

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

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

**Wednesday, February 16, 2022
4:30 p.m.
Cellular One Classroom
Environmental Education Center
Kennekuk County Park, Danville, Illinois**

President Staske called the February 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
Randy A. Johnson
Doug R. Staske

Trustee(s) Absent: Jessica Augustson

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

Staff members present: Cole Craft, Lara Danzl and Gary Tyrl.

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

President Staske asked for amendments to the agenda. There were none.

Trustee Johnson moved to approve the February 16, 2022, agenda as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Gast. All in favor by acclamation, motion to approve the agenda carried.

Agenda item number five. Approval of the Minutes from the December 15, 2021, Regular Meeting. The January 19, 2022 meeting was cancelled due to lack of business to be transacted.

With no comments or corrections, Trustee Arbuckle moved to approve the December 15, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Gast. All in favor by acclamation, motion carried.

Item number six. Audience Comments. President Staske stated each person has a maximum of three minutes, total maximum of 30 minutes for all audience comments. There were none.

Agenda item number seven, the Treasurer's Report. President Staske asked if there were any questions on items seven a through h. This included bills, checks and journal entries for December 2021 and January 2022.

Trustee Gast commented regarding the price of new Gannett Outdoor Education Center entryway doors.

Executive Director Pasquale responded that the doors were automatic open and ADA compliant. They were paid through the Wagner Fund account designated for education expenses. He agreed that the price for that type of door is outrageous.

Trustee Johnson asked if the legal fees listed on January 2022, Check Detail Report, ck#41913 for \$880.00 was normal.

Executive Director Pasquale replied that it was not, the fee was for the new policy made to the Employee Personnel Policy. [Note: A section regarding banked sick hours, approved at the November 17, 2021 Meeting.]

Trustee Johnson asked about the membership paid to Vermilion Advantage, ck#41885 for \$500.00.

Executive Director Pasquale responded the community centered organization has different membership levels and has promoted the VCCD through a monthly publication. The membership also allows the VCCD to send a representative to Vermilion Advantage meetings.

With no other comments or questions, *Trustee Gast moved to approve the Manual Checks dated December 2021 in the amount of \$43,007.84, which included check #'s 41855 – 41872 and 41882 – 41896; the current list of voucher checks dated January 20, 2022 in the amount of \$11,378.60, which included check #'s 41916 – 41927; the Manual Checks dated January 2022 in the amount of \$38,993.83, which included check #'s 41897 – 41915 and 41928 – 41940; the current list of voucher checks dated February 17, 2022 in the amount of \$5,548.28, which included check #'s 41952 – 41959; the Budget Report and General Journal Entries through February 28, 2022. This was followed by a second from Trustee Johnson.*

With no other questions or comments, President Staske requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Gast	-	yes
Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Staske	-	yes

The vote was 4 – 0 in favor, motion to approve the bills, checks and journal entries carried.

Agenda item number seven i. Report on Cash and Investments. Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Fox reported that as of February 16, 2022, the NOW checking account balance is \$143,049; Illinois Funds Investment Pool balance is \$84,562; the Illinois Funds Money Market Fund balance is \$5,402. First Farmers Bank Money Market Passbook account balance is \$249,135; Central Illinois Bank Money Market passbook account balance is \$245,750. The Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) balance is \$6,723. First Saving Bank NOW account balance is \$248,758; the NOW account at Catlin Bank balance is \$249,429. The 3 mo. CD [Whittaker Funds] at Iroquois Federal at .05% interest balance is \$57,478; the 3 mo. CD [Wagner Funds] at Iroquois Federal invested at .05% interest balance is \$50,766. A 3-month certificate of deposit at Longview Bank now at .15% interest now has a balance of \$250,095. The 2-year, with 6-month option acquired at Illinois National Bank remains at \$250,000.

The grand total of cash and investments for February 16 2022: \$1,841,580. This compares to \$1,609,628. in February of 2021.

Executive Director Pasquale noted that a bond payment of \$109,000. had been made this week and was reflected on the report.

Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Fox stated that \$100,000. had been moved from one of the Illinois Funds accounts to make the bond payment.

President Staske asked for a motion to approve the Cash & Investment Report. *Trustee Johnson moved to approve the Report on Cash and Investments for February 16, 2022 as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Arbuckle.*

With no other questions or comments, President Staske requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
Trustee Staske	-	yes

The vote was 4 – 0 in favor, motion to approve the Report on Cash and Investments carried.

Agenda item eight. Specific Items of Business to be Transacted. Item eight a. Discuss/approve changes to personnel policy section 3.21 Supervisor Residency Requirement. A map was provided to the Trustees with concentric circles based at Kennekuk County Park; from 25 miles to 45 miles. Executive Director Pasquale recommended that park superintendents and supervisors live close to the park they supervise.

Discussion ensued.

With no other comments or discussion, *Trustee Arbuckle moved to accept the personnel policy change for supervisory employee residency requirements to be within a 25-mile radius of Kennekuk County Park. This was followed by a second from Trustee Johnson. [Note: this includes park superintendents, executive director, associate director, and supervisors]*

With no other questions or comments, President Staske requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
Trustee Staske	-	yes

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

Agenda item eight b. Discuss/approve purchase of 2019 Ford F350 Diesel from Schepel GMC Commercial Truck Center. Executive Director Pasquale explained that the VCCD typically orders vehicles through the State, but this past year Illinois held the contract regarding vehicle purchases until after the deadline had passed to order. He stated that a truck is needed to pull the excavator and trailer; the truck that is currently used has been pulling 2,000 pounds over what it should be pulling. Executive Director Pasquale located a used Ford F350 that would be available now.

