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**LANCASTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 7, 2020**

The 822nd regularly scheduled Board Meeting of the Lancaster County Conservation District (LCCD) was held in-person on Wednesday, October 7, 2020, at 7:30 PM at the Farm & Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, PA and also by a Zoom Call-In.

The following Directors were present: Daniel Heller, Chairman; Herb Kreider, Kent Weaver, Treasurer; Jay Snyder, and Ken Meck all attended in person, with Sonia Wasco and Commissioner Lehman attending via Zoom.

The following Associate Directors were present: None present.

The following District Staff were present: Christopher Thompson, District Manager; Gerald Heistand, Business Manager; Jeff Hill, Ag Department Manager; Rich Snyder, E&S Department Manager, Kent Bitting, Justin Furnia, Sallie Gregory, Greg Heigel, Kevin Lutz, Eric Hout and Suzanne Kopp.

The following Cooperating Agency representatives were present: Heather Grove, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Elwood Blake, Department of Environmental Protection.

The following guests were present: None

Chairman Dan Heller called the meeting to order at 7:30p.m. Chairman Heller extended a big thank you to everyone at the District for doing their best during the pandemic to continue to get the work accomplished daily. Ken Meck provided the invocation for the meeting.

There were no additions to the agenda other than additional correspondence.

An opportunity was given for public comment:

Chris Thompson announced that one of our Associate Director's, Greg Strausser's wife is battling cancer and Greg has asked that we keep him and his wife in our prayers during this time.

Condolences were offered to Ken Meck for the passing of his oldest brother.

II. Agency Reports

1. USDA, NRCS

Heather Grove stated that they finished up the 2020 Federal fiscal year. The report shows that there was a great deal of activity this year, as well as, a significant amount of EQUIP work being accomplished.

2. PA DEP Field Rep Report

Elwood Blake reported the first couple of articles in the Talking Points are the same as last months.

The SCC has circulated two new Draft Policies for public review:

1. Conservation District Drone Utilization Policy – The Commission staff has drafted a policy regarding when drones may be used and for what purpose. This draft policy has been

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reviewed with the Conservation District Advisory Committee (CDAC) and has been forwarded to Conservation Districts and other interested parties for a 45-day comment period.

2. Draft Policy appointing former Conservation District Employees as Conservation District Directors – The Commission staff has drafted a policy stating that former conservation district employees are “ineligible” to be appointed as a District Director for three (3) years after the end of their employment with that District. This does not carry over from District to District (you can be retired from one District and then be appointed as a District Director in a different District). This draft policy has been reviewed by the CDAC and has been forwarded to Conservation Districts and other interested parties for a 45-day comment period.

The Ag Plan Reimbursement Program has been continued for the fourth year. There is \$870,000 available to cost-share privately developed Ag, E&S, Conservation, Nutrient Management and Manure Management Plans. There is \$6,000 available per farm.

Retirements announced in Conservation Districts are: Mark Kimmel, Manager at York County is retiring in early Spring of 2021 and Dan Dunmore at Mifflin County is retiring at the end of October 2020.

Chris Thompson stated that Board review and approval is requested for the Draft Policies that Elwood Blake discussed.

Chris Thompson stated that there is a training specific for Directors called Building for Tomorrow Fall Leadership Webinar Series scheduled for October 14, 2020 through November 17, 2020. Registration is now open and Chris is really encouraging all Directors to attend for training. Chris will be sending out the link to all Directors and Associate Directors to register.

III. Consent Agenda

Chairman Daniel Heller gave the opportunity for Directors to withdraw any of the items from the Consent Agenda in order to have additional discussion. Hearing none, Herb Kreider moved to approve the Consent Agenda which included items numbered one through four. Ken Meck seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The Consent Agenda included the following approved items.

The Consent Agenda includes the following approved items.

- #1 – Minutes of September 2, 2020 Board meeting**
- #2 – Technical Assistance Requests/Cancellations**
- #3 – Nutrient Management Plan Approvals**
- #4 – Conservation Plan Acknowledgement**

IV. Additional Business

1. Items removed from Consent Agenda

There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda.

