



REPORT ON MCCD

UPDATE April 2019

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

No action, no answer on ethics violation questions

Monroe County Conservation District board members have not taken any action regarding the ethics violations of a board member.

The district board has met three times since the Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission announced the violations last year, but did not mention the issue during its December 2018, January or March 2019 meetings.

This reporter directed a question during the April 18 meeting to district board member Charlie Garris. Garris, as a county commissioner, appointed district board member David W. Moyer to the board seven years ago. Late last year, the Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission concluded after an investigation that Moyer, who runs an excavating business, violated the state Ethics Act when he voted, as a district board member, to disburse grant funding to Tobyhanna Township under the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program, when he had outstanding invoices with Tobyhanna for doing that work. The SEC also found Moyer in violation for failing to file a Statement of Financial Interests to the district when he was an associate director, during 2012. The commission ordered Moyer to pay the commonwealth \$8,372 for the violations.

This reporter asked Garris whether commissioners had discussed Moyer's ongoing position on the board, given the violations. District board chairman Pat Ross immediately deflected the question, suggesting that it be more appropriate to ask during a county commissioners' meeting. This reporter pointed out that Garris is the commissioners' official representative to the Conservation District, but Ross again deflected the question.

Responding to a question to himself, Ross stated that the district board itself had never discussed the status of Moyer's position in the context of the ethics violations.

This reporter then questioned Moyer directly. Moyer said he hadn't thought about the potential conflict of interest in the moment he cast the vote. He added that in the past, other agencies "raised a red flag" to him regarding a potential conflict.

Moyer's conflict of interest had been raised before, during the April 2018 meeting. Local resident Tom Van Zandt asked that Moyer be removed from the board. Van Zandt cited potential conflicts of interest, as Moyer makes his living on earthmoving and paving jobs while serving as a member of the district board that oversees such projects.