there were no costs to implement in FY 2021 and most of the costs are tied to seed. In addition, the plan adds additional staff to manage acres and these positions may be able to be
accommodated with future retirements in the Division. After thoughtful discussion, it was agreed upon to take out the dates and create a phased approach with non-specified dates and to show the costs as estimated costs. There was a consensus that adopting the modified plan was not committing this Board, or any future Board, to the additional expenses outlined within the plan as is done with the Capital Improvement Plan. The additional resources needed to implement the plan would be evaluated on an annual basis, in conjunction with all of the District’s needs and available resources, during the budget planning process. With the changes, the group was agreeable to having the document come forward with the changes to an upcoming COW for discussion.

5.3C CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
Director of Operations & Public Safety Kremer provided an overview of the 3-Year Capital Improvement Plan. Several projects were discussed and then it was determined that staff needed to review these projects in more detail and come back in September. It was also requested that staff have a serious look at the FY 2020 - FY 2023 projects for long-term decisions that would impact investments and a realistic list of projects that could actually be accomplished over the next three years. The Board of Trustees understand that when a project is initiated the funds are needed to complete the project; however, they would like to see the funds broken into phases (permitting, engineering, construction, etc.) and budgeted accordingly. A future discussion should also be had by the Board of Trustees on trail type and preferred solution and maintenance costs, specifically asphalt to crushed limestone/gravel, etc. Vice President Brandt shared with the group that stone is as impervious as asphalt. Executive Director Kessler also noted that trail surfaces should be in compliance with the American’s with Disabilities Act where appropriate. A discussion was held regarding the Lost Valley Visitor Center road from the Maintenance Shop to the Powers Walker House at $65k and whether this road should be vacated, which led to a larger discussion on reducing the number of regional shops.

Executive Director Kessler and Director of Administration Dylak requested to circle back regarding the overall assumptions driving the FY 2021 Budget. It was the consensus of the Board of Trustees to have the staff work towards the guidelines presented and to not use fund reserves for operational expenses; however, reserves could be considered as a funding source for FY 2021. The draw down on fund reserves was discussed and whether these funds should be used for the Pichen Installment Agreement or accelerating building removal, natural resources restoration and or repairs/replacements of public access amenities.

6.0 REVIEW OF PURCHASING POLICY
Director of Administration & Finance Dylak provided an overview of the District’s purchasing policy citing the approval process and quotes needed at different purchasing thresholds. President Scacci provided clarification on the request for vendors doing business with the District for three or more years consecutively and refocused his request to professional services (architects, engineers, etc.). Executive Director Kessler suggested this was reasonable and it was a good place to begin and staff will provide this information to the Finance & Administrative Committee no later than September 1, 2019 as had been previously discussed and agreed upon with President Scacci.

7.0 PROJECT TIMELINE
Executive Director Kessler shared that she had taken the feedback from Treasurer Henning and flipped the X and Y axis of the Project Timeline for FY 2020 and that she would provide the report in an excel format so that Board of Trustees could scroll and freeze panes at their
leisure. Executive Director Kessler inquired as to whether she needed to go back and re-do the project timeline for FY 2019 and the consensus of the group was this was not necessary. It was agreed upon that the Project Timeline would be updated monthly and presented quarterly to the Board of Trustees.

President Scacci provided information to the Board of Trustees regarding his conversation with the County Board Chairman regarding the FY 2021 Budget and concerns expressed regarding the District’s Police Department. President Scacci suggested that the Finance & Administrative Committee meet to discuss the cost of the District’s Police Department sooner than later so that we are prepared in advance of the FY 2021 Budget presentation. Vice President Brandt suggested that Chief King attend a future meeting where the discussion would take place. It was agreed that the Police Department is perceived no different than other departments of the District where efficiencies are assessed for continuous improvement.

8.0 ADJOURN

A motion was made by Secretary Campbell, seconded by President Henning, to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote resulted in all ayes. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m. July 24, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

John Henning, Treasurer

Aug 22, 2019

Date