2. Treasurer’s Report

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Gerald Heistand reported that the General Operations fund has \$379,119 for this month. Last month it was stated at a little over \$400,000. The target amount to operate the District each month for the General Operations fund is \$200,000 – and we have exceeded that amount.

A nutrient management reimbursement is expected in October 2020 in the amount of \$136,000. Gerald stated that things are on target financially for the District for the remainder of 2020.

Gerald stated where we are in 2020 in comparison to one year ago in 2019. We are currently at \$3,978,619 in assets and in 2019 our assets were \$1,000,000 less than that figure.

The Self-Funded Health Insurance is at \$65,000 more than last year.

The Conservation Excellence Grant is a new grant and the \$625,359 is money that we did not have in the 2019 budget.

The Exelon Grant is at \$141,000 more than we had in the 2019 budget.

The Grants held in the general checking account - in 2019 was in the red at -\$14,000 and this year it is showing \$163,033 which is \$177,000 more in 2020.

Gerald highlighted a few numbers on the Income and Expense report:

- A. Grants Other Income shows income of \$6,890 – this is the amount that other programs in the District paid to the Dirt and Gravel Road to use the truck that was purchased for Dirt and Gravel Road.
- B. Scholarship Other Income shows income of \$278 which were cash donations and Activity Income shows income of \$1,392 which is the amount that was collected from the auction.
- C. The Net Income column shows \$1,122,488 which is the amount we brought in this year over a million dollars more than we spent on grants.

Sonia Wasco questioned if Gerald could speak on the impact that Covid-19 is having on the budget. i.e. savings on travel, trainings, office expenses. Gerald stated, that because the office did not close and work continued to get done, there is not a big difference in expenditures or income due to Covid-19.

Gerald stated that the audit reports were given to the Directors to view.

3. Personnel Committee Report

Sonia Wasco stated that the personnel committee met on September 10, 2020 and the following items were discussed:

- A. Total of 38 District Staff members – a reclassification of staff may be required in 2021 as we consider a new Telework policy.
- B. Anticipated program changes in 2020-21:
 - a. 2 staff members are over retirement age of 65 in 2021.
 - b. Extending the COOP work schedule through October 2020.
 - c. SWAT program – discussed proposed changes to increase design capacity of District programs.
 - d. Grants Manager – funding is being pursued for the new position.
 - e. HR Manager – 3 different HR companies that offer HR managing to individual companies were interviewed. All members of the committee preferred the offerings from the company Paragon Consulting. Paragon Consulting has a monthly fee of \$2,500 (\$30,000 yearly), they are based in Reading, PA and they are familiar with working with non-profit and government agencies. The services that Paragon can offer seem to fit the needs of the LCCD. The Personnel Committee's request is to ask that Paragon be considered as the new HR Company. Chris Thompson stated that he would like to engage Paragon as of November 1, 2020.
- C. Holiday Schedule – A list of twelve paid holidays for the 2021 year was approved.

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- D. Benefits packages were reviewed and the contributions by the employees are set for 2021:
 - a. The Personnel Committee approved giving each staff member that contributes to the HSA a payout of \$500, as well as, a half day mental health day off plus a gift card to a local restaurant. Non-participation insurance employees will be paid up to \$4,500 for not using the company's insurance plan compared to prior years being paid \$1,500.
- E. Salaries were reviewed and entry level salaries will be \$36,000 to \$44,000 plus a \$2,400 sign on bonus. Also, COLA increases and performance raises were discussed to aid in the 2021 budget.

Sonia Wasco moved to approve the Personnel Committee report in full, Herb Kreider seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

4. CEG Report Conservation Excellence Grant

Jeff Hill reported that the CEG Application being presented to the Board for approval is for a grassed waterway for Clark Stauffer – the existing waterway is no longer functioning and needs to be rebuilt. The amount being requested is \$7686.19. If the Board approves this application, tomorrow Clark Stauffer will sign the paper work and the work to rebuild will start October 8, 2020 if the Board approves this application.

Jay Snyder moved to approve the first CEG application, Kent Weaver seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Chris Thompson stated that history was made tonight and that this is the first approved CEG Grant in the County and in the State.

