Walla Walla County Conservation District
September 14 2026 Board Meeting

Date: September 14, 2026 Time: 5:00 p.m.
Place: In person at USDA and via Zoom

Presiding Officer: Matt Williams, Presiding Chair
Supervisors Present: Jesse McCaw (Via Zoom), Jim Kent, Ronda Gothberg (Via Zoom)
Supervisors absent: Don Schwerin
Other Agencies: Tami Stubbs, SCC
Also present: Annie Byerley, Jenny Freer, Alison Crowley, Jake Mantela, Brandon Panensky, Nells Hannah
Members of the Public: Wyatt B.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Matt Williams.

Williams invited the public to comment. There were none.

Minutes: The Board reviewed the July 13th and July 17th Special board meeting minutes. **Motion by Jesee McCaw and second by Rhonda Gothberg to approve the July 13 and July 17 Special board minutes as presented, no discussion, motion passed.**

Financial Reports: The board reviewed the July and August Financial Reports. **Motion by Jesse McCaw and second by Rhonda Gothberg to pay the bills, motion passed.**

As of this date September 14th 2026 the Board reviewed the July financial reports with no further discussion: Checks 15414 to 15436 and 9 EFTs, revenues $456,068.66 and expenses $524,170.48; total of bank accounts $57,908.57.

(Total Matches Springbrook)

As of this date September 14th 2026 the Board reviewed the August financial reports with no further discussion: Checks 15437 to 15451 and 9 EFTs, revenues $653,811.79 and expenses $631,789.69; total of bank accounts $79,930.67.

(Total Matches Springbrook)

New Business:

1. **Partner Updates: Stubbs, SCC;** shared that elections training is September 29, WWCCD's point person is Jake M. with Brandon P. as a backup, staff must register

ahead of time and watching the recording does count for the elections training requirements. SE Area meeting will be held in St John on October 28, supervisors are welcomed to join. Allan Warren is the new Director of Programs for the SCC. Mike Lopez is the SCC's cultural resource point person going forward. Rule making is in process to change the WAC in regards to elections. WACD legislative engagement meeting is this Friday September 18. Budget decision packages for next biennium have been sent to the Office of Financial Management. There is also a technology update where the SCC is transferring away from CPDS to Prism; RGP is the pilot program. **Byerley on behalf of NRCS;** question was asked about ideas of funding for an emergency cover crop program for areas that have been burned by fires but not ready to seed. The FY26 funding cycle has closed and NRCS is moving to a first come first serve model for program applications. NHQ wants to clean out the backlog and has some that date back to 2019, these will be reviewed as long as the application meets a minimum threshold and the applicant is still eligible. Local DCs are going to send out defer letters via certified mail in the net 30 days or so. Only those returned will remain active in our system. **Byerley, WWCCD;** Washington State Auditors reached out and WWCCDs accountability audit will be early to mid-October for the calendar years of 2023 to 2025.

2. Request to Approve Grants and Applications:

a. **Byerley** is asking to apply for five projects funded through the WW Water 2050 through the Office of Columbia River. **Coppei 2.0 Construction** request for 70k to remove structures that have moved during the high flows. **Mid Touchet River Assessment and Prioritization Plan** application for $260k to seek out prioritization projects on the Touchet river below RM33 and above Luckenbill Rd. **Heritage Gardens** application for TA in the amount of 50k. **Walla Walla RM 20** application to create a 60% design for 230k. Asking for 310k for the Managed Aquifer Recharge in the **Gardena Farms Irrigation District.**

Motion by Jim Kent and second by Jesse McCaw to approve the applications for the OCR Project Packet, as presented: motion passed.

b. Two project applications are being proposed through the Department of Ecology's Water Quality program. **Byerley** shared that there is a **Touchet RM 33 Restoration** project is in need of another 500k for the next section to be funded as the first section is funded through a previous Water Quality grant. **Lamar Road Crossing and Riparian Project** needs help with an unvented ford and bank erosion for 500k. This would include riparian planting and design to improve crossing with implementation; this project is proposed by **Panensky**.