President Staske commented that a “sole source buy” by the VCCD could be contested by another dealership since this is a significant expenditure not bid out. A policy exists limiting purchases to a maximum amount before a purchase must be bid out.

Discussion ensued.

Executive Director Pasquale is concerned about the use of the current truck, a ¾ ton gasoline engine, and does not know when a new truck purchased through the State would be delivered to the District. The 2019 Ford F350 would be delivered soon. He has also located a new Ford F450 chassis, gasoline engine, from National Auto Fleet Group. This could be delivered in May 2022.

President Staske asked how comparable the price would be to one through the State.

Executive Director Pasquale responded that it would be comparable in price.

Extensive discussion ensued regarding various options.

With no definitive conclusion, President Staske asked for a motion to table this item.

With no other questions or discussion, *Trustee Gast moved to table the purchase of 2019 Ford F350 from Schepel GMC Commercial Truck Center. This was followed by a second from Trustee Johnson. All in favor by acclamation, motion carried.*

Eight c. Review Executive Session Minutes from April 18, 2018; May 8, 2018; May 23, 2018; December 5, 2018; May 15, 2019; July 17, 2019, for release or hold. Executive Director Pasquale recommends holding all executive session minutes from all dates.

With no further discussion, *Trustee Johnson moved to hold the Executive Session Minutes from April 18, 2018; May 8, 2018; May 23, 2018; December 5, 2018; May 15, 2019; and July 17, 2019*
This was followed by a second from Trustee Gast.

With no other questions or comments, President Staske requested a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Staske	-	yes

The vote was 4 – 0 in favor, motion to hold the executive session minutes.

There was no executive session.

Agenda item nine. Report from the Executive Director. Executive Director Pasquale reported that the VCCD hired Brenna Karcher as a full-time educator. He recognized Lara Danzl, Education Supervisor.

Lara gave a brief background for Brenna, stating also that she and her husband have purchased a home in Danville, IL.

Executive Director Pasquale reported that Justus Newman was promoted to fill the full-time Forest Glen Maintenance vacancy. Justus has been working maintenance part-time the past several months.

President Staske requested a current personnel list with positions listed.

Executive Director Pasquale reported that he is now a Danville Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau Board Member. The DACVB met a week ago, and meet every other month. It is a good opportunity to promote the parks.

Executive Director Pasquale has been working with a company to bring new phone and internet services to Kennekuk. Due to federal deregulation, current service is going to change regarding repair of AT&T lines, and monthly charges will be increased significantly. During work at Lake Vermilion, the phone line was damaged, and AT&T abandoned the line. He has tried working with Comcast and they are not interested. A fiber optic company he has been in contact with is still working out details. No one seems to want to meet with him after determining the location of Kennekuk.

Discussion of various other companies and options ensued.

Executive Director Pasquale spoke with County Board Chairman Baughn. The County Board has received a lot of requests for American Rescue Plan Act [ARPA] Funds; the VCCD has never received ARPA funds and may be eligible. He will be updating the Board regarding phone and internet service.

Another shipment of handrails was delivered for Heron County Park Boardwalk. This will cover 2/3 of the boardwalk handrails. The last section has been ordered.

The Maple Syrup Open House is postponed again for this year. The decision had to be made in mid-February, before mask mandates were lifted. Also, there are many volunteers that must work the event and they were a consideration as well.

Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Fox, Lara Danzl, and he met with Farnsworth Group this afternoon regarding the Kickapoo Rail Trail. The VCCD will be looking into ITEP Funding this year. It makes the most sense to continue on, extending the trail to Muncie. Between the VCCD and the VCCF there is

around \$100,000 available for match funding. The Julius W. Hegeler Foundation is interested in donating toward the construction. Engineering plans need to be done first, of course. Currently Champaign County is bidding out a section, therefore after that is done the VCCD will have a better idea of how much the District will need to expend.

The Pullman Trail Car is currently being dismantled and going for scrap material. The District has given the car to Moreman and Son Co., including the interior fixtures and items.

Currently IDNR and the Kickapoo Mountain Bike Club are trying to add additional miles to the current mountain bike trails at Kickapoo. IDNR owns the property, previously owned by Dynegy which borders Kennekuk County Park, and the club wants to build more miles of trails on that property. There is controversy regarding the land on the old Dynegy property, several endangered or threatened species of plants and unique birds are there. Executive Director Pasquale does not wish to take a stance regarding this issue, seeing both sides. The biggest issue he is concerned with is a possible parking lot IDNR will build that may be accessible only by a VCCD roadway.

Discussion ensued regarding trail funding, etiquette, land and surrounding area impact. There was no action taken.

Trustee Gast asked if maple trees were tapped at Kennekuk, in addition to Forest Glen.

Executive Director Pasquale responded that they were not, adding that around 500 taps or spiles were placed.

President Staske asked what was done with the ash trees.

Executive Director Pasquale answered that, in addition to the 80 or 90 trees cut down in Kennekuk, there have been about 100 cut down at Forest Glen. They are working in the high profile areas first.

Trustee Gast inquired as to what the District was doing with the wood.

Executive Director Pasquale responded that it was all burned. The insurance company was not happy with the wood being made available to the public.

There were no more questions. This concluded the Report from the Executive Director.

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

Trustee Gast had no comment.

Trustee Arbuckle had no comment.

Trustee Johnson had no comment.

President Staske had no comment.

This concluded President & Trustee Comments.

With no further discussion and all business transacted, the meeting was adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

Michael H. Gast
Secretary
VCCD Board of Trustees