

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

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

**Wednesday, August 17, 2022
4:30 p.m.
Environmental Education Center, Cellular One Classroom
Kennekuk County Park
Danville, IL 61834**

President Staske called the August 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: Michael P. Arbuckle
Jessica Augustson
Michael H. Gast
Randy A. Johnson
Doug R. Staske

Trustee(s) Absent: none

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

Staff members present: Lara Danzl, Cole Craft, 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.

Trustee Johnson moved to approve the August 17, 2022, agenda. This was followed by a second from Trustee Arbuckle. All in favor by acclamation, motion to approve the agenda carried.

Agenda item number five. Approval of the Minutes from the July 20, 2022, Regular Meeting.

With no comments or corrections, *Trustee Arbuckle moved to approve the June 20, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Augustson. All in favor by acclamation.*

Item number six. 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 d. This included bills, checks and journal entries for July 2022.

Trustee Gast asked, in regard to agenda item seven b., who was authorized to use a Vermilion County Conservation District credit card.

Executive Director Pasquale responded that all full-time employees, with the exception of two or three, are authorized for use of the VCCD VISA. Each with the employee's name, and listed on the invoice from VISA separately.

Trustee Arbuckle questioned the credit limit.

Executive Director Pasquale stated the limit of \$1,000 - \$1,500 was set individually, and the VCCD total limit is \$30,000.

With no other comments or questions, *Trustee Gast moved to approve the Manual Checks dated July 2022 in the amount of \$396,856.22, which included check #'s 42180 – 42197 and 42216 – 42225; Voucher Checks dated August 16, 2022 in the amount of \$21,261.52, which included check #'s 42246 – 42264, the Budget Report and General Journal Entries through July 31, 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 Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Augustson	-	yes
President Staske	-	yes

The vote was 5-0 in favor, motion to accept the Treasurer's Report carried.

Agenda item number seven e. Report on Cash and Investments. Director of Administration and Personnel Fox reported that as of August 17, 2022, the NOW checking account balance is \$195,472; Illinois Funds Investment Pool balance is \$209,566; the Illinois Funds Money Market Fund balance is \$248,691. First Farmers Bank Money Market Passbook account balance is \$249,256; Central Illinois Bank Money Market passbook account balance is \$245,872. The Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) balance is \$8,470. First Saving Bank NOW account balance is \$248,773; the NOW account at Catlin Bank balance is \$249,569. The 3 mo. CD [Whittaker Funds] at Iroquois Federal at .05% interest balance remains \$57,478; the 3 mo. CD [Wagner Funds] at Iroquois Federal invested at .05% interest balance remains \$50,767; 3-month certificate of deposit at Longview Bank now at .15% interest remains at \$250,000. The 2-year CD, with 6-month option acquired at Illinois National Bank remains \$250,189.

The grand total of cash and investments for August 17, 2022: \$2,264,103. This compares to \$1,953,723. in August of 2021.

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

Item eight a. Election of VCCD Board of Trustees Officers for 2022-2023. The current slate of officers is: Doug Staske, President; Randy Johnson, First Vice President; Jessica Augustson, Second Vice President; Michael Gast, Secretary; Mike Arbuckle, Treasurer.

Trustee Johnson moved to approve the current Vermilion County Conservation District Slate of Officers in their respective offices for 2022-2023. This was followed by a second from Trustee Arbuckle.

President Staske asked for discussion and comments. There were none. He asked for a roll call vote. The results as follows:

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

The vote was 5 – 0 in favor. Motion carried to retain the current slate of officers for 2022-2023.

Agenda item eight b. Discussion/Presentation by Middlefork Audubon Society regarding proposed Kickapoo Mountain Bike Trail Expansion. President Staske asked for introduction of the group from Middlefork Audubon Chapter of the Audubon Society and their presentation.

