

MONROE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
April 16, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Armstrong, Sharon Laverdure, Chuck Gould, Roger McFadden, Pat Ross, Dave Moyer, and Randy Rice

DISTRICT STAFF: Kristina Heaney, Barbara Bistras, Emily Paul, Roger Spotts, Amber Funk, Annie Polkowski, Drew Wagner, Mike Wilk, Alesia Gallo, John Motz, Steven Baade, and Lori Kerrigan

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS: John Lyman, Brendon J.E. Carroll, Edith Stevens, Craig Todd, and Amalia O'Brien

COOPERATING AGENCIES: Ryan Hill, Monroe County Planning Commission, Jennifer Matthews, NRCS, Shane Kleiner, DEP

PUBLIC: Leslie Berger, KCEF

Pat Ross called the meeting to order at 8:00 am:

Board Members Present:

Dave Moyer
Roger McFadden
Bob Armstrong
Chuck Gould
Pat Ross
Sharon Laverdure
Randy Rice

Public comment: None

Board Meeting Minutes:

Pat asked for approval of the February 20, 2020 Board Meeting minutes. Chuck Gould made the motion to accept the minutes, Bob Armstrong seconded the motion, motion carried.

Technical Report: Lori Kerrigan reviewed the technical report for the months of March and April. We've been continuing to operate. All the technical staff has been working from home. It's been a complete reorganization and quick move to E-permitting. We are still doing reviews. We are still accepting new applications, and those are all being done via e-mail, Dropbox, and FTP sites. We are still receiving hard copy checks, but Barbara and Kristina have been looking into accepting credit card payments over the phone. We have still been getting plenty of phone calls. For February we had 110 calls, and in March, we had 92 calls. General correspondence was over 400 for the combination of the two months. We are still responding to the public. We are responding to complaints when they are health and safety hazards. We practice safe distancing. We have been working with DEP, they have been excellent at supporting us; having weekly meetings, conference calls, and updating us on the ever changing situation. We've been trying to keep business as normal as much as possible. Bob Armstrong asked how the E-permitting is going. Drew answered that it is not the actual E-permitting process yet. We are accepting applications electronically, but E-permitting is not up and running yet. This is our own version of it to continue work and keep things moving. Lori explained that we are accepting PDF plans via e-mail, and FTP sites. Chapter 105 E-permitting is operational and up and running. That has been up and running for quite some time, but it had a number of glitches with the program. Pat asked how many plans do we have under review now. As of March, we had over 30 plans under review. Those are a combination of general permits in for 105, E&S plans, a couple of timber harvests, and the others are all NPDES related. We have been doing preconstruction as well as preapplication meetings via Zoom, so they are ready to go when this is all over with. Most of the engineering firms are working from home as well, so the consultants are pushing things ahead.

PACD Non-Point Source Mini Grant: Annie Polkowski reported that we recently put together an application for this grant. We proposed to do a riparian buffer workshop with the public. The workshop would have an educational component to it on how to install and maintain a riparian buffer and native/invasive plants. It would focus on the importance of why we need to protect buffers, but then it would also have a hands-on component. We would be demonstrating a tree planting, and a live stake installation. We are partnering with Penn State extension as well as US Fish and Wildlife Services on this. We are going to be using the US Fish and Wildlife Services as the Cherry Valley Golf Course for the demonstration site. We will be partnering with Penn State Extension Master Watershed Stewards to assist with the workshop as well as helping to prepare some educational materials. We also did include a portion of the grant for signage to be installed at the site that we do the demonstration. We were awarded \$1920 for that grant.

EE Report: Roger Spotts reviewed the Environmental Education report for the month of April. With the shutdown, all of our programs have been cancelled for schools, public, or

anything else we had weekend program wise. We were able to finish almost all of maple sugaring programs, but we had to cancel Scout day, and two schools missed out on programs at the sugar bush. We did have the opportunity to finish the season up there and produce the maple syrup, so in that regard, we are in good shape. The cleanup up there is pretty well done. We haven't done any programs that are on the schedule, and since schools are cancelled, all our spring programs for schools have been lost, which is our busiest time of the year. Along that line, the staff has started to produce videos. We've put some on Facebook for the general public, and now we have gone to specific school programs that we typically do in the schools in the spring. We use lectures, Powerpoints, and hands-on activities for the students to do. We've shipped them out to all the school districts and have gotten an extremely good response from teachers and administrators. They're looking for things for kids to look at and do online, so we're trying to provide them with as much as we can. In the next few weeks, we are going to do a virtual field trip to the bog, and also one or two here at Kettle Creek when we get more staff back in the building to do that. All the educational staff has been working from home except for Roger S. They've helped to produce videos, keep up with the blog, and Alesia is maintaining the website. We feel it is working pretty good right now and we are going to continue to do that, and it also maintains our contact with the school districts which is pretty important.

We were in the process of trying to hire the office position. We advertised, got resumes in again and conducted three interviews over the phone in late March, and narrowed it down to two candidates. Roger has been in touch with them, and they are interested in the position, but right now we are in a holding pattern. We are hoping to call those two back in for a face to face interview when it's convenient. Since the office isn't open right now, there's no big hole to fill at this point in time, but as it opens up, we will be interviewing and having a candidate for the Board to approve hopefully by the May meeting. Bob asked if they are in house or outside candidates. Roger S. answered that they are outside candidates.

