

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

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

**Wednesday, March 17, 2021  
4:30 p.m.  
Maple Grove Lodge  
Forest Glen Preserve, Westville, IL**

President Schroeder called the March 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 H. Gast  
Charles B. Schroeder  
Doug R. Staske

Trustee(s) Absent: Randy A. Johnson

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

Staff member present: Cole Craft, 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 Arbuckle moved to approve the agenda as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Staske. All in favor by acclamation, motion carried.*

Agenda item number five. Approval of the Minutes from the January 20, 2021, Regular Meeting. The February regular meeting was canceled.

Trustee Gast commented that his middle initial was omitted, it is "H". *Trustee Staske moved to approve the January 20, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes as amended. This was followed by a second from Trustee Arbuckle. 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.

Suzette Carpenter was recognized and introduced herself. She wanted to thank the VCCD Staff and Board for working with her regarding the planting of trees in memory of loved ones. After her daughter-in-law passed, leaving a husband and small child, Suzette called the Forest Glen Office to inquire about planting a tree in her memory. At that time, there was no program in place and the

staff responded it was in the planning stages, but had been set aside. Just after Christmas, a draft of the program was put into words, and she was notified of this. Since her daughter-in-law loved Forest Glen, she wanted a tree for her young grandchild to be able to see there. Suzette offered to help in any way she could. She was very grateful.

Amy Steeples introduced Executive Director Pasquale and Cole Craft to Suzette.

Executive Director Pasquale explained that many years ago the Foundation offered a Memorial Tree Forest areas at both Kennekuk and Forest Glen. Eventually they ran out of room and the program was discontinued. Since then, many people have wanted to plant a tree in honor of someone, but there was no official program to do so. There have been many dead trees in both parks and this will be a good way to help replace some of them in different areas of the parks. The donation to plant a tree will be applied to the cost of the tree, a weed mat, and perhaps a tree shelter to protect the young tree. The family will be allowed to place a plaque of some type, designating the tree.

The Board thanked Suzette for attending and expressing her gratitude.

Agenda item number seven, the Treasurer's Report. President Schroeder asked if there were any questions on items seven a through h. This included the bills, checks and journal entries for February and March 2021.

Trustee Gast inquired about the entry on the Check Detail from January. The description states "transfer funds" to Catlin Bank.

Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Fox responded that was an amount transferred to the Catlin Bank from a CIB account that was closed.

*With no more questions or discussion, Trustee Gast moved to approve the Current List of Bills dated March 19, 2021 in the amount of \$5,169.12, which included check #'s 41402 – 41408; the Manual Checks dated February 2021 in the amount of \$149,192.76, which included check #'s 41349 – 41359 and 41371 – 41385; and the General Journal Entries for February 28, 2021. 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 |
| President Schroeder | - | yes |

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

Agenda item number seven i. Report on Cash and Investments. Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Fox reported that as of March 17, 2021, the NOW checking account balance is \$192,405; Illinois Funds Investment Pool balance is \$84,155, the Illinois Funds Money Market Fund remains at \$5,400. First Farmers Bank Money Market Passbook account balance is \$249,020; Central Illinois Bank Money Market passbook account balance is \$245,461. The Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) balance is \$7,630. First Saving Bank NOW account balance is \$248,717; the NOW account at Catlin Bank balance is \$249,220. The 3 mo. CD [Whittaker Funds] at Iroquois Federal at .25% interest balance is now \$57,435; the 3 mo. CD [Wagner Funds] at Iroquois Federal invested at .25% interest balance is \$100,732.

The grand total of cash and investments for March 17, 2021: \$1,440,177. This compares to \$1,349,460. in March of 2020.

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

Item eight a. Approve Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Tentative Budget. Executive Director Pasquale explained the budget process. He then highlighted several of the accounts and line items.

Page one. He explained each revenue line item. Some of the revenue accounts were budgeted less than last year due to COVID-19. For example in 2020, Boat License Fees were \$60,000; Campground revenue was \$55,000 alone. This was due to families and individuals staying close to home in 2020. The 2020 Forest Glen Archery Hunt brought in more dollars than in 2019; it is very successful. Building and Shelters in 2020 were down due to COVID; typically netting \$50,000. Gatherings are limited to 50 people now, but rentals seem to be picking up. Dedicated funds are expected to equal expenses for those listed.

The budgeted estimated cash for expenditures is \$3,199,043.

Pages 2 through 7 are administrative, salary and individual park expenses based on last year's numbers.

Page eight. Executive Director Pasquale stated that there may be up to \$204,150 available for capital improvement projects this fiscal year. He plans to keep the yearly capital improvement project budget around \$200,000. This year's items include continued repair work on the Willow Creek Pond Spillway, Lake Mingo Dam maintenance, roof replacement on Laury Barn and Atwood House, parking lot repairs at Lake Vermilion, and new handrails at Heron County Park, among other items. The Heron County Boardwalk handrails will be replaced with galvanized steel and the District recently received a \$10,000 donation to help with this upgrade.

Trustee Staske asked about the informational signs that were placed along the boardwalk. Will those be redone?

Executive Director Pasquale responded that the brackets are still usable, but the signs did not last very long. They were expensive, good quality signs. There are no immediate plans to replace them.