Motion by Jim Kent and second by Rhonda Gothberg to approve the applications for the ECY Water Quality Project Packet, as presented: motion passed.

c. **Crowley** shared three Outreach project applications are being proposed. The first is through the **Clif Family Foundation**, asking for 25k to support the current Follow the Fins program for next year. The second is for **WSU Ext. Verle Kaiser** grant to continue the Growing Minds education program, this includes 5k for salaries, materials, and transportation. The third grant is through **MDU Resources** that will focus o riparian restoration, water quality, and soil health for 15k.

Motion by Jesse McCaw and second by Rhonda Gothberg to approve the applications for the Education and Outreach Packet, as presented: motion passed.

d. Three projects through the SCC are being proposed. The first is needing approval to spend the funds we received through the Science Hub by **Mantela** for **Shrubsteppe Monitoring Collaborative** with multiple districts but ran through Franklin CD. The second request by **Byerley** is for approval to use the remaining **NRI funds** for log jam removal at 100% cost share. This log jam came from a 2024 project that the District installed. The third request from **Hannah** is for the opportunity to use **VSP** cost share funds from the operating budget for **4 flow meters** that is estimated to cost 3k each.

Motion by Jim Kent and second by Rhonda Gothberg to approve the SCC Project Packet, as presented: motion passed.

e. **Mantela** proposed one project application for approval to apply for 84.9k to 221.1k for a project that the department of Ecology recommended. This project is called the **Dry Creek at Dixie** project that would be funded through Direct Implementation Funds from the Department of Ecology for engineering design and riparian planting with the possibility of construction.

Motion by Jim Kent and second by Jesse McCaw to approve applying for the Dry Creek at Dixie project through the ECY Direct Implementation Funds program, as presented: motion passed.

3. **Request to Approve Collaborating with the Valley Giving Guide- Crowley** shared that the District has the opportunity to add our name to the Valley Giving Guide where individuals can donate to local organizations. WWCCD is able to use the non-profit status under the Washington Conservation Society to be able to participate during November and December 2026. The funds will offset the SCC Implementation funds for outreach and education. **Freer** shared with the board the district operations brief from the SCC that allows the District to receive donations. An excerpt of a proposed policy for the districts Policy and Procedure manual is as follows: WWCCD welcomes gifts of cash, personal property, and other assets that can be used or managed to further its conservation mission. The Board will accept or reject gifts, or may withhold approval pending a review by administrative personnel.

Motion by Jim Kent and second by Jesse McCaw to approve participating in the Valley Giving Guide, as presented: motion passed.

4. **Approve VSP Budget Modification-Hannah** shared that the SCC reached out about our remaining budget and fear that too much money would be left at the end of the biennium. With this information and landowners contacting the district, WWCCD is requesting to move 10k from VSP Operating salaries and benefits to VSP Operating cost share. This would have a new budget of $175.5k for salaries and benefits and 50k for Cost Share. This move would allow the District to help four more landowners with Fish Screens and Meters.

   Motion by Jim Kent and second by Jesse McCaw to approve the VSP modification to the Operating Budget, as presented: motion passed.

5. **Approve date for WWCCD's Annual Meeting-Byerley** shared that the Water and Environmental Center has a date available for the districts annual meeting of Wednesday January 20, 2027 and is requesting approval for that date.

   Motion by Jesse McCaw and second by Jim Kent to approve the Annual Meeting date of January 20, 2027, as presented: motion passed.

6. **Request Approval of WWCCD hosting the SCC Bi-monthly Meeting-Byerley** shared that the SCC visits a new district for each bi-monthly meeting and Walla Walla would be in charge of organizing a project tour on September 15th 2027 followed by dinner. September 16th 2027 would be the bi-monthly meeting that WWCCD will secure a location for. The request is for WWCCD to host this meeting on September 15 and 16th 2027.