Each year the Conservation District recognizes an outstanding conservation teacher of the year. We received applications in February. The staff reviewed them, and we would like to recommend James Feuerstein at Pocono Mountain West School District. He works with science programs and has been the Envirothon coach for over a decade. A motion was made by Chuck Gould and seconded by Sharon Laverdure to approve James Feuerstein for Teacher of the Year, motion carried.

The summer work crew dates are June 16th through August 14th. We have one supervisor and two crew members. Kenneth Dougher and Kieran Dougher have asked if they can come back again this year, they did an excellent job last year. We have one new position that was advertised through the County system, we had several people apply. Roger S. recommends Genni Martinelli for this position, she has been involved with Conservation

camp for four years on staff and is aware of what the job entails. A motion was made by Sharon Laverdure and seconded by Bob Armstrong to approve the recommendation of hiring Kenneth Dougher as supervisor and Kieran Dougher and Genni Martinelli as crew members, motion carried.

The Conservation along with the Becker family awards a scholarship to a senior every year who is going on to college in some environmental field. We had to play with the deadline dates on this because of schools being out and kids not having access to the guidance counselor system, but we extended the deadline to April 17th. We have several applications in hand and are waiting for a few more. Typically, these applications are looked over by the staff and the Becker family, and then we select a scholarship winner and ask for Board approval. Roger S. asked for guidance from the Board if they wanted to wait for the person to be selected by the staff before approval, or if the Board would approve them without knowing them today. Pat said that they approve the recommendation from Roger without knowing or interviewing them, so he believes that it would be fine to approve without a selection. A motion was made by Chuck Gould and seconded by Sharon Laverdure to approve the staff's recommendation for the candidate for the Becker scholarship, motion carried.

District Managers Report: Kristina reviewed the District Manager report for the month of April. We've been focused on putting together a continuity of operations plan, basically, that is just to keep operations functioning as is. We are still processing permits, we are still doing inspections, most importantly for human health and safety issues. We are answering the phones. We are helping the community, and doing educational programming. The staff has been absolutely incredible at adapting to the change here. We appreciate the Board support that we have received.

The copier contract for 2020 was negotiated by Barbara Bistras and only marginally increased. A motion was made by Chuck Gould and seconded by Roger McFadden to approve the copier contract for 2020 as presented, motion carried.

John Motz has been trying to get a quote together for the purchase of a laser level for the Dirt and Gravel Road program. We are asking for \$900 from the Dirt and Gravel Road program funds which is a little higher than the cost of the level to cover any shipping or any additional costs associated with the purchase of the level. A motion was made by Sharon Laverdure and seconded by Chuck Gould to approve the purchase of the laser level as presented, motion carried.

Financial Report:

Financial Statement/Balance Sheet: A motion was made by Chuck Gould and seconded by Roger McFadden to approve the Financial Statement/Balance Sheet as of February 29, 2020 as presented, motion carried.

Invoice Lists: A motion was made by Roger McFadden and seconded by Chuck Gould to approve the invoice lists for February 2020 and March 2020 as presented, motion carried.

Financial Statement/Balance Sheet: A motion was made by Roger McFadden and seconded by Bob Armstrong to approve the Financial Statement/Balance Sheet as of March 31, 2020 as presented, motion carried.

Cooperating Agency Reports:

DEP: Shane Kleiner discussed that one of the big things they have been working on is the contingency plans for the districts during the shutdown. Grant processing is still going on, he is processing them as he works from home. They are having weekly meetings with all the districts. They are on top of all the grants and permits that are coming in as they are working from home. They are meeting all their obligations and it has been very fluent with processing permits. They are also working on emergency responses, these are ones that they are going out to see and approve by the regional director. They are counting on the districts to give them a heads up on these. They are encouraging the districts especially those with new employees to use the Clean Water Academy and take the opportunity to do some of the trainings that are offered. There is a new financial sheet that has been sent to the districts in order to categorize expenses for employees.

NRCS: Jennifer Matthews reported that NRCS is open for business. They are on a rotating schedule in the office, and are receiving phone calls and emails. They will make field visits when necessary and practice social distancing. Currently, they are working on learning their new planning and ranking systems. They hope to be writing contracts in July through September.

MCPC: Ryan Hill reported that they are still planning on moving forward with 2020 Water Quality Study which will cover 40 sites, weather permitting.

Public Comment: None

Sharon Laverdure asked about personal protective equipment for the district especially for when inspections are necessary. Kristina answered that most of the PPE and cleaning products the district has ordered. Barbara brought in some gloves and Kristina brought in some masks. Kristina reached out to the county, and there is potential that products will be sent out to the offices. Right now, staff is limited. The only ones that are coming into the office are Lori, Kristina, Roger S. and more often than not, Barbara. We are keeping our distance.

Kristina reported that Amber Funk, the Agricultural Technician, is still employed with the district. She is waiting to move to her next employer, however until then, she has decided to stay on and help with the transition.

Bob Armstrong asked about a ramp update. Drew Wagner reported that the next step is to meet with the township and see what requirements they are going to have as far as building and zoning permits go. Pat Ross would like to be present when they do meet.

Discussion was had on construction businesses and how all of this will play out financially once the shutdown is over.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Paul
Office Assistant, Senior

**THE NEXT MCCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY,
May 21, 2020 AT 8:00 AM AT THE MONROE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
OFFICES STROUDSBURG, PA.**