

Walla Walla County Conservation

District Feb. Board Meeting

Date: Feb. 13, 2017 Time: 4:00 p.m. Place: District Conference Room

Presiding Officer: Ed Chvatal

Supervisors Present: Jim Kent, Todd Kimball, Associate Mike Hagerman

Representatives of Other Agencies: Ed Teel, NRCS

Also present: Jeff Schulke, Pat McConnell, Rick Jones, Renee Hadley, Greg Kinsinger, Joanna Cowles, Jeff Klundt and Audrey Ahmann. Jess Davenport attended via teleconference, as did three members of Mike Hagerman's Water Ecology class.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Ed Chvatal

Minutes: The Board reviewed the January minutes. **Motion by Todd Kimball and second by Jim Kent to approve the minutes as presented, motion carried.**

Financial Report: The board reviewed the February Financial Report. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Todd Kimball to approve the February financial reports and pay the bills, motion carried.**

Checks included 12644 to 12677 total all accounts: \$413,346.73

As of this date February 13th 2017 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the February financial report and further described as follows: Checks 12644 through 12677 Total Accounts Balance: \$413,346.73

New Business:

- 1. NRCS Lease discussion:** Ed Teel described to the board the elements of our mutually beneficial lease agreement signed in 2013. Among these are shared training, shared equipment, and shared files. We have access to GIS software through this agreement. The lease agreement which sets up working on NRCS tasks in lieu of paying a lease is separate from this agreement.
- 2. Review of Overhead Rate:** The worksheet shows a comparison between district staff (excluding support staff) vs overhead costs. The resulting rate is 19%, but this rate is lower due to paying less overall for the lease and not having an audit. The district is expecting an audit and to pay more lease expenses. If one adds these an overhead rate of 24% is forecast. Audrey further explained that we do not have a negotiated overhead rate with any grants; this is being reviewed so the board can monitor our overhead costs.
- 3. Budget Comparison: 2016 expected vs actual** Audrey presented the comparison between the budget the board reviewed last year and the actual costs of the year. Of note: there was some income from 2015 expenses vouchered in 2016, and some project expenses were lower than expected. Travel increased due to additional training and Lance Horning project related travel.
- 4. Board Vacancy:** As has been reviewed previously, when the city annexed his residence, Jeff Schulke was no longer eligible to serve as an elected member of the board. Rick Jones had indicated a willingness to serve out the remainder of Jeff's term. This term will conclude at the May 2017 Commission meeting when new appointments and elected supervisors take office. The board considered Rick's qualifications. **Todd Kimball moved and Jim Kent seconded to have Rick Jones serve out the duration of Schulke's elected term; motion passed.**

5. **Burn Refund, special circumstance:** Jeff Klundt said that due to circumstances outside the producer's control, Craig Noble's burn refund wasn't processed until after the county distributed the fall burn permit funds. Ecology agreed to reimburse Noble their portion. Jeff requested that the District do the same (51.25). **Todd Kimball moved and Jim Kent seconded that the District reimburse Craig Nobel for his unburned acres, motion passed.**
6. **CREP maintenance cost share:** Jeff Klundt informed the board that he is reviewing the hold down rates for CREP maintenance. The current rates were set in 2008. At that time, an ATV cost 6,000; today the same ATV costs 12,000, and other costs have risen as well. Jeff asked those working on CREP maintenance give him updates on their costs. One thought his costs had increased 20-to 30% but didn't have item-by-item numbers. Brian Cochran, CREP coordinator for the Commission, did not have a list of hold-down rates for each county. Jeff will present recommendations at the March meeting for board consideration.
7. **Annual Meeting Summary:** Jeff Klundt gave the board overall numbers for the Annual meeting. There were fewer attendees possibly due to a concurrent Columbia County meeting; the weather was also somewhat hazardous. The pesticide-resistant weeds presentation and the presentation on bees were both described as exceptional.
8. **Learning on the Land:** The Blue Mountain Land Trust is seeking volunteers with CREP and/or CRP plantings on their property for their "Learning on the Land" series. These sessions are attended by members of the general public with an interest in learning more about the outdoors. Jeff Schulke volunteered to allow a tour of his CREP site.
9. **Farmer to Farmer mini-sessions:** Renee Hadley informed the board that these will take place over the next two weeks.

