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MCHENRY COUNTY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
April 9, 2019  
5:00 P.M.  
LOST VALLEY VISITORS CENTER

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Vice-President Ivers called the April 9, 2019 meeting of the McHenry County Conservation Foundation to order at 5:20 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

2.0 ROLL CALL

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Brad Semel, President (arrived late)  
Kevin Ivers, Vice-President  
Kim Becker, Treasurer  
Marti Gorman, Director (via phone)  
Dennis Dreher, Director  
Ray Eisbrener, Secretary  
Elizabeth Kessler, Advisor  
Dave Brandt, MCCD Liaison  
Dave Kranz, MCCD Liaison Alternate

OTHERS PRESENT:

Shawna Flavell, Executive Director  
Yvonne Semel, Administrator

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

All Present

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one from the public attended.

4.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 After reviewing the minutes of the March 12, 2019 - Special Meeting, Strategic Planning Session, Treasurer Becker moved to accept the minutes, Director Gorman seconded the motion. All were in favor.

## 5.0 OFFICER'S REPORTS

### 5.1 President's Report

#### 5.1a Earth Day Event - April 20

The date and time of the Earth Day Event at Prairieview Nature Center was discussed and Yvonne Semel asked if any Foundation Board Members would be able to help cover the display table during the event. Vice-President Ivers volunteered to cover from 1:00-2:30pm and Director Gorman volunteered from 2:30-4:00pm.

### 5.2 Treasurer's Report

#### 5.2a Financial Review

Treasurer Becker reviewed the Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet. She discussed the payments to the District for numerous projects that the Foundation helped to support. Treasurer Becker also discussed current interest rates for Money Market Accounts and Certificate of Deposit Accounts. She recommended moving some funds to secure higher interest rates. The proposed financial move will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

#### 5.2b Current Account Activity

There was some discussion about what to do with funds that exceeded the FDIC-insured level at a single institution. Treasurer Becker will research other rate options and will report back at the next meeting.

## 6.0 DIRECTOR & BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

6.1 Consideration to Adopt the *McHenry County Citizen's Conservation Bill of Rights*. On February 7, 2019 the McHenry County Conservation District unveiled the *McHenry County Citizen's Bill of Rights* and the accompanying *McHenry County Conservation District Conservation Pledge* at the State of Conservation. The District asked that all delegates who concur with the *Bill of Rights* formally adopt the document and endorse the agreement. Vice-President Ivers asked if there was a motion to sign the *McHenry County Citizen's Bill of Rights and MCCD Conservation Pledge*. Secretary Eisbrener made the motion that we sign the agreement on behalf of Foundation Board. Treasurer Becker seconded the motion. All were in favor.

6.2 Consideration to Enter into Three-Month Administrative Contract Under Board direction following the March 12, 2019 meeting, legal counsel Roger Stelle was consulted for his opinion on the employment status of the Foundation's current Administrative Assistant. At this point Yvonne Semel was asked to recuse herself from the room. Vice-President Ivers summarized the letter from Attorney Stelle and the conversations he initiated with the Directors regarding the letter prior to the meeting. It seemed clear that Stelle's opinion was that the Department of Labor and the Internal Revenue Service would view the current Administrative Assistant relationship as an employee and not a contractor and that it was the responsibility of the Foundation Board to follow legal counsel's recommendation. Secretary Eisbrener questioned whether it wouldn't make sense, since the position is poised to be housed under the District payroll, to hire someone who split their time between the District and the Foundation in order to offer more hours and potentially increase the applicant pool, in the event that the current contracted assistant is not interested in continuing. Treasurer Becker stated that the current Administrative Assistant works approximately 200 hours a year and would need to work at least 20 hours a week to be eligible for District benefits.

Vice-President Ivers reviewed comments during the March 12, 2019 meeting, where the Board of Directors discussed entering into a short-term agreement with the contractor pending the ultimate shift to District employee. The Board agreed that the current contractor should be maintained until the end of the fiscal year. Secretary Eisbrener made the motion to enter into a three-month administrative contract with the current contractor (through June 30, 2019). Treasurer Becker seconded the motion. All were in favor.

#### 6.3 Consideration to Establish Part-Time Administrative Assistant Position

After reviewing the draft job description for the part-time Administrative Assistant position, Secretary Eisbrener raised questions about the education requirements. Executive Director Flavell clarified that the education requirements are a minimum requirement and that the current Administrative Assistant exceeds the education and experience requirements.

Director Eisbrener also questioned salary range and Executive Director Flavell stated that proposed range is \$41,102 - \$60,143 annually, per District guidelines. Treasurer Becker stated that since the pay range is established by the District, the Executive Director should discuss details with the hired individual. Treasurer Becker made a motion to establish a part-time Administrative Assistant position. Secretary Eisbrener seconded the motion. All were in favor.

#### 6.4 Consideration to Hire Part-Time Administrative Assistant for Fiscal Year 2019-2020

Vice-President Ivers reiterated from the March 12, 2019 meeting that the new Administrative Assistant role would be reimbursed by the Foundation at 100 percent. Advisor Kessler stated that there is a placeholder in the District budget for the position and the District is still in the middle of the budget approval process. Secretary Eisbrener questioned how the reimbursement process would work and Executive Director Flavell suggested that it made sense to reimburse it quarterly so the request for payment could coincide with the request for Executive Director salary reimbursement. Treasurer Becker made the motion to hire a part-time Administrative Assistant for Fiscal Year 2019-2020, Secretary Eisbrener seconded the motion. All were in favor.

### 7.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

#### 7.1 Digital Billboard in Algonquin

An offer for in-kind an Advertisement on a Digital Billboard in Algonquin for Pedal/Paddle/Saddle was brought to Shawna's attention. The value is estimated to be worth around \$2,500 if the Pedal/Paddle/Saddle was advertised for four weeks. Caution was advised for any hidden costs that could be associated with this arrangement. Treasurer Becker said she would have her Marketing Director look into putting together a contract that could address any financial liability or concerns.

#### 7.2 Business Based on Tree Donations

Executive Director Flavell made a connection through Ed Collins with a businessman who would like sell trees as a fundraiser and partner with the Foundation to plant the trees on District lands. Executive Director Flavell said she would like to see a business plan or website about this, but nothing has been established yet. She updated the board on the memorial gift which she had discussed at the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, which the Foundation would hopefully steward.

7.3 Leadership Greater McHenry County (LGMC) Meeting Attended  
Executive Director Flavell attended the Leadership Greater McHenry County (LGMC) Annual Candidate Breakfast. LGMC is a community of leaders in McHenry County striving to make the county a better place. She felt this might be a good connection for potential Board members. Director Dreher felt it could also be a good source for potential donors.

#### 10 Minute Break

### 8.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP - PART 2

#### 8.1 MCCF Timeline to Address Gap Analysis (DRAFT)

Executive Director Flavell provided a handout outlining projects scheduled throughout the year. She asked if there were any questions about the Gap Analysis. Some of the projects have been placed on hold. Vice-President Ivers asked what the Board could do to help build the donor pipeline through research, networking and marketing. Executive Director Flavell mentioned President Semel as being the best source for conversations on the history and progress of the Foundation. Executive Director Flavell asked that the Board members let her know when events that should be attended are happening in the County. Secretary Eisbrener talked about Openlands Strategic Planning and Annual Report handout and compared their organization with the Foundation's progress.

#### 8.2 McHenry County Conservation Foundation Mission Statement

The current Mission Statement is the following:

*"The purpose of the McHenry County Conservation Foundation is to support the vision of the McHenry County Conservation District and its partners."*

Several Board members felt the current mission statement was too dry. Executive Director Flavell discussed other mission statement options. An updated option that many Board members appreciated was:

*"To support, sustain and advance the public conservation, education and recreation programs of the McHenry County Conservation District and its partners."*

#### 8.3 McHenry County Conservation Foundation Vision Statement

The current Vision Statement is the following:

*"The McHenry County Conservation Foundation is the leader for promoting the enhancement and enjoyment of McHenry County natural resources for the benefit of all residents."*

There was some discussion on changes to the Vision Statement. Director Dreher commented on inclusion of the three pillars. The Foundation Board of Directors liked the following vision statement:

*"To preserve and restore McHenry County's public open space, natural resources, water, and wildlife to benefit our way of life and that of future generations."*

#### 8.4 Draft Core Values

Core Values are principles that guide our strategy and our individual actions. Six categories that Executive Director Flavell felt were important to include in the Foundation's core values are: Committed to Conservation, Fiscally Responsible, Transparent, Donor Focused, Flexible and Engaged with the Community. Member of the board were in agreeance.

### 9.0 MCHENRY COUNTY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION SWOT

#### 9.1 Strength and Positive Attributes of the Foundation (See handout)



Executive Director Flavell gave the Board members a handout compiling the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the Foundation shared with her by the Board of Directors.

#### 9.2 Weaknesses - Improvements That Can Be Made

Each category was discussed. The three main areas that the Board felt were weaknesses that needed work were: 1. Need more community awareness of the Foundation; 2. More board development is needed; and 3. The Foundation needs to find a way to target large donors.

#### 9.3 Opportunities That Might Contribute to Success

Executive Director Flavell asked the Board to pick 3-5 points that need to be addressed. President Semel mentioned a need for a series of brochures that discuss our goals with a plan in place to show to a potential donor: a direct marketing plan to present to potential donors. Advisor Kessler asked the Board to look into the future three years - what would you want to see? Director Dreher mentioned greater public awareness and greater public visibility. Vice-President Ivers would like to see a confident Board, versed in our mission and communication with the public. President Semel asked how connecting with prominent names and companies can be done effectively. Executive Director Flavell said that a number of companies would like to see their employees and/or board members on the Foundation's Board of Directors before they become more involved in supporting the Foundation. Board development and expansion is a critical part of expanding the success of the Foundation. President Semel shared his concern of misdirection of the Board of Directors with the example of his college friend who may ultimately be forced out of the Foundation he created due to change in board focus toward financial gains over the vision of the organization. Executive Director Flavell commented that the Board of Directors should be closely vetted to be certain that their vision compliments the Foundation's vision. Director Dreher suggested that in some way the Foundation Board of Directors needs to become a very desirable board to be part of.

Director Dreher discussed fundraiser options and commented that maybe the District should run something like the Pedal/Paddle/Saddle and the Foundation should run a fundraiser like Tap into your Wildside. Advisor Kessler asked how brochures and marketing plans can be more engaging. MCCD Liaison Brandt feels that we need to have "at a glance" tangible projects that we have successfully completed that we are able to explain when meeting with a potential donor. For example, being able to confidently say, "This is where your sponsorship/donor dollars will go and what they will do." Advisor Kessler feels that development of a fundraising model is important. Over the past six months most of the work done has been internally focused.

President Semel commented that it would be wise to become more closely associated with the Community Foundation for McHenry County as he feels that they have done a tremendous job in cultivating the larger donors in McHenry County. He asked Executive Director Flavell what her response has been when she attends Rotary Clubs or Chamber of Commerce lunches. Advisor Kessler felt that Chamber Mixers will provide better opportunities to network.

What does success look like in three years: More community awareness is needed, increased board development and targeting large donors. President Semel feels that articles in *Landscapes* are a wonderful way to promote the accomplishments of the Foundation. MCCD Liaison Kranz suggested picking some kind of restoration project to

promote involvement of donors in seeing that project completed. Executive Director Flavell felt we should also continue to strength the Foundation's relationship with the District. The connection of donation dollars with a tangible project that the public can see has been completed with their donor dollars is a good way to promote the Foundation.

Advisor Kessler said that the District is coming up on its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and she asked the Foundation Board of Directors to think about how we can launch that celebration and include the Foundation. President Semel feels we need to have a clear and concise marketing plan by this time. Executive Director Flavell feels that tapping into the Memorial Gift option is something that people are really interested in. They want to remember their loved ones with something tangible.

Executive Director Flavell said the Foundation should put together some kind of Annual Report and also should recognize donors as part of the marketing plan. President Semel suggested target marketing with *Landscapes* magazine to larger income households with a full spread about the accomplishments of the Foundation. Executive Director Flavell said that she looks at the Daily Ledger in the Northwest Herald each day to see who the business "movers and shakers" are in McHenry County. She said that people she has talked with have told her that she needs to sell the Foundation to them - what will they do with the money they entrust the Foundation with.

9.4 Threats That We Have No Control Over but Can Prepare to Face  
There was brief discussion about this category. Further discussion will continue at a later date.

#### 10.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, Secretary Eisbrener made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Treasurer Becker seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2019 at Lost Valley Visitor Center at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Ray Eisbrener, Secretary