

**Vermilion County Conservation District
Headquarters: Kennekuk County Park
Danville, IL**

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Wednesday, November 18, 2020
4:30 p.m.
Cellular One Classroom, Environmental Education Center
Kennekuk County Park, Danville, IL**

President Schroeder called the November Regular Meeting of the Vermilion County Conservation District Board of Trustees to order and opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Agenda item number three, Roll Call showed the following to be present.

Trustees Present: Michael P. Arbuckle
Michael Gast *arrived at 5:04 p.m.*
Randy A. Johnson
Charles B. Schroeder
Doug R. Staske

Trustee(s) Absent: None

In attendance were Executive Director Jamie Pasquale, Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Kim Fox, and Recording Secretary Amy Steeples.

Staff members present included Cole Craft, Lara Danzl, Mike Kotcher, and Gary Tyrl.

First order of business, agenda item number four, was the Adoption of, or Amendments to the Agenda.

President Schroeder asked for amendments to the agenda.

Trustee Johnson moved to approve the agenda as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Arbuckle. All in favor by acclamation, motion carried.

Agenda item number five. Approval of the Minutes from the October 21, 2020, Regular Meeting.

With no corrections, Trustee Arbuckle moved to approve the October 21, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Johnson. All in favor by acclamation, motion carried.

Item number six. Audience Comments. President Schroeder stated each person has a maximum of three minutes, total maximum of 30 minutes for all audience comments. No audience present.

Agenda item number seven, the Treasurer's Report. President Schroeder asked if there were any questions on items seven a through d. This included the bills, checks and journal entries for October 2020.

Trustee Johnson inquired about the pick-up broom brush set expense listed in the Manual Check Detail Report.

Executive Director Pasquale responded that it was an attachment for the front end loader used for cleaning roads prior to repair or repaving.

With no other questions or discussion, *Trustee Arbuckle moved to approve the Current List of Bills from October 2020 in the amount of \$7,673.39, which included check #'s 41214 – 41227; the Manual Checks from October 2020 in the amount of \$37,517.62, which included check #'s 41152 – 41163 and 41177 – 41197; and the General Journal Entries for October 31, 2020. This was followed by a second from Trustee Johnson.*

President Schroeder requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Staske	-	yes
President Schroeder	-	yes

The vote was 4 – 0 in favor, motion carried.

Agenda item number seven e. Report on Cash and Investments. Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Fox reported that as of November 18, 2020, the NOW checking account balance is \$225,000; Illinois Funds Investment Pool balance is \$236,107, the Illinois Funds Money Market Fund remains at \$5,400. First Farmers Bank Money Market Passbook account balance is \$248,977; Central Illinois Bank Money Market passbook account balance is \$245,300. The Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) balance is \$6,865. First Saving Bank NOW account balance is \$248,700; the NOW account at Catlin Bank balance is \$230,142. The 3 mo. CD at Central Illinois Bank at .05% interest balance is at \$103,653; 3 mo. CD [Whittaker Funds] at Iroquois Federal at .30% interest balance is now \$57,210; the 3 mo. CD [Wagner Funds] at Iroquois Federal invested at .30% interest balance remains at \$100,420.

The grand total of cash and investments for November 18, 2020: \$1,707,774. This compares to \$1,710,975. in November of 2019.

Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Fox reported that \$40,000 recoverable cash value will be deposited for hail damage, also CURE Program reimbursement of \$29,485 was received; \$170,000 from the State of Illinois for the Kickapoo Rail Trail construction is expected.

Agenda item number eight, Specific Items of Business to be Transacted.

Item eight a. Election of Officers. President Schroeder reported the list of current officers, noting that Shelley McLain had served as Board Secretary.

Trustee Arbuckle nominated Michael Gast for Secretary of the VCCD Board of Trustees. President Schroeder called for a vote. All in favor by acclamation. Michael Gast will serve as Secretary for the Vermilion County Conservation District Board of Trustees.

President Schroeder asked for nominations for any other office.

Trustee Johnson moved to retain the current VCCD Board of Trustees Officers: Chuck Schroeder, President; Doug Staske, First Vice President; Randy Johnson, Second Vice President; Mike Arbuckle, Treasurer. President Schroeder called for a vote. All in favor by acclamation for the aforementioned Trustees to serve as officers on Vermilion County Conservation District Board of Trustees.

Item eight b. Discuss/Approve 2021 employee health insurance benefits. Executive Director Pasquale introduced Gordon Thoennes, Dimond Brothers Insurance Representative. The present policy which covers the employees now will be discontinued at policy term. The most comparable policy is Health Alliance PPO 3800 Silver. The employees currently have an HRA [Health Reimbursement Account] benefit. The Trustees had received a handout of the current HRA benefits along with new proposed HRA benefits. The amended proposal would help with the increased deductible of the new policy.

Gordon explained that the cost of Health Alliance employee health insurance to the District had increased by 12% – 13% for 2020 – 2021. He explained other insurance company's policies too.

