

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

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

**Wednesday, October 18, 2023
4:30 p.m.
Gannett Outdoor Education Center
Forest Glen Preserve
Westville, IL 61883**

President Johnson called the October Meeting of the Vermilion County Conservation District Board of Trustees to order and called for the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Agenda item number three, Roll Call indicated the following:

Trustees Present: Michael P. Arbuckle
Jessica Augustson
Michael H. Gast
Randy A. Johnson
Cristin O'Shaughnessy

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: Lara Danzl and Mike Kotcher.

First order of business, agenda item number four, was the Adoption of, or Amendments to the Agenda. President Johnson asked for amendments to the agenda.

Trustee Arbuckle moved to approve the October 18, 2023 agenda as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee O'Shaughnessy. All in favor by acclamation, motion to approve the agenda carried.

Agenda item number five. Approval of the Minutes from the September 20, 2023, Regular Meeting.

Trustee Gast noted on page 4, Agenda item nine, second paragraph, the amount raised from the River To Rail Ride should be \$3,500; not \$35,000.

Trustee Augustson noted on page 2, agenda item eight a., first sentence, the surname of Tammy should be added. It is Battle. Also, page 3, second paragraph, "Page 12 isa balance sheet", should have a space between "is" and "a".

With no more corrections, *Trustee Gast moved to approve the September 20, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes as amended. This was followed by a second from Trustee Arbuckle. All in favor by acclamation, motion to approve the minutes carried.*

Item number six. Audience Comments. None.

Agenda item number seven, the Treasurer's Report. President Johnson asked if there were any questions on items seven a through c. This included bills, checks and budget report from September 2023.

Trustee Gast queried check #42895 on the Manual Check Report to National Auto Fleet Group in the amount of \$77,293.74.

Executive Director Pasquale responded it was for the two gasoline powered trucks. Next month the bill for the two electric models will be paid.

With no other comments or questions, *Trustee Arbuckle moved to approve the Manual Checks dated September 2023 in the amount of \$320,307.89, which included check #'s 42860 – 42882, and 42895 – 42909; Voucher Checks dated October 19, 2023 in the amount of \$7,153.15, which included check #'s 42935 – 42950; This was followed by a second from Trustee Augustson.*

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

Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Augustson	-	yes
Trustee O'Shaughnessy	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
President Johnson	-	yes

The vote was 5 – 0. Motion to approve Treasurer's Report carried.

Agenda item number seven d. Report on Cash and Investments. As of October 18, 2023, the NOW checking account balance is \$170,989. Illinois Funds Investment Pool balance is \$250,708. The Illinois Funds Money Market Fund balance is \$248,553. First Farmers Bank Money Market Passbook account balance is \$246,590. The Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) balance is \$5,794. First Saving Bank NOW account balance is \$247,031. The NOW account at Fisher National Bank balance is \$246,838. The 3 mo. CD [Whittaker Funds] at Iroquois Federal at 3.0% interest balance remains at \$20,735; and renewed 3 mo. CD at Iroquois Federal at 4.75% interest is \$228,378. The 13-mo. CD at Illinois National at 4.02% interest remains at \$150,000; 2-year CD, with 6-month option acquired at Illinois National Bank remains at \$100,000. Longview Bank renewed 3-mo. CD at 4.50% has a balance of \$250,000.

The grand total of cash and investments for October 18, 2023: \$2,165,616. This compares to \$2,245,208 in October of 2022.

There were no questions or comments.

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

Item eight a. Discuss/approve Ordinance #165 Tax Levy for 2023 taxes payable in 2024. Executive Director Pasquale put the tax levy into a simpler format, indicated on a separate page, showing the previous year and current year levy information as a comparison. *Note: maximum rate increase for corporate fund is \$135,284; maximum rate increase in total levy without the truth in taxation hearing is \$62,500.*

He is asking for a \$50,000 increase, or 5.3% increase in corporate levy; a \$50,000 or 4% increase in the total amount levied. This is a \$1M for the corporate fund. Last year the corporate fund was not raised; the IMRF Fund was raised by about \$3,000. Basically, the amount would cover salary increases for each employee.

The Personal Property Replacement Tax (CPPRT) is expected to fluctuate, it is so hard to predict.

With no comments or questions, *Trustee Augustson moved to approve Ordinance No. 165, Annual Tax Levy of the Vermilion County Conservation District, for the 2023 Taxes due in 2024. This was followed by a second from Trustee O'Shaughnessy.*

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

Trustee Augustson	-	yes
Trustee O'Shaughnessy	-	yes
Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
President Johnson	-	yes

The vote was 5-0 in favor, motion to approve Ordinance No. 165 carried.

Item eight b. Approve Ordinance #166 Tax Abatement for 2017 bond, for 2023 taxes payable in 2024. 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. An ordinance has to be approved and filed each year.

