

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

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

**Wednesday, May 18, 2022
4:30 p.m.
Environmental Education Center, Cellular One Classroom
Kennekuk County Park
Danville, IL 61834**

A public hearing was conducted for the Budget and Appropriations Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2022 -2023, Ordinance No. 161, at 4:30 p.m. President Staske called for the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Agenda item. Executive Director Pasquale presented the final budget. He noted the following amendments from the tentative budget which was approved in March 2022 and placed on public display.

Cash Fund Balances were updated to reflect actual end of year balances. Total revenue earnings were increased in the amount of \$71,000 over the tentative budget. CPPRT was increased \$50,000; May allocation was \$153,818 compared to \$80,000 in May 2021.

Estimated Expenses: were increased by \$97,100, line items affected were highlighted in the Trustee's copy: . Major increases in Capital Improvements included fiber optic lines for Gannett Outdoor Education Center, \$15,000; dock replacement or improvement in Kennekuk \$14,000; and increase of \$45,000 in General Expenses of for equipment and vehicle purchases.

Total revenue is \$2,550,450; estimated cash for expenditures is \$3,774,994; total estimated Corporate Fund Expenditures is \$2,799,175.

President Staske asked for an explanation of other income \$27,000 amount.

Executive Director Pasquale responded the District had an excess of equipment sale which netted \$18,000, the bulk of that amount.

Insurance and Compensation Fund, Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, Audit Fund, Social Security Fund, and Debt Service Fund were corrected due to updated April 1, 2022 cash balance.

There are many items to consider and situations occur that may affect the budget; vehicles or equipment may not come in during the fiscal year expected; much of the labor is done in-house, and may not get time to get it done due to not enough help.

There were no other comments or questions from the Trustees; there was no audience.

President Staske asked for adoption of Budget and Appropriations Ordinance No. 161. *Trustee Johnson moved to adopt Ordinance No. 161 for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 as presented this date May 18, 2021. This was followed by a second from Trustee Augustson. All in favor, motion carried.*

President Staske called the May Regular Meeting of the Vermilion County Conservation District Board of Trustees to order.

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

Trustees Present: Jessica Augustson
Michael H. Gast
Randy A. Johnson
Doug R. Staske

Trustee(s) Absent: Michael P. Arbuckle

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

Staff members present: Lara Danzl and Gary Tyrl. Vermilion County Conservation Foundation Directors Rick Strebing, Chairman and Mike Van De Walker, Vice Chairman were also in attendance.

First order of business, agenda item number seven, 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 May 18, 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 eight. Approval of the Minutes from the March 16, 2022, Regular Meeting.

With no comments or corrections, Trustee Johnson moved to approve the March 16, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Gast.

President Staske called for a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
Trustee Augustson	-	yes
President Staske	-	yes

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

Item number nine. Audience Comments. President Staske stated each person has a maximum of three minutes, total maximum of 30 minutes for all audience comments. VCCF Chairman, Rick Strebing stated that the Foundation and VCCD have been working toward the transfer and presentation of the deed to the 9 acres of real estate adjacent to Forest Glen Preserve currently owned by the Vermilion County Conservation Foundation to the Vermilion County Conservation District. Photos of the parcel were given to the Trustees. He explained the history of the aforementioned parcel. At this time, VCCF Chairman Rick Strebing is pleased to present the Quit Claim Deed to two tracts, Tract I “commencing at a stone at the Southeast corner of the Southeast Quarter of Section 24, Township 18 North, Range 11 West of the 2nd P.M., Vermilion County, Illinois; Tract II “a permanent easement for use as a roadway for ingress and egress, subject to the mutual obligations for the cost of maintenance of said roadway” over the aforementioned Tract I to the Vermilion County Conservation District. The deed is dated for the 14th day of March, 2022.

Executive Director Pasquale added that this property is attached to the Busby-Meyer Wildlife Sanctuary by a lane.

The deed was presented to the Board and President Staske thanked the Foundation.

Vice Chairman Mike Van De Walker reported the Foundation is in the process of overhauling the Foundation’s current website to an updated and user-friendly resource tool for information as well as donations. The

Foundation hired AWEBCO, a Danville based web design company. They have been great to work with and there is a planned website launch in June.

The Foundation is planning the 2nd annual *Cheeseburgers & Run 5K* event. The event was virtual in 2021, this year's 5K will be both virtual and live. The proceeds from last year's and this year's event are dedicated to replacement of the playground equipment at both Kennekuk and Forest Glen. Equipment has been purchased for placement near the White Oak Barn at Kennekuk.