Park signage upgrades are planned at Forest Glen and Kennekuk. A new truck purchase is planned this year also.

The grand total budgeted for expenditures is \$2,537,200. This represents a balanced 2021-2022 budget; the cash balance would be amended to the actual amount.

Page nine, Insurance and Compensation. Depending on the HRA, he anticipates a decrease in the cash balance.

Page ten, Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. There is not much change. A new rate is announced each December.

Page thirteen, Debt Service Fund. Executive Director Pasquale explained that this is the bond payment statement. This fiscal year's principle is \$95,000 and interest of \$29,025 for a total payment of \$124,025. There is a zero cash balance. No tax revenue is collected from the bond unless the District would default on a payment. The ten year bond was issued in 2017.

Trustee Staske asked about the Gannett Outdoor Education Center Project funding from the VCC Foundation.

Executive Director Pasquale answered that the Foundation pledged up to \$75,000. The project will be more than that, obviously, and the VCCD planned to use the Wagner Funds. As the remodel

progresses and if more funding is necessary, he is confident that the Foundation will contribute more funds if possible.

When approved, this tentative budget will be available for public review for at least thirty-three days, through April 20, 2021. The final budget will be presented for approval in May.

With no more comments or questions, *Trustee Gast moved to approve the Vermilion County Conservation District Tentative Budget for fiscal year 2021-2022, Ordinance No. 158 as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Staske.*

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

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

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

There was no executive session.

Agenda item nine a. Report from the Executive Director. Executive Director Pasquale presented each Trustee with a small “Breakfast in a Basket” basket. Susan Biggs Warner had the idea to design a maple syrup basket, comparable to the “Home for the Holidays” basket that was sold in December. Since the Maple Syrup Open House was postponed, the District will offer these baskets for sale. The Education Staff has been working on filling orders. There are two different sizes; each contains pancake mix, sassafras tea kit, chocolate chips, hot cocoa mixes, and recipes. The large sells for \$45 and also includes a 20-oz VCCD tumbler and 16 oz. of Forest Glen Maple Syrup in a glass leaf shaped bottle. The small sells for \$35 and includes two VCCD coffee mugs and 8 oz. of Forest Glen Maple Syrup in a glass leaf shaped bottle. They have been advertised in *The Conservationist*, Facebook and other media outlets.

Seventy-seven gallons of syrup were made this year. Syrup is still available in the familiar plastic jugs. The revenue from the sale of baskets and syrup is expected to be about the same as the Maple Syrup Open House Pancake and Sausage Dinner.

The old nature center at Kennekuk was demolished by the Executive Director and Kennekuk Park Superintendent. This saved the District between \$20,000 and \$25,000. Some of the debris was burned and some of the blocks and bricks will be repurposed as erosion control material for the Willow Creek Pond Spillway, Forest Glen. The District has dump trucks that will be used to haul the fill for the spillway.

The Board congratulated Executive Director Pasquale for accomplishing this demolition.

Nick Jeurissen has been doing most of the work so far, on the Gannett Outdoor Education Center remodel. The shower rooms and bathrooms have been torn out and water to the building shut off. There will be an employee bathroom and storage area in addition to public bathrooms. The next step will include a classroom addition where the deck is located, and that is all that is planned for this year. The back classroom will be torn off and rebuilt, but it will have to be worked around the Maple Syrup Open House next year.

The Willow Creek Pond spillway is still eroding and needs extensive repair or we will lose it. Some work was done a few years ago, and then a big rain washed out everything before the large concrete blocks were placed. The plan now is to relocate the concrete from the Kennekuk Nature Center demolition to fill the eroded area and make it bowl or u-shaped. Finally, hire a concrete truck to “splash” concrete over that. It is a big cavity and will take a while to fill.

Executive Director Pasquale has been contacted by the Gao Grotto regarding boat races on Lake Vermilion this year. Buddy Freed wished to schedule them during the July 4 weekend. This is one of the busiest days for the lake, and Executive Director Pasquale is hesitant to agree to that date due to approximately half of the lake reserved for the races. We cannot reduce the lake area that weekend for the public for their boat, skiing, tubing, and jet ski recreation. He will keep the Board updated on this.

The Kickapoo Rail Trail (KRT) sections are done, other than the final top-coat screenings. The trestle bridge section is also done. He went on to clarify that the VCCD pays the bills associated with the construction and design of the trail; reimbursed by the State. No bills have been received recently and the VCCD receives a bill for \$588,000. The District is unable to pay this in full. The total project is \$1.4M - \$1.5M; to date, the VCCD has paid bills for \$171,000 and \$39,000 and been reimbursed. He anticipates a final bill of \$600,000, and reimbursement has typically taken 90 days.

There were no more questions or comments.

The next VCCD Board of Trustees Meeting will be Wednesday, April 21, 4:30 p.m., Kennekuk County Park, Education Center.

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

Trustee Staske affirmed good job removing the nature center and at quite a savings to the District. He also thanked the VCCD for the basket and wanted to relay that was a good idea.

Trustee Gast had no comment.

Trustee Arbuckle had no comment.

With no further discussion and all business transacted, *Trustee Arbuckle moved to adjourn the meeting, second by Trustee Gast. All in favor by acclamation. The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 p.m.*

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Michael H. Gast  
Secretary  
VCCD Board of Trustees