Sue Tinkle, Middlefork Audubon Chapter Vice President, thanked the Trustees and VCCD Staff for allowing them to address the Board. She referenced documentation procured by the Middlefork Audubon Chapter regarding the Kickapoo Mountain Bike Club's proposal each Trustee had received, thanking Executive Director Pasquale for getting the information to the Trustees. *See attached documentation.*

Sue Tinkle reported that Kickapoo State Park has 20+ miles of Mountain Bike/Multi-use trails now. She explained the Club's goal was to procure at least 40 miles total of mountain bike trails so that they may host regional and national competitions. Therefore, bringing business and income to the Danville area restaurants and hotels. She stated that, along with Middlefork Audubon Chapter members, representatives are present today from The Prairie Rivers Network, and other concerned citizens to inform the VCCD Board of Trustees of the proposal and impact ecologically, biologically, geographically and recreationally on the proposed 450-acre site. This tract, previously owned by Dynegey Corp., was acquired by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources 15 years ago, but was not included on any Kickapoo State Park maps. Currently, access to the proposed trail #11 would only be through Kennekuk County Park, since this trail and others like it would be located on or near the border of Kickapoo State Park and Kennekuk County Park. She reported the proposed trail, and others like it may be located near Illinois' only National Scenic River. Sue wished to make it clear that Prairie Rivers Network, Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, and Middlefork Audubon Society they are not opposed to mountain biking, only to the proposed location in the beautiful intact forested ravine area.

President Staske asked for comments and questions from the Trustees. All were addressed by the representatives in the audience to the satisfaction of those present. They were informed that more documentation regarding research studies any surveys performed could be provided by Prairie Rivers Network and the Middlefork Audubon Chapter upon request. The representatives present were not aware of any Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) surveys of the proposed site.

On behalf of those organizations represented and other concerned citizens, Sue Tinkle asked the Vermilion County Conservation District to write a letter to Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director, Colleen Callahan, stating concerns stemming from the information that was presented today.

President Staske asked for any objection to the VCCD composing a letter to Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director stating concerns regarding what has been presented. This letter should reference the documentation and ask that these groups be given due wait from IDNR and the VCCD be apprised of the process going forward. The Board had no objection and concurred that a letter be composed and mailed.

President Staske thanked the representatives for their concise proposal of information and all work that has been completed regarding this issue.

Jim Knoblauch was recognized and requested a copy of the VCCD letter to IDNR be given to Middlefork Audubon Chapter when mailed.

The Board of Trustees agreed, requesting the VCCD be updated with any other documentation and information as well.

Agenda item eight c. Discussion of Lake Vermilion Expenses/Repairs. A copy of the five-page lease between Aqua Illinois, Inc. and the VCCD was provided to the Trustees with their packet. The lease period is January 1, 2008 and ending December 31, 2033. Executive Director Pasquale wanted to update the Board from last month regarding infrastructure improvements needed on Lake Vermilion, a property the VCCD does not own, before proceeding with any improvements.

The docks need replaced or repaired. The VCCD applied for an Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) match grant, but was not awarded any funding. The VCCD did not receive an official letter regarding the funding, but was not listed as one of the recipients.

President Staske suggested calling the agency to ask if the VCCD can reapply.

Executive Director Pasquale stated that because the VCCD does not own the lake, IDNR and other agencies are hesitant. The lease states that it may be terminated at any time due to failure in any part of the lease on the part of the VCCD.

Trustee Gast queried how Lake Vermilion really fit into the mission for conservation.

President Staske responded that the VCCD manages the only public access areas to the lake.

Executive Director Pasquale stated that since the VCCD is the only access area, it would be very unpopular with fishermen, boaters, and other aquatic recreation users.

Discussion ensued, no action was taken regarding Lake Vermilion.

Trustee Arbuckle asked if Executive Director Pasquale has had any conversations with Aqua Illinois, Inc.; he has not.

