

Walla Walla County Conservation

District May Board Meeting

Date: May 14th, 2018

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: District Conference Room

Presiding Officer: Ed Chvatal

Supervisors Present: Jim Kent, Pat McConnell

Supervisors Absent: Jeff Schulke, Todd Kimball, associate Mike Hagerman

Representatives of Other Agencies: Ed Teel, NRCS

Also present: Renee Hadley, Joanna Cowles Cleveland, Audrey Ahmann, Lynda Oosterhuis, and members of the public Ann Byerley and Chris Hyland.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Ed Chvatal.

Minutes: The Board reviewed the April minutes. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Pat McConnell to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

Financial Report: The board reviewed the May Financial Report. **Motion by Pat McConnell and second by Jim Kent to approve the May financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.**

Checks included 13133 to 13170 total all accounts: \$334,964.14

As of this date May 14th, 2018 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the May financial report and further described as follows: Checks 13133 through 13170. Total Accounts Balance: \$334,964.14

New Business:

- 1. NRCS report:** Ed Teel reported that many apprentice conservation planners in CDs (like Stearns and Cowles Cleveland) and NRCS need additional training to become fully certified planners, but nationally NRCS lacks the funds and staff to provide all of them with additional training. NRCS certified planners are being lost to attrition. The Conservation Commission is working with NRCS to facilitate additional training.
- 2. Internal Audit:** Chvatal reported that he and Kimball completed the internal audit and found no significant errors or omissions. There are four items on the Action Plan developed by the audit committee and provided to the board members. **Jim Kent moved and Pat McConnell seconded that the Action Plan be approved as presented, motion passed.** The audit team recommended that the annual financial report be approved. (Copies were provided to board members.) **Jim Kent moved and Pat McConnell seconded that the Annual Financial Report be approved and submitted to the State Auditor's Office, motion passed.**
- 3. Annual Plan of Work:** The board reviewed the Annual Plan of Work. Hadley explained the plan follows the template provided by the SCC which is only slightly changed from previous years. **Jim Kent moved and Pat McConnell seconded that the Annual Plan of Work be approved, motion passed.**

4. Landowner discussion of project: Ed Chvatal introduced Chris Hyland who is pursuing a CREP project on property located on the lower Walla Walla River. The FSA county Committee (CC) approved the project along with some additional site prep funds. The additional amount won't cover the estimated cost of the site preparation. The site has heavy weed pressure, low rainfall, and marginal soils. Hyland is seeking a letter of support for the project. The board discussed the following concerns:

- Time to complete recommended site prep may exceed the 36 months allowed by FSA to install all project components.
- Other sources of funds have application windows that do not mesh with the FSA timeline; the CC approval is valid for 6 months.
- Past experience with ground adjacent to Hyland's was poor; projects required extensive maintenance that exceeded project caps and plantings still failed.
- Landowner is at risk for having to return FSA funds if the project is not completed within the FSA 36 month timeline.
- The property outside the proposed buffer area is also degraded and will be a weed seed source unless aggressively treated. The cost of weed control on these acres is entirely the landowner's responsibility.

The board agreed to send a letter of support for the project provided that Hyland obtain additional funds from other sources such as the Partners in Wildlife fund. Additional funds are needed as it is a challenging site and without considerable effort, runs a high risk of planting failure.

The other project involved a fence rebuilt under mid-contract maintenance. (FSA and the CREP program share the cost of mid-contract maintenance.) The rebuilt fence needs some additional work. The board agreed to pay the mid-contract maintenance after the landowner completes the needed work. Cowles Cleveland was asked to send the landowner a letter reminding him that regardless of the condition of the fence, it is the landowner's responsibility to keep cattle out of the riparian area.

5. Grant Application Ranking: Hadley reported that the SRSRFboard had ranked projects and has funds only for the top 3; our projects were below this cutoff. It appears the SCC will fund one of our projects.

6. Associate Supervisor Policy: Hadley reviewed the role of associate supervisors. She presented a new application form that prospective associates could fill out so they better understand the role they are seeking before the board approves them. **Pat McConnell moved and Jim Kent seconded to add the new application form to our process of adding associates; motion passed.** Annie Byerley expressed interest in applying. McConnell & Chvatal requested additional information regarding the cost-share limitations for associate supervisors.

Old Business:

1. Vehicle Replacement Options: Hadley reported the cost of vehicle leases and asked the board for direction in seeking a new vehicle. The board asked for the exact

amount of our vehicle fund¹ and to consider used vehicles; they will make a decision at the June meeting.

Program Updates

1. **Burn.** The board reviewed Klundt's report.
2. **CREP and Special Circumstances:** Cowles Cleveland suggested that the board consider raising the maintenance caps, which are locally set to 2,000 per acre but state-wide are 2,700. The 2,000 cap makes it difficult to interest contractors in doing small projects of less than 10 acres. There could be a special rate for these smaller projects. The board requested a list of the projects that have hit the 2,000 cap before the 5-year maintained window ends.
2. **Meters/Screens:** Oosterhuis reported on the number of meters that should be completed before the end of June. The screens are either going in or ready for inspection, with the exception of one with a landowner still reviewing the landowner agreement. On Blalock, she is working with Myrick to determine where the lines are and options for the screen.
3. **Restoration projects:** McCaw: the CORPs extended the in-water work window and work will begin in July; the contractor is Royce. The Mill Creek project has been impacted by the recent high water events exposing the Stiller Aquifer Recharge project pipeline which also supplies an irrigation pond. The plan is to proceed with installation of the habitat work to help bring this river section to a geomorphically acceptable rate of change. On the Williams' project, we have a written response (email) from Ecology confirming they are aware the landowner is not planting native species and that the district is not maintaining this project once installed.

Public Comments: No comments.

Employee Reports: Nothing specific.

Joint Agency Meetings

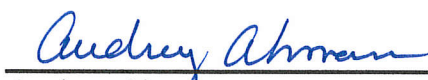
1. **WW Water Management Partnerships:** Chvatal and Annie Byerley reported that they are looking to revise their annual Report to the Legislature. Ecology has offered funding for a very large scale project (that is, a reservoir or pumping exchange) as the best solution to address low flows, but no local agency has the staff or experience to handle a project of this complexity.
2. **SRSRB meeting:** Will be conducting interviews for the position left vacant after John Foltz's promotion to executive director. Tri-State Steelheaders are seeking other funding sources for Mill Creek and have some interest from the Fish Passage Barrier Board although this group usually only funds transportation related (culvert) work.
3. **SCC All District Meeting:** FSA and NRCS are being merged into the Farm Production and Conservation agency. They are facing some additional cuts. Discussion on the SCC long range strategic plan.

¹ The exact amount is \$26,070.00


Misc. Discussion: Pat McConnell moved and Jim Kent seconded to declare a 2008 V22" monitor as surplus, motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 by the Chairman without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted



Audrey Ahmann
Assistant Mngr., Finance



Ed Chvatal, Pat McConnell
Chairman



Pat McConnell
Member Jeff Schulte

Next meeting: June 4th, 2018

Motions:

To approve the April minutes as written:	Motion: Kent Second: McConnell Motion passed
To approve