



**MONROE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
July 16, 2020**

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

**DISTRICT STAFF:** Kristina Heaney, Emily Paul, Roger Spotts, John Motz, and Lori Kerrigan

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS:** Amalia O'Brien, Brian Winot, Edie Stevens, and Craig Todd

**COOPERATING AGENCIES:** Ryan Hill, Monroe County Planning Commission; Carl Deluca, DEP; Shane Kleiner, DEP; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD

**PUBLIC:** Drake Stinson

**Pat Ross called the meeting to order at 8:01 am:**

**Board Members Present:**

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

**Public comment:** None

**Board Meeting Minutes:**

Pat asked for approval of the June 18, 2020 Board Meeting minutes. Sharon Laverdure made the motion to accept the minutes, Roger McFadden seconded the motion, motion carried.

**Technical Report:** Lori Kerrigan reviewed the technical report for the months of June and July. We fielded 100 phone calls, 317 in correspondence, and had two individual permits in Eldred and Barrett. We didn't acknowledge any GP's for the 105 program. The

e-permitting has been delayed. It will probably be rolled out in September for General Permits and the end of the year for Individual Permits. They are still working out some issues with the program. Both of our engineers have been involved with the test run. We received two grants that Annie, our Watershed Specialist and Josie, Environmental Educator worked on. The "Growing Greener Mountainhome rain barrel workshop" grant and "Shaping Watersheds Augmented Reality Sandbox" grant, respectively, to be utilized for education and outreach. There was a third grant for a pocket-sized E&S BMP manual for contractors, but that was not granted. Pat Ross discussed complaint calls and having the complainant send a picture of what they are talking about, so that an inspector might not have to go out to the site if it is not a Conservation District matter. Lori explained that we are still obligated in our delegation agreement to inspect the complaint but that oftentimes photos and video are provided. She explained that complaints are often referred to other agencies or municipalities as appropriate, however, there may be a crossover in jurisdiction.

**EE Report:** Roger Spotts reviewed the Environmental Education report for the months of June and July. We have been doing outdoor programs in July for kids on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and those programs have been well received. We've also done some public walks on Wednesdays here at Kettle Creek as well as some public Saturday programs. All of which have been outdoor programs. We follow all guidelines including wearing masks and taking temperatures ahead of time. We are getting a very positive response from those programs. We have had to cancel some programs including the bog which the Nature Conservancy owns. The latest information is that it will probably be closed for the rest of the year. We are going by their timeline. This is for all of their sites nationwide. We cancelled the Elk trip which was scheduled for September. The reason for the cancellation was due to the deposit being 60 days out for the cabins. With the seating in the bus, it would be difficult to social distance. The Chincoteague trip is still scheduled for the end of October. The cancellation dates are much closer to the trip dates, so the deposit is easier to get back if there is a need to cancel. We still have people interested and are still planning on the trip. Roger S. has been in touch with the school districts to let them know that we can be flexible with whatever parameters they have set for the school year. One possibility is to shift all school field trips that are scheduled in the fall to the spring instead. This would make a very hectic schedule in the spring, but at least the kids would not miss their field trips. Pat Ross asked if the schools go to e-learning would we have programs to share with the school districts. Roger S. answered that they have Zoom programs every Friday morning at 10am, and are using that as a trial run for the school year. If they are in a classroom, the teacher could just set it up for the kids; if they are at home, we are hoping that we can use it to reach the kids in their homes. We have all the equipment to be able to do that, we just have to wait for the school's protocols. Bob Armstrong asked if there would be a charge for those programs. Roger S. answered that they applied for a grant

through the Monroe County Bar Association asking for support for our school educational programs, so it's possible that if we receive this grant, we can use the money for these programs. If the kids are in the classrooms, we could drop off a box of materials for the programs to the schools, so that they would be able to do the same thing that we were doing on Zoom. Roger McFadden asked how much the grant would be. Roger S. answered that the grant is to cover the entire year of existing programs, which would cover all four school districts, all contracts, which would be close to \$34,000. Sharon Laverdure mentioned the CARES act and the money that is available through the county for that. It has to be spent by December and can cover anything that is Covid-19 related. Kristina Heaney asked if purchases of PPE and other tools to protect staff would be eligible for the CARES funding. Sharon answered that yes they would be covered and to submit an inventory of items to them. Pat Ross asked if Roger S. has a full staff now. Roger S. answered that Josie, our part-time educator, is still on furlough. It all depends on what the schools do. We still have the position that Alesia Gallo used to be in open. We have not filled it yet because the building is closed and there is no need for it. The current staff has been arranging their schedules to complete necessary tasks.

**District Managers Report:** Kristina Heaney reviewed the District Manager report for the months of June and July. We did move forward with MuniPay. It is an on-line payment option for applicants. This will make it really easy for us to streamline into e-permitting that is coming potentially September 2<sup>nd</sup>. We wanted to have a program in place that would allow applicants to pay online instead of the exchange of checks. Hopefully it will make the process go faster. The timelines will start quicker with this process instead of having to wait to receive the checks. This could eliminate 5-7 days of wait time for the applicant depending upon how quickly it goes. It's an instantaneous ACH transfer. We will be doing a few staff trainings.

**Verizon:** We have been in contact with Verizon for MiFi devices. Our inspectors now have Microsoft Surface tablets. These were a little cheaper than getting new laptops. This allows them to go into the field and have full Wifi access, so they can do whatever they need to do in the field. The Surface will speak to our server here and they can automatically upload whatever they need in the field. We were able to purchase these as their main computers instead of purchasing them through the e-permitting budget.

**Ramp update:** We are moving forward on the ramp timeline. Kristina and Drew have been working to get everything put together. Kristina thanked Dave Moyer and his company for the assistance helping us to prepare some estimates. We are working on getting the bid packet together, and getting the township permits. The Commissioners have been supportive of the plan. We hope to start construction in September.

Staples: Barb has been in negotiation with Staples. We have been working with them for a very long time and we were able to negotiate 25% off of many items that we purchase. We make a lot of purchases from Staples, so this will really help our budget. Bob Armstrong asked about the possibility of the County having a better rate. Kristina explained that we don't go through the County's procurement process, so we negotiate our own contracts.

Spotted Lanternfly Grant: We received a grant for \$55,000 to conduct Spotted Lanternfly control projects. We were working with property owners in Eldred Township in an area that is heavily infested with Ailanthus trees. This money will pay a contractor to go out and treat these trees through hack and squirt, foliar application, and other means including cutting trees down entirely. They also will prepare trap trees that will reduce the spread of the Spotted Lanternflies. This is a great project because it is in Eldred Township, surrounded by agricultural land, and there is a vineyard not far away. The Ag industry has been hit hard by Spotted Lanternfly, so our focus is on the high impact areas. Kristina has been very active in going out to the site and meeting with the companies interested in the bids for this project. She prepared a bid note sheet with information from the companies and references for the Board to make an educated decision. Discussion was had about the companies and references with Bartlett Tree Experts being the final decision. A motion was made by Bob Armstrong and seconded by Roger McFadden to approve Bartlett Tree Experts' bid for the Spotted Lanternfly project as presented for \$28,120, motion carried. Roll call vote was unanimous.

DGLVR: John Motz discussed the Dirt Gravel & Low Volume Roads program and what it entails. He discussed the members of the Quality Assurance Board and their purpose. The QAB meeting was held on Tuesday, June 14, 2020. Hamilton Township has applied for a Dirt & Gravel Road Grant in the amount of \$105,100 for Roger's Lane. Under the Low Volume Road program, last year we approved the County Park Road Phase I project for the primary stream crossing replacement in Chestnuthill Township. They applied for a grant in the amount of \$63,249 for the County Park Road Phase II which is to help alleviate some of the flooding in that area. They are planning to do the project next year. Pocono Township is a new, first time applicant with the program. They have a project on Park Lane which is to replace the four foot pipe with a 12-12.5 foot opening which will greatly improve the stream condition in that area. They are asking for the money for the materials. They are going to do the work themselves. The amount that they are requesting is \$84,829.18. The Quality Assurance Board has reviewed all of these projects and approves funding all of these applications. A motion was made by Roger McFadden and seconded by Sharon Laverdure to approve the Hamilton Township's Dirt and Gravel Road Grant Application as presented for \$105,100, motion carried. Roll call vote was unanimous. A motion was made by Sharon Laverdure and seconded by Bob Armstrong to approve the Chestnuthill Township's Low Volume Road Grant Application as presented for \$63,249, motion carried.

Roll call was unanimous except for Chuck Gould who abstained due to being Chestnuthill Township's Chairman. A motion was made by Roger McFadden and seconded by Sharon Laverdure to approve the Pocono Township's Low Volume Road Grant Application as presented for \$84,829.18, motion carried. Roll call vote was unanimous.

**OCT:** A motion was made by Sharon Laverdure and seconded by Bob Armstrong to approve the Out of County Travel requests as presented, motion carried.

Pat Ross asked Kristina about using Lackawanna County Conservation District's services for a project. Kristina explained that we received an agricultural operations erosion and sediment control plan from Pocono Organics. We don't have a staff member right now that knows the ins and outs of farming, so we contacted the Department of Environmental Protection and they recommended coordinating with another conservation district. They recommended Lackawanna County, so we reached out to them. They reviewed the plan. They didn't charge us anything for reviewing the plan and we were able to send the comments from them along to Pocono Organics.

### **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 June 30, 2020 as presented, motion carried.

**Invoice Lists:** A motion was made by Roger McFadden and seconded by Bob Armstrong to approve the invoice lists for July 16, 2020 as presented, motion carried.

**Strategic Plan:** Pat Ross mentioned discussing a strategic plan for the District. He would like to meet with Kristina between now and the next meeting to create a sub-committee to get this started. He asked for people to submit anything that they would like included to himself and Kristina so they can begin working on it. He discussed other points of pollution including road salt.

### **Cooperating Agency Reports:**

**DEP:** Shane Kleiner reported they are still tracking the Conservation Continuity of Operations Plans for the districts. He mentioned the DEP "Alerts" webpage which is updated daily during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a Leadership Development Program Manager's COVID-19 Forum that is bi-weekly on ZOOM. Shane also pointed out the Employment Law for Conservation Districts Webinar Series which are scheduled for July 8<sup>th</sup> and August 5<sup>th</sup> from 1-3pm. He highly recommended the District Board and staff to attend these webinars. Chapter 102 E-Permitting July 1<sup>st</sup> date has been cancelled. The Harrisburg office will inform them of the new date for E-Permitting when it is available. The Conservation District's Watershed Specialist Meeting will be held virtually on October

6-8<sup>th</sup>. There are also a number of PACD/SCC meetings that will be held virtually. Carl DeLuca added that along with keeping up with the county's activities, he mentioned the PA Clean Water Academy as an online resource to help train with 102 & 105 issues. They have been putting more training modules in there to help train people, so if new hires come in, or for a refresher course, they are available. You just have to set up an account, and they are free of charge for the districts. Pat asked if they are receiving a lot of new plans for development. Carl answered that the plans or permits coming in are at the same level or have increased. They are still doing everything they were doing before the pandemic with only about 2-3 weeks of setting everything up to work remotely. They are doing most of their meetings through Skype or Zoom, but are able to set up site meetings if needed.

**PACD:** Brenda Shambaugh discussed the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts services. One of things that PACD does is meet with the legislators and talk with them about the districts. They have a three-pronged legislative approach. The first is PACD on the state level and they do contact legislators on a number of different issues. The second is to send out templates for the districts to use. This includes letters and information that might be helpful to share with the legislators, press releases, etc. They recently did a public service announcement which was sent to all the districts for their use if they choose to do so. The third prong is regarding individual Board members and/or associates contacting their legislators on a very regular basis. The reason Brenda is bringing this up is that we currently have a budget for 5/12ths of the year. That budget will end at the end of November. When that ends, the legislature is going to have to make a significant cut in their overall budget. With COVID and all the related lack of income coming in, and additional income going out, they are going to be about \$4 billion dollars in the hole. That is a lot of money to try to make up because we have to have a balanced budget. Brenda is very concerned that there will be negative ramifications for districts if they do cut a significant amount of money out of the Conservation District Fund. The good news is that the State Conservation Commission, next week, will probably vote to distribute all of the Public Utility Commission money that they received for distribution to the districts. That will only be part of the budget. As we get closer to November and some difficult decisions will need to be made, Brenda recommends that we, not only as a District contact our legislators on a regular basis, but also as individuals. Everyone is going to be trying to protect their funding, so we need to make sure the legislators understand, not only from an environmental standpoint, but also from an economic standpoint, the importance of having a fully staffed district. Even if the programs are in place, you still need the staff to carry them out. The funding needs to be protected, so Brenda recommends getting in touch with legislators, not once, but twice, and on a fairly regular basis. She also encouraged inviting legislators to any events that are taking place. She reiterated the meetings that Shane mentioned that are taking place on ZOOM and encouraged people to join. Brenda also mentioned that there has been a lot of COVID

information out there and the districts have been bombarded with this information. In light of this, they have made a tab on the PACD website to put all of this information. They are keeping it up to date as much as possible. They have also added liability forms developed by their attorneys for when there are in person events again.

**MCPC:** Ryan Hill reported that the census is still ongoing and he encouraged anyone who hasn't taken it yet to do so. They are starting Farmland Preservation Inspections on July 27<sup>th</sup>. It will take a total of 10 days to cover 120 farms. The big focus will be conservation plans, and making sure that everyone is compliant with what their current plan is on file. They have had some reports of people switching from crop land to pasture land, and vice versa, so they want to make sure that their conservation plan is up to date.

**Public Comment:** None

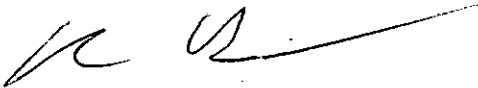
Executive session was held to discuss hiring of personnel.

A motion was made by Roger McFadden and seconded by Chuck Gould to advertise the Resource Conservation Specialist position, motion carried.

A motion was made by Bob Armstrong and seconded by Roger McFadden to advertise the Technical Section Intern position, motion carried.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:22AM.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristina Heaney  
District Manager

**THE NEXT MCCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY,  
August 20, 2020 AT 8:00 AM AT THE MONROE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
OFFICES STROUDSBURG, PA.**