President Staske agreed that a playground is necessary at the parks for young children.

Foundation Chairman Strebing reported that a \$75,000 check was given to the VCCD for the Gannett Outdoor Education Center renovation project.

President Staske thanked the VCC Foundation and stated that the VCCD Board looks forward to working with them. Adding that so much work is done by the VCCD Staff [in-house] thus saving taxpayers money.

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

Trustee Gast asked about check #42016 listed on the March Manual Check Report for \$11,439 to Clark Truck Equipment.

Executive Director Pasquale responded that a 2015 F250 truck bed was removed and replaced with complete commercial-type tool and equipment service body.

Trustee Gast questioned the insurance claim, check #42022 to Truscelli's Collision Repair for \$6,774.74.

Executive Director Pasquale answered that the grey F150 he drives was hit by an ash tree that was blown down by winds.

Trustee Johnson queried check #42025 to Dell Marketing for \$1,575.48 on the March Manual Check Report, and also check #42072 to Miller Tree Service for \$950 on the April Manual Check Report.

Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Fox answered that was for both a computer tower and monitor. She runs software that takes extra processing time and storage, and this type of system was recommended.

Check #42072 was for firewood for resale to campers.

With no other comments or questions, *Trustee Gast moved to approve the Manual Checks dated March 2022 in the amount of \$197,428.28, which included check #'s 41979 – 41998 and 42006 – 42027; the Manual Checks dated April 2022 in the amount of \$74,650.80, which included check #'s 42028 – 42046 and 42057 – 42073; the current list of voucher checks dated April 21, 2022 in the amount of \$9,940.16, which included check #'s 42047 – 42056; voucher checks dated May 19, 2022 in the amount of \$11,163.77, which included check #'s 42093 – 42108; the Budget Report and General Journal Entries through April 30, 2022. This was followed by a second from Trustee Johnson.*

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

Trustee Gast	-	yes
Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Augustson	-	yes
President Staske	-	yes

The vote was 4-0 in favor, motion to accept the Treasurer's Report carried.

Agenda item number ten g. Approval of Budget Report for April 2022. There were no questions or comments, *Trustee Johnson moved to approve the Budget Report for April 2022. This was followed by a second from Trustee Augustson.*

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

Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Augustson	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
President Staske	-	yes

The vote was 4-0 in favor to approve the Budget Report, motion carried.

Agenda item number ten h. Report on Cash and Investments. Director of Administration and Personnel Fox reported that as of May 18, 2022, the NOW checking account balance is \$145,681; Illinois Funds Investment Pool balance is \$245,564; the Illinois Funds Money Market Fund balance is \$5,406. First Farmers Bank Money Market Passbook account balance is \$149,157; Central Illinois Bank Money Market passbook account balance is \$245,811. The Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) balance is \$5,716. First Saving Bank NOW account balance is \$123,768; the NOW account at Catlin Bank balance is \$249,506. 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 \$50,767; 3-month certificate of deposit at Longview Bank now at .15% interest has a balance of \$250,187. The 2-year CD, with 6-month option acquired at Illinois National Bank has a balance of \$250,189.

The grand total of cash and investments for May 18, 2022: \$1,779,230. This compares to \$1,464,820. in May of 2021.

Associate Director of Administration and Personnel reported that interest rates were still “terrible”.

With no more comments, *Trustee Johnson moved to approve the Cash and Investments Report dated May 18, 2022, as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Gast. All in favor by acclamation, motion carried.*

Agenda item eleven a. Specific Items of Business to be Transacted.

Item eleven a. Discuss/approve Resolution 22-1, increase VCCD bid limit to \$30,000. Executive Director Pasquale explained that in 2021 the state passed a motion to increase the Conservation District and Conservation District’s Act bid limit from \$25,000 to \$30,000 to take effect June 1, 2022. This will update our policy. The resolution reflects the current bid limit of \$25,000, and from now on authorizes the VCCD Board of Trustees to adopt and follow the Illinois Conservation District Act bid limit effective June 1, 2022. Executive Director Pasquale stated the wording will now cover any subsequent raising or lowering of the bid limit for Conservation Districts covered by the Conservation District Act. Most of what this will affect will be road work.

Trustee Johnson moved to approve VCCD Resolution 22-1, authorization of the VCCD to increase the bid limit to the amount allowable by the Illinois Conservation District Act. This was followed by a second from Trustee Augustson.

