

**McHENRY COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 18, 2020**  
**SPECIAL CALL MEETING**  
**FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE**

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

The Special Call Meeting of the Finance and Administrative Committee of the Board of Trustees of the McHenry County Conservation District was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by Treasurer Henning on the evening of Tuesday, February 18, 2020 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  
                               Patrick Fritz, Trustee

**Additional Trustees**

Present:                 Vern Scacci, President  
                               Dave Brandt, Vice President  
                               Bill Cook, Trustee  
                               Linda Thomas, Trustee

**Staff Present:**

Elizabeth S. Kessler, Executive Director  
 Anne Basten, Executive Assistant  
 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 & Education  
 Shawna Flavell, Director of Development/Executive Director  
 McHenry County Conservation Foundation

**3.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**4.0 NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**4.1 FY 2021 Final Combined Annual Budget & Appropriation Ordinance**

Treasurer Henning and Executive Director Kessler discussed the response process for County Board Member questions on the budget. The process was to respond in writing followed by a phone call with Treasurer Henning, Executive Director Kessler and the County Board Member if needed. We had received questions from County Board Member Vijuk prior to this meeting.

The group then discussed the presentation of the budget to the County Board Finance and Audit Committee in early March. The consensus was to present the brief highlights which is the same information provided in this board's summary and then open it up to questions. We have not been asked for a full presentation. The final budget documents will be sent to the County Board Chairman, the County Administrator, and the County Board Liaison on February 26, 2020 after they have been filed with the County Clerk. The cover memo will include the highlights rather

than waiting until the actual meeting. Executive Director Kessler offered to draft the document and will present to the Board of Trustees by the end of the week for review.

#### 4.2 MCCF Projects Lists - Discussion on Process and Priorities

Trustee Thomas referred to item 12.8 in the Regular Board packet containing the list of Fiscal Year 2021 projects proposed by staff.

Director of Development/Executive Director of McHenry County Conservation Foundation Flavell explained that the projects have not been prioritized between categories and noted that there are more projects classified in the land preservation category. She explained that the proposed process is for the District Board to review the projects first and then the approved projects will be forwarded to the Foundation Board.

A more detailed process is that the District board would review the projects based on the estimated cost generated by the submitter. The projects then move to the Foundation in the form of a "grant" request. Once the Foundation Board approves the grant request, the submitting department would then follow the standard purchasing procedure including detailed specifications and firmer pricing based on three quotes, etc. It will then be up to the Foundation to determine the funding sources (either existing funds or fundraising) of approved projects. The Foundation Board has seen the initial list and know that not all items will move forward.

Trustee Cook asked for clarification on two projects related to the acquisition of land from the Dollman and May families through Illinois Clean Energy Community Program grants. It was clarified that on the Dollman Parcel, the District was seeking the 20% matching grant funds from the Foundation and the District will submit the grant request, while the Foundation will be submitting the grant request for the whole project on the May acquisition.

Trustee Cook also noted that he did not see a request to the Foundation to assist in paying off the Pichen Installment Loan debt and that this is his number one priority. Director of Development/Executive Director of McHenry County Conservation Foundation Flavell explained that raising funds through private donations to pay off debt would be difficult. A straw poll was taken and the general consensus was to put the request on the list to seek input from the Foundation.

The group started discussing each item and whether there should be priorities set. Director of Development/Executive Director of McHenry County Conservation Foundation Flavell requested that the list remain flexible as the document will be used as a guide for raising funds and donors like to support different things. It was noted that whatever projects are submitted to and approved by the Foundation, this Board needs to remain committed to continue the use of the funded project and not decide to drop the related programming or service in the near future unless the items are transitory in nature i.e. fishing poles and supplies, etc.

The Foundation will hold their next meeting April 11, 2020.

The process will again be discussed at the February 25, 2020 meeting, the consensus was to hold off on the project list discussion until March.

#### 4.3 Framing the Strategic Discussion - Agricultural Leases

This item was requested by President Scacci and staff is seeking direction. President Scacci stated that he thought there should be discussion about the future of agriculture on District holdings and should we be extending the leases out for longer terms. Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources Collins summarized the revamping of the program and the discussions of 2015 where the pricing was changed and based on corn futures pricing. Operators have asked us to keep that aspect and thought it was more equitable rather than just using the highest bidder. The emphasis is on long-term relationships with our operators. It was noted that our operator meetings used to be better attended when we included breakfast and a speaker but budgets have restricted our ability to provide this.

Treasurer Henning suggested that the District consider working more closely with the operators. Staff responded that we have been working toward this goal by bringing more GIS data sharing; conservation plans modified to include affordable options and practices; and, due to our collaborative work with the Liberty Prairie Foundation, more educational opportunities for operators including conservation grazing, insect control, and conventional agriculture 101 will be initiated this spring. It was also noted that the District has discussed revamping the PT Agricultural Coordinator position in FY 2022 with a FT Agroecologist. There has also been additional soil testing run for comparison in the future.

A question was asked about the District giving priority to existing lease holders at the end of the contract terms and Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources Collins explained that we might make more money putting leases out to bid at the end of each term; however, we would potentially lose the relationships we are striving to make.

There was support for working to improve communication between the operators and the Land Preservation Natural Resource staff as we may need to keep some of the land in agriculture for longer than originally anticipated. They also supported additional discussion on the proposed staff position.

#### 6.0 OTHER

There were no other items discussed.

#### 7.0 ADJOURN

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

Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m. February 18, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

John Henning

John Henning, Treasurer

Mar 26, 2020

Date

Signature:   
John P. Henning (Mar 26, 2020)

Email: [jhenning@mccdDistrict.org](mailto:jhenning@mccdDistrict.org)