5. ACT Report

Gerald Heistand stated that the SCC allocated funds to partially support salary/benefits for the following programs: \$22,350 for the District Manager position, \$16,225 for the 1st E&S Technician position, \$16,225 for the ACT Technician position and \$12,076 for a position at the discretion of the District.

Earlier this year, when the staff person in the Grants Coordinator/Ag Technician position terminated employment, administration assigned the remaining funds to support the Professional Engineer position. It is being recommended that the funds continue to support the Professional Engineer and the Business Manager position.

Ken Meck moved to approve the ACT Report, Herb Kreider seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

6. State Conservation Commission Policy

Chris Thompson reviewed the New Business informational items. The State Conservation Commission has a drone policy to follow if the District will be using a drone. The policy aligns with the one LCCD has developed for our own use. Nate Straw and Derrick Fiddler are taking the needed courses to operate the drones for the District. Also reviewed was the draft policy that former Conservation District employee can not be appointed to that same District, in which they were employed, as a Director for a period of three years. Chris is asking that the Board of Directors review these policies and if there is anything that needs flagged please make him aware before the November 5, 2020 deadline so it can be filed with the SCC.

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7. Strategic Plan

Chris Thompson passed out copies of the 2020 - 2025 Strategic Plan to all the Directors at the meeting. Chris pointed out that the Ag Department is going to hold a meeting and is asking for Directors to attend that meeting as well as the Ag Team.

The Strategic Plan is a working document and we need to keep moving forward to make sure we review it monthly and make the changes that are stated in the document.

Chris thanked everyone involved in the Strategic Plan and Dan Heller extended his thanks for the hard work that went into designing the document and to the SCC for offsetting some of the cost associated with developing it..

V. Reports/Information

1. Correspondence, News and Updates

The following correspondence, news and update items were circulated at Board meeting:

- Invitations – Lancaster Farmland Trust Benefit Events– October 21, 2020
- Invitations – NRCS – State Technical Committee Meeting – October 22, 2020
- Letters of Understanding on Collaborative Efforts between EPA and the PA Dept. of Ag. – September 2020
- Booklet – Lancaster Farmland Trust – Annual Report 2019
- Letter – Legislative Update – PACD 2020 Fall Region Report
- COVID Effects on Ag Report – Lancaster County Ag Counsel – October 7, 2020
- Announcement of the Act 319 Grant – EPA – October 7, 2020
- Donation request from the State Environthon – The State Environthon is requesting that LCCD will support them as we have other years. They want to extend their scholarships next year and double the amount that they award next year by combining the donations from 2020 and including the 2021 donations. Chris is requesting the Board approve to donate \$300 to the State Envirothon in 2021. Ken Meck moved to approve donating \$300 to the State Envirothon in 2021, Kent Weaver seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2. E&S/NPDES Monthly Projects Report

Rich Snyder reported that in September 2020 we have received 12 more complaints and all had significant issues with each complaint. 35 complaints were received in the office in seven weeks. Twenty-four complaints in total in the third quarter were received. The plans we received in September were on the smaller side – which allowed the techs to catch up on their work loads as well as investigating the incoming complaints.

- Rich Snyder reported on the E&S Committee meeting. The E&S Committee met on Thursday, September 1, 2020. There has been no recent correspondence from DEP on the 102 e-permitting. At this point e-permit is being delayed possibly due to short staffing at DEP.
- Schatz Garage vs. Melhorn Drive Basin appeal/litigation update – the E&S Department invested 50 hours into getting the files duplicated and up to DEP by the due date of September 21, 2020.
- Stauffer CAP Enforcement – the LCCD continues to receive updates relative to current earth disturbance activities and stabilization shall be completed by October 2020.
- Rich referenced a phone call that Chris Thompson and Berks County Conservation District Manager had with DEP. There is a conflict of interest with the 105 Program if a District is approving plans for their own District work. If we did any approvals for County or City projects also would create a conflict of interest. This program is a tremendous amount of work for our E&S Staff. DEP is going to determine that there is a conflict of interest and not

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allowing us to approve our own projects – Chris has told DEP that there is no benefit for us to keep the 105 Program. Depending what DEP decides about us approving our own 105 Permits for plans from our own Ag Staff – he will then decide if we will need to come to the Board for approval to give the 105 Program back to DEP to handle.