President Staske called for a roll call vote. The results as follows:

Trustee Johnson	-	yes
Trustee Augustson	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
President Staske	-	yes

The vote was 4-0 in favor, motion to approve Resolution 22-1 carried.

Agenda item eleven b. Discussion of phone and internet services at VCCD parks. Executive Director Pasquale reported that the District has been working on getting service for the landline lines, which need repair

frequently at Forest Glen and also at Kennekuk. More dependable and faster internet service is needed too. Every company that has been contacted: does not want to respond, recommends switching service to internet-based phones, the quote of installing a line is too costly, etc. He has made a tentative deal for internet with Starlink, but has not signed any contract. Starlink is satellite based. He would prefer fiber optic connections. The current phone provider, Gibson Teladata, claims that they can get Comcast to both Kennekuk and Forest Glen. Executive Director has tried contacting Comcast, but has not been able to work with them.

Extensive discussion ensued.

Executive Director Pasquale does not recommend a decision now, only information at this time, and he is still exploring options.

There was no executive session.

Agenda item twelve. Report from the Executive Director. Executive Director Pasquale reported this is a hectic time of year. Staff is trying to get the parks ready for the Memorial Day Weekend and beyond.

The end of April, Susan Biggs Warner retired from the District after 38 full time years & 2 years part-time service. She has not been replaced. She was District Historical Interpreter, Naturalist/Educator – offering day visits, substituting for Outdoor School, presenting programs and working special events.

A new dock has been installed at the Lake Mingo Boat Ramp which is ADA Accessible; new dock at Mallard Point.

Another section of handrail on the Heron Park Boardwalk was completed, with the last shipment delivered today. It is approximately 2/3 complete and expect to finish in one month. The walkway also needs replaced at some point. Now, with prices as high as they are, is not the best time. Heron Park is a popular place for photographers and is visited often by the public.

Mike Kotcher, Forest Glen Superintendent and Justus Newman traveled to Michigan to pick up the new maple syrup evaporator. The order took over a year to fill. It has not been set up yet.

Forest Glen Ranger Station is being remodeled, adding new offices for Carol Pearson and Amy Steeples. The current Visitor Center building has lots of issues and needs to be demolished. The VCCD is working with the Lorna J. Konsis Foundation, after razing, to build a structure or design something to enhance the area. The remodel to the Ranger Station includes a sliding glass window inside so that the public can enter the building safely. There are a lot of public traffic daily at both parks, and for safety reasons it is good for staff to be secured. The doors of the Kennekuk Visitor Center are still locked to the public due to safety concerns. There are plans to separate the Kennekuk Visitor Center staff from the public other than “cranking open a window”, so the public may enter. The display area at the Kennekuk Visitor Center will be eventually moved to the Education Center.

Lara Danzl, Education Supervisor, reported on 2022 Conservation Olympics after a two-year interruption due to the COVID pandemic. All schools participated, with the exception of Schlarman which had a date conflict. Most staff participated in the events, along with volunteers to make the event great!

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

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

Trustee Gast commented on the north side of Lake Mingo Trail where the culvert is has extensive erosion. Also, the River Bluff Trail needs maintenance.

Executive Director Pasquale responded that there are plans to address the issue on Lake Mingo Trail.

Lara Danzl stated that River Bluff Trail has been made safe for now, and has been rerouted. As part of an Eagle Scout Project, there were rails installed on Lookout Point Trail.

Trustee Johnson exclaimed that the O'Leary's Rail Car is gone! Will the rails remain?

Executive Director Pasquale responded that he was glad for it to be gone and some of the rails may remain, others will be removed. There were many negative comments on social media, but he did not receive any emails or phone calls regarding the car removal.

Trustee Johnson was curious what the demolition company got out of the scrap.

Executive Director Pasquale guessed that they may have gained \$6,000 - \$7,000, he is not certain. The VCCD salvaged some of the remains.

Trustee Gast inquired if he was to pay the \$5 fee to walk the River Ridge Backpack Trail, and stated that the trail was very busy the time(s) he has hiked.

Amy Steeples responded that popularity of the trail increased during 2020, adding many new hikers from Chicago and a few from out of state.

Trustee Gast asked if the TiPis were still popular.

Executive Director Pasquale answered that they had been discontinued since 2020.

This concluded President & Trustee Comments.

With no further discussion and all business transacted, Trustee Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting. This was followed by a second from Trustee Augustson. The meeting was adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

Michael H. Gast
Secretary
VCCD Board of Trustees