New Projects for Board Approval

1. **Screens Revisited: Byerley (SCC non-shellfish funds)** As previously discussed, this screen combination project addresses a diversion that diverts flows from Cottonwood Creek into an irrigation pond; it has a non-compliant screen and the potential to strand fish. The landowner will install a trash rack on the diversion, a screen on the intake, and an updated fish bypass to help fish exit the pond. The project has been approved for funding by the Conservation Commission.

Program Updates

1. **Screens/Meters:** Discussion centered on meters and the difficulty of obtaining reliable and durable meters. Greg Kinsinger reported that the newer Micrometer saddle meters are improved and working well after a year in service.
2. **VSP:** Jeff Klundt reported that Laurie Parry of the AP LaGrande office is helping fill in after Brian Mahoney left. The Anderson Perry contract goes through the end of June. Legislators have not released their budget and there is no word on whether VSP will be funded. Chelan and Thurston have submitted draft Work Plans and there will be a response to these on March 20th. Our plan is due November of 2018. There was a statewide meeting on January 24th that Lisa attended and all presentations from that meeting are available here: http://scc.wa.gov/regional-vsp_0117/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

3. **Restoration Projects:** The McCaw Phase B construction project is funded and Jeff Klundt is working on the Jarpa. This is a 150-page document. Once submitted there is a 45 day review time. The application for a USACE permit has been submitted with no response to date. It was submitted as a salmon recovery project and is supposed to be given priority.
4. **CREP:**

Joanna reported that national caps are being approached and as a result, FSA has moved up the deadline for applying to re-enroll CREP projects to ensure established projects are added to the total before the caps are reached. Landowners have been informed of the deadline change. Landowners who act to bring their project into compliance *before* they have a new contract risk not being reimbursed by the program. Dunhams have indicated they intend to do the fire-recovery work themselves and may also do Gradwohl's. The expected costs are within budget and Dunhams understand they are obligated to complete all components of the project. In response to a question, Joanna explained that while FSA does not begin work on a contract until a landowner is determined to be eligible, District staff are allowed to do preliminary work on proposed CREP projects. Finally, Joanna explained that the Commission Technical Committee approved adding several streams to the CREP eligible list; these have now been submitted to the FSA state committee for concurrence. If they agree to add these streams to the CREP eligible list, the entire stream becomes eligible.
5. **OCR Bi-State Flow enhancement study:** At the February meeting, the group was going to vote on project pairing to achieve the goal of having 45 cfs in the Walla Walla river. However, after a long meeting no vote was taken. Most of the members are in support of building the Pine Creek Reservoir but CTUIR favors the Columbia River exchange system. The merits and costs of both were discussed. Among these: the exchange system offers a certain fixed amount of water and leaves the Walla Walla River untouched, but requires an estimated 1.5 million in annual maintain. The reservoir would be rely on yearly precipitation but requires a lower 500,000 in annual maintenance costs.

Joint Agency Meetings


1. **WW Water Management Partnership Activities**
 - a. **Partnership Board:** Mike Buckley was again elected as chair. CTUIR has missed the last four meetings. Weather has affected attendance.
2. **Office of Columbia River:** see above.
3. **GFID 13 meeting:** Renee attended and discussed the Pine Creek Siphon replacement project meeting. Renee applied for a Bureau of Reclamation grant to be matched by funds from Gardena. This would be a 2,000,000 project. The District will enter into an agreement with GFID that describes briefly the roles of each. GFID is also considering a synthetic liner for the upper ditch.

Misc. Discussion: The board indicated they preferred to meet at 5 in March as usual (daylight savings begin March 12.)

Public Comment Period: There were no public comments. The CC students asked questions on the composition of the board and the history of the proposed reservoir vs Columbia exchange systems.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted


Audrey Ahmann
Assistant Manager, Finance


Ed Chvatal
Chairman


Jim Kent
Treasurer

Next meeting: March 13, 2017

Motions:

To approve the Jan. minutes as written:	Motion: T. Kimball Second: J. Kent Motion passed
To approve the February Financial report:	Motion: J. Kent Second: T. Kimball Motion passed
To approve appointing Rick Jones to serve out the remainder of Jeff Schulke's elected position on the board.	Motion: T. Kimball Second: J. Kent Motion passed
To approve reimbursing Craig Noble the District share of the cost of his unburned 2016 fall acres.	Motion: T. Kimball Second: J. Kent Motion passed