With no other comments, *Trustee Arbuckle moved to approve Ordinance No. 166, abating the tax hereto levied for the year 2023 to pay the principal of interest on General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2017, of the Vermilion County Conservation District, Vermilion County Illinois. This was followed by a second from Trustee Gast.*

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

Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee Gast	-	yes
Trustee O'Shaughnessy	-	yes
Trustee Augustson	-	yes
President Johnson	-	yes

The vote was 5-0 in favor, motion to approve Ordinance No. 166 carried.

Item 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 stated that Executive Session Minutes are to be reviewed every six months. The Trustees had been given the minutes from the dates listed for review. Executive Director Pasquale recommended the Board continue hold each session listed.

With no other comments or questions, *Trustee Gast moved to hold the Executive Session Minutes from April 18, 2018; May 8, 2018; May 23, 2018; December 5, 2018; May 15, 2019; July 17, 2019, as presented. This was followed by a second from Trustee Arbuckle.*

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

Trustee Gast	-	yes
Trustee Arbuckle	-	yes
Trustee O'Shaughnessy	-	yes
Trustee Augustson	-	yes
President Johnson	-	yes

The vote was 5-0 in favor, motion to approve the hold of these executive session minutes.

There was no executive session.

Agenda item nine. Report from the Executive Director. Executive Director Pasquale welcomed Trustee Cristin O'Shaughnessy to the Board. She was appointed in July. He offered to give her a tour of the parks if she would like to do so.

Trustee O'Shaughnessy thanked Executive Director Pasquale.

He reported the District had received 2 gasoline powered pickups ordered approximately 14 months ago; 2 electric powered F150 Lightning models, ordered approximately 15 months ago; waiting on the third Lightning model, still on order which has been assigned a VIN number. The Lightnings are the basic model, which has a crew cab with 4 doors and a 5½ - 6-foot bed. This is not ideal for use as a "work truck", but will mostly be used for patrol inside the parks.

Discussion ensued regarding vehicle battery life and chargers. No action taken.

He met with a representative from Tick Tock Energy to discuss the Kennekuk solar options which will be funded by the Dynegy Coal Ash Settlement award. They are anticipating the units may be installed this winter at the Administration and Education buildings.

Solar panels for other park locations: Gannett Education Center, Office, and Maintenance buildings in Forest Glen, are in the planning stages. He met with a representative from a company recommended by Directors on the Vermilion County Conservation Foundation (VCCF) Board, regarding quotes for these locations, plus the Kennekuk Maintenance building. He plans to ask the VCCF to front the cost. If they agree, any carbon credits or tax incentives reimbursed will be allocated back to the VCCF.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the tax credit, and other incentives. No action taken.

The mayor of Oakwood is working to gain permission to construct a pavilion near the Kickapoo Rail Trail (KRT). The "Friends of the KRT" is working with the Village regarding where it should be located. It is important that there is continuity along the trail. Depending on the outcome, there should be an intergovernmental agreement drawn up reflecting responsibilities. He stated that the Village of Oakwood has been great to work with and appreciates their support of the KRT.

Executive Director Pasquale stated that funding to finish the section from Oakwood to Ogden; Ogden to St. Joseph is still progressing. The VCCD is working with the State of Illinois regarding these funds expected to be \$11M - \$12M to complete. As prices continue to rise, he is certain it will be more. Champaign County Forest Preserve District (CCFPD) is taking the lead handling funds. It is generous of them to share their staff with us for the project. They have a staff of 50+ people.

Lara Danzl reported that the City of Danville plans to hire a firm to research the best way to extend the trail from the Vermilion County Fairgrounds to Ellsworth Park, and perhaps beyond.

In conclusion, Executive Director Pasquale congratulated Amy Steeples, who will be retiring from the VCCD; her last day will be Monday, November 6th, 2023. She started at Forest Glen Preserve in January of 1997.

The Board congratulated Amy.

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

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

Trustee Gast asked if there was any cost to attend "Thanksgiving at the Cabin". Amy responded there was no charge to watch the demonstrations of cooking over fire with ironware. There will be samples of

food prepared and free recipes. The event will be November 5, 1 – 4 p.m. at the Pioneer Homestead, Forest Glen Preserve. Trustees were provided with a flyer.

Lara Danzl added that “KRT at Sleepy Creek” will be Wednesday, November 9. There are several great auction items and raffle prizes. Tickets are available online. Trustees were provided with a flyer.

President Johnson stated that the park looks beautiful. He “tips his hat” every time he drives in to the parks.

Trustee Arbuckle had no comment.

Trustee Augustson had no comment.

Trustee O’Shaughnessy had no comment.

This concluded President & Trustee Comments.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, November 15, 2023, 4:30 p.m. at the Education Center, Kennekuk.

With no further discussion and all business transacted, *Trustee Arbuckle moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:09 p.m. This was followed by a second from Trustee O’Shaughnessy. All in favor by acclamation, meeting adjourned.*

Michael H. Gast
Secretary
VCCD Board of Trustees