E&S Team work group is being formed and will consist of five members. This work group is being formed to update the E&S Fee schedule and the E&S Application to make it more user friendly. It will be brought to the Board in December 2020 for approval. Implementation of the new forms is targeted for January 2021.

Dan Heller questioned Rich Snyder for his opinion of why the E&S Department is having so many more significant complaints coming in – Rich stated that he feels it is due to the pandemic and everyone staying at home and taking more time to be out in the community and seeing issues and problems that were not being seen before due to people's hectic lifestyle before the pandemic shutdown.

3. Executive Committee Report

Chris Thompson stated that a solicitor had been engaged to defend the District against the fraudulent claim that we caused damage to Ronald Gantz's property but no further update from the August 26, 2020 complaint from Ronald Gantz. Mr. Gantz missed the chance to adequately file a response request to the complaint which would have mandated a response from us within ten days. An update will be shared with Directors as it occurs.

4. Spotted Lanternfly Report

Chris Thompson reported that Amanda Goldsmith had co-hosted an event at the Columbia Crossings – several hundred people attended and the event received good media attention. Amanda taught how to attach the SLF traps and kill the bugs and safely remove any animals from the traps. The State does not believe they will have the funding to continue supporting the SLF Department for next year. Amanda is being moved into the Ag Department as an Ag Technician.

Sallie Gregory asked that everyone go onto the LCCD Website and look at the SLF videos and reports on the website. Sallie praised Amanda's outstanding work in re-organizing the SLF portal of the website.

Dan Heller asked that Amanda Goldsmith be told how pleased the entire Board of Directors is with her good work with the Spotted Lanternfly program.

5. Ag Week Update

Chris Thompson stated that it is Ag Week this week and there are several events happening this week. It is a virtual program this year and sessions will be recorded if you want to watch them later at your leisure. The links for more detail is in your packet of information.

6. Education Program Update

Chris Thompson stated that 2021 marks the 25th anniversary of the LCCD Education Program. Sallie Gregory is doing things differently this year due to the pandemic and she is reaching out virtually to still instruct in the classrooms. Sallie has been in charge of the Education Program for 20 of the 25 years.

Chris also reported on a recent recognition Sallie Gregory had received. The Youth Manure Management Curriculum was published by Jenn Fetter, Deb Seibert and Sallie Gregory, District

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Education Coordinator, and it was recognized with the 2020 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence. The banquet that is usually held for these award winners can not be held this year due to Covid-19.

Sallie Gregory reported on being awarded a special invitation grant for a \$40,000 Grant from Arconic that she had applied for. \$20,000 from the grant will support Sallie's Salary and the work she is doing the next year. \$20,000 will be going to the Cargas communications data base program that is being worked on currently to create an updated data base that all departments can use and expand who we can connect with and how we can connect with them.

7. PACD Directors Report

Sonia Wasco was unable to attend the meeting so she turned it over to Chris Thompson. Chris is a alternate voting delegate for Sonia when she cannot attend. The meeting was held on September 29, 2020.

Covid-19 continues to be an impact to all Districts. Some Districts are adopting a totally different work schedule and some Districts are putting a COOP into place. All Districts are operating again; however, they are working differently and many are working remotely.

Chris directed Board members to the agency reports that were presented from DEP, SCC, NRCS and DCNR so that they can be read in detail by the Directors.

Sonia Wasco stated that everyone should have received an emailed template from PACD that would allow you to send a press release as a Director to bring awareness to our Conservation Districts and what they do. She is asking that all Directors please consider doing that.

Additional Public Comment:

Chris Thompson would like to thank Dan Heller for attending the Commissioner's Budget Meeting and also thanked Commissioner Lehman for all of his support and kind words of the District.

Meeting Adjournment

Chairman Dan Heller officially adjourned the meeting at 9:07pm.

Suzanne Kopp
Recording Secretary