Executive Director Pasquale stated that since 2017, employees have been paying a percentage of dependent coverage, with the goal of 100% (paid by employee). In 2017, employees paid 10% of any dependent coverage and the percentage has been raised each year. He asked if the Board would be in favor of approving the proposed amended Health Reimbursement Account as presented, and raising the percentage of employee dependent coverage.

Discussion ensued regarding the health insurance coverage and health reimbursement account.

Trustee Johnson moved to approve the Health Alliance Employee Health Insurance PPO 3800 Silver Plan for the 13 month period; increasing the percentage paid by the employee from 40% to 50% for employee dependent coverage. This was followed by a second from Trustee Arbuckle.

President Schroeder requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Staske	-	yes
President Schroeder	-	yes

The vote was 4 – 0 in favor, motion carried.

Next, President Schroeder asked for a motion for the proposed Health Reimbursement Account policy.

Trustee Arbuckle moved to approve the amended Health Reimbursement Account policy as presented: employees meeting the first \$500 for self, \$1000 for self plus family coverage. The HRA will pay 100% of the in network deductible expenses up to a maximum of \$3,300 for employee, \$6,600 for employee plus family coverage. The HRA will then pay 15% of the in network out of pocket cost up to a maximum of \$652.50 for employee only or \$1,305 for employee plus family coverage. This was followed by a second from Trustee Johnson.

President Schroeder requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Staske	-	yes
President Schroeder	-	yes

The vote was 4 – 0 in favor, motion carried.

Agenda item eight c. Discuss/Approve payment for employee earned compensation time from March 16, 2020 to June 1, 2020. Executive Director Pasquale explained that this was a unique situation brought on by COVID. The employees that were required to work were granted comp time for hours at work while some remained at home part of the time or working from home. Any

full time employee that worked hours during this period was granted comp time for the hours worked. All current employees were paid full wages for 40 hours per week.

Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Fox applied for the CURE grant which initially covered COVID related supplies, was eventually approved for administrative expenses as well. Some employees accrued so much comp time for the regular hours they had worked; it could never be used by the March 31, 2020 deadline. The District has always granted comp time (for hours worked over 40 a week), but never paid employees for this time. Executive Director Pasquale wishes to offer the employees an opportunity to be paid for the compensatory time granted during this period. This would not be possible without the funds provided by the CURE grant. This comp time buyout has the potential for up to 1,800 hours (at the employee's rate).

Discussion ensued.

Trustee Gast arrived at 5:04 p.m.

Trustee Staske moved to concur with the Executive Director's recommendation and reimburse employees by offering to pay them at their rate of pay for comp time accrued during the period March 16, 2020 to June 1, 2020. This was followed by a second from Trustee Johnson.

Trustees Johnson and Staske both commented that in respect to future shutdowns, comp time should be limited or even eliminated due to lack of reimbursement.

President Schroeder requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Staske	-	yes
Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
President Schroeder	-	yes

The vote was 5 – 0 in favor, motion carried.

Agenda item eight d. Discuss/Approve employee holiday bonus. Executive Director Pasquale stated last year, Trustee McLain presented this option, which had never been done before 2019, and he placed it on the agenda for discussion this year as well. The bonus to full time was \$200 and part-time was \$75 last year. He stated that the salaries for this year were already under budget due to limited seasonal employees, and extra was budgeted for 2020-2021 for holiday bonuses.

With no further discussion or comments, Trustee Johnson moved to approve VCCD Employee Holiday Bonuses in the amount of \$200 net for full time employees and \$75 net for current part-time employees. This was followed by a second from Trustee Gast.

President Schroeder requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Staske	-	yes
President Schroeder	-	yes

The vote was 5 – 0 in favor, motion carried.

Agenda item eight e. Approve Ordinance #156 Tax Abatement for 2017 bonds, for 2020 taxes payable in 2021. Executive Director Pasquale explained that the bond funds received in 2017 automatically levied taxes each year, guaranteeing payment of principal and interest. This is an ordinance abating this tax levy, since the District is fiscally responsible and able to make the payment without any levy. This ordinance has to be approved and filed each year.

Trustee Staske moved to approve Ordinance #156 Tax Abatement for 2017 bonds, for 2020 taxes payable in 2021. This was followed by a second from Trustee Johnson.

President Schroeder requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Staske	-	yes
Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
President Schroeder	-	yes

The vote was 5 – 0 in favor, motion carried.

Agenda item eight f. Discuss/Approve Ordinance #157 Tax Levy for 2020 taxes payable in 2021. Executive Director Pasquale presented the ordinance explaining that it is a \$30,000 increase over last year, as stated. The Illinois State Minimum Wage is going up each year, which affects our seasonal workers rate of pay. It is a 3.4% increase this year. “It is a fine line, not getting too close to the maximum amount allowed for levying in case there is a drop in the county’s Equalized Assessed Value,” Executive Director Pasquale stated.

Trustee Staske moved to approve Ordinance #157, Annual Tax Levy Ordinance, as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Johnson.

President Schroeder requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Staske	-	yes
Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
President Schroeder	-	yes

The vote was 5 – 0 in favor, motion carried.

Agenda item eight g. Discuss employee hours for potential Stay at Home Order. Executive Director Pasquale stated that Illinois Governor’s Tier 3 recommendations call for people that can work from home. There is not enough work for the employees to work from home. Obviously the Maintenance Staff cannot. During the first shutdown, he made the choice for office staff and education staff to remain at home, allowing a few hours each week.

There are options to reduce staff hours, rotate schedules, or many others if there is a shutdown. He does not recommend employees work from home during a shutdown. The offices are closed to the public. He described the current working conditions for each employee. These areas are one of the safest places to be working.

If they qualify, employees may use the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which is a federal program. If employees feel uncomfortable coming to work, they may use vacation, comp or sick time.

Trustee Staske inquired if Executive Director Pasquale felt that the employees were safe in coming to work; could perform duties that do not involve crews working together.

Executive Director Pasquale answered that staff could, and would do that sticking to 40 hours per week. If things change, hours can be adjusted.

Trustee Johnson wished to ask the employees how they felt, and suggested if they did not feel safe they could have conversations with the Director to work it out.

Trustee Gast asked if this had been discussed with the staff.

Executive Director Pasquale responded that it could be worked out so that staff would feel safe, and they would certainly be flexible.

Other areas of concern were separate staff vehicles, and offices, also keeping the parks open and available to the public.

Executive Director Pasquale stated that the parks would stay open if at all possible. They remained open during the most critical time of the pandemic shutdown, and he doesn't see any closure in the future.

Agenda item eight h. Discuss/Approve 2021 employee salaries. Executive Director Pasquale stated that, per the Open Meetings Act, the Board did not have to go into Executive Session to discuss salary percentage or as a staff, unless employee department, groups or employee names were discussed.

Trustee Gast questioned when the salary increases would take effect.

Last year it was the first pay period in December to coincide with health insurance increases.

President Schroeder recommended the Board retire to Executive Session.

Trustee Johnson moved to retire to Executive Session pursuant to Illinois Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/2 (C)(1) – The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee to determine its validity. This was followed by a second by Trustee Arbuckle. The time was 5:30 p.m.

The Board returned from executive session at 5:56 p.m. There was no action taken in executive session.

Trustee Gast moved to approve the increase of Jamie Pasquale's salary to \$69,000 per year and approve the increase of \$1,500 for each full time employee to begin with the payroll on December 7, 2020. This was followed by a second from Trustee Arbuckle.

President Schroeder requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Gast	-	yes
Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Staske	-	yes
Trustee Johnson	-	yes
President Schroeder	-	yes

The vote was 5 – 0 in favor, motion carried.

Executive Director Pasquale thanked the Board on behalf of the employees and himself for their support.

Agenda item nine a. Report from the Executive Director. Executive Director Pasquale reported \$40,000 recoverable cash value was received from the insurance company for the hail damage. After all bills were totaled, the District was about \$28,000 on the plus side. This balance requires some guidance from the auditors or a CPA regarding expense of it now or holding it for future repairs.

Some asphalt work was done at Lake Vermilion, replacement of a section of the boat ramp and repair of a section of the parking lot. This was done in-house.

The White Oak Barn Addition is close to completion. The project was done with dedicated funds from the Whittaker Account.

Trustee Gast requested a tour of the new addition soon.

Stark Excavating received the contract for Denmark Road work. They will be using the Lake Vermilion Parking Lot to stage their equipment. There will be a contract agreement with the District regarding repair of any damage they cause. They will be done by our busy season.

Discussion ensued regarding the water/sewer line work. No action was taken.

Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Fox reported that she has been working on the three items the auditor's report highlighted during their presentation. The Kickapoo Rail Trail land leases, minimum fund balance policy, and amortization and capitalization policies.

Trustee Johnson asked about the rentals for the buildings.

Executive Director Pasquale answered that they were way down and will probably have to cancel the remainder of the year. However, boat decal sales and campground revenues were up.

The next VCCD Board of Trustees Meeting will be Wednesday, December 16, 4:30 p.m. Kennekuk County Park.

Agenda item thirteen. President's and Trustee's Comments.

Trustee Johnson thanked the staff for all they do to keep the parks open.

Trustee Gast asked about the informational material the Trustees receive in their packets and at the meeting; is it to be shredded?

Executive Directory Pasquale answered that they did not.

Trustee Arbuckle had no comment.

Trustee Staske had no comment.

President Schroeder had no comment.

With no further discussion and all business transacted, *the meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m. All in favor by acclamation.*

Michael Gast
Secretary
VCCD Board of Trustees