President Staske summed up agenda item eight c., stating the point is to spell out what the future liabilities are, reviewing the income from Lake Vermilion and identifying there may be some larger investments necessary for the property. By lease agreement, the VCCD is responsible for all maintenance and upkeep of everything there. It is a popular recreational area and needs to be retained; expenses for the area need to be kept in check.

Executive Director Pasquale added that Aqua Illinois, Inc. also gave the VCCD Heron County Park land, which is also a very popular area.

Agenda item eight d. Approve Lake Vermilion Dock purchase. Executive Director Pasquale reported that replacement of these docks would be a great way to silence complaints from the public. There is \$50,000 budgeted for new docks, projected with the prospect of a match grant of \$50,000 for a total of \$100,000. However, there was no grant awarded to the VCCD.

Associate Director of Administration and Personnel Fox reported that the next DCEO grant deadline of this type is September 23, 2022.

Discussion ensued regarding the docks at Lake Vermilion. No action was taken.

President Staske asked what Executive Director Pasquale's preference would be.

Executive Director Pasquale responded that the structure of the docks is fine. Staff could replace the decking, but they do not have time. Purchasing new docks that are one-piece and easy to assemble would allow staff to install them.

Discussion ensued, no action was taken regarding approval for new docks.

With no other comments or discussion, *Trustee Arbuckle moved to table agenda item eight d. Approve Lake Vermilion Dock purchase. This was followed by a second from Trustee Johnson.*

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

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

The vote was 5 – 0 in favor of tabling agenda item eight d. until more information could be obtained.

There was no executive session.

Agenda item nine. Report from the Executive Director. Executive Director Pasquale reported that roads at Kennekuk are prepared and ready to oil and chip. District Staff used the patching machine to fill holes. The road work at Forest Glen Preserve has been completed. From now on, all roadways will be scraped prior to resurfacing with oil and chip. There are approximately 14 miles in the District road system.

A traffic count report was distributed to the Trustees today. This included Kennekuk, Lake Vermilion and Forest Glen for a period of one year. Lake Vermilion was highlighted for incorrect counts during June 2021 through March 2022, due to improper placement of the device. It was remedied in April 2022. All data is significant for grant applications, as well as interesting for comparisons. Data can be broken down into days of the week, and other variations.

Fiber optic communication line through Starlink is complete and now running in the current internet system at Forest Glen. The end goal will be to obtain a wireless phone system that would improve service and to link Kennekuk and Forest Glen Preserve. He estimates the new service is 10 times faster than our previous provider. Four thousand feet of fiber optic line was installed by staff from the Forest Glen Ranger Station to the Gannett Outdoor Education Center. Our newest outdoor educator, Brenna Karcher's office will be moved from the Ranger Station to the Gannett Center once WIFI is available at the Gannett Outdoor Education Center.

Executive Director Pasquale and Kennekuk Superintendent, Gary Tyrl, met with Rita Brooks, donor of "Brooks Family Christmas" regarding planning for 2022. The lighting programmer believes he will have synchronization with music this year. Even if that does not happen, the display is still great. Executive Director Pasquale ordered a couple of new displays. Executive Director Pasquale referenced the traffic counter report, stating that traffic in December 2021 at Kennekuk increased by 2000 or more over November 2021!

Lara Danzl reported that 42 participants has signed up so far for the Kickapoo Rail Trail fundraiser, Rail to Ride. All routes begin and end at the Hideaway in Kennekuk, September 10th. Registration is online only through Eventbrite.

Staff Reports were included with the Trustee's packets.

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

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

Trustee Gast asked if the roads were closed during resurfacing.

Executive Director Pasquale stated that they were not, the road is drivable almost immediately after covering. Crushed pea gravel was used, instead of limestone, for longevity.

Trustee Johnson had no comment.

Trustee Arbuckle had no comment.

Trustee Augustson had no comment.

President Staske had no comment.

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 Arbuckle. The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Michael H. Gast
Secretary
VCCD Board of Trustees