   Motion by Jim Kent and second by Jesse McCaw to approve WWCCD hosting the SCC Bi-monthly meeting in September 2027, as presented: motion passed.

7. **Request Approval of moving WWCCDs Internal Server to the Cloud-Byerley** is requesting permission to change how we access our internal storage system. Currently a remote login is needed if away from the office and only one staff member can access this at a time. During the Govt shutdown, each staff member had to download what they may need onto their personal computers. This was very difficult. This request would be to move the internal storage to the cloud at a $140 extra per month.

   Motion by Rhonda Gothberg and second by Jesse McCaw to approve moving the Internal Server to the Cloud, as presented: motion passed.

8. **Request to Approve A. Byerley Signing the Washington Water Trust Letter to the Department of Ecology- Byerley** shared that WWT along with other local agencies have compiled a letter regarding Ecology's Trust Water Program. Byerley would like approval to sign her name on behalf of this district.

Motion by Rhonda Gothberg and second by Jim Kent to approve A. Byerley Signing the WWT letter on behalf of WWCCD, as presented: motion passed.

9. **Discussion regarding Pesticide Handlers License held by Staff-Byerley** shared that two staff members have experience with pesticides and one currently carries an active pesticide license in Washington State. WWCCD would like to utilize staff in some cases rather than a contractor for spraying pesticides. There are grants that will cover the materials and chemicals and the second staff member can work under the first staff member's license.

10. **Request Approval to Move the October Meeting-Byerley** shared that the October board meeting falls on a Holiday where the USDA building is closed and is requesting to move the Board Meeting date to Wednesday October 14th.

Motion by Jim Kent and second by Rhonda Gothberg to approve moving the October Board Meeting to October 14th due to Holiday, as presented: motion passed.

Program Updates:

1. **District Operations: Byerley** shared a copy of the district operations outlining what the staff has been working on and what meetings were attended.
2. **Board Review of RCW 89.08: Freer** shared RCW 89.08.210 Powers and Duties of Supervisors and 89.08.220 Corporate Status and Powers of District for the board to review.

Meeting adjourned without a formal motion at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Freer
District Staff

Board member

Next meeting: Monday, October 14, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

Motions:

To approve the July 13th and July 17th Special meeting minutes as written	Motion: McCaw Second: Gothberg Motion passed
To review the July and August Financial Reports and approve paying the bills, as presented	Motion: McCaw Second: Gothberg Motion passed
To approve applying for 5 projects through OCR, as presented	Motion: Kent Second: McCaw Motion passed
To approve applying for 2 projects through ECY Water Quality, as presented	Motion: Kent Second: Gothberg Motion passed
To approve applying for 3 Outreach projects, as presented	Motion: McCaw Second: Gothberg Motion passed
To approve funding from and applying for 3 SCC Projects, as presented	Motion: Kent Second: Gothberg Motion passed
To approve applying for the Dry Creek Dixie Project through DIF, as presented	Motion: Kent Second: McCaw Motion passed
To approve participating in the Valley Giving Guide, as presented	Motion: Kent Second: McCaw Motion passed
To approve VSP budget modifications, as presented	Motion: Kent Second: McCaw Motion passed
To approve Date of January 20 2027 for Annual Meeting, as presented	Motion: McCaw Second: Kent Motion passed
To approve WWCCD hosting SCC bi-monthly meeting Sept 15 & 16 2027, as presented	Motion: Kent Second: McCaw Motion passed
To approve moving the internal server to the cloud, as presented	Motion: Gothberg Second: McCaw Motion passed
To approve A. Byerley signing the WTT letter to ECY on behalf of WWCCD, as presented	Motion: Gothberg Second: Kent Motion passed
To approve moving the October meeting to October 14, as presented	Motion: Kent Second: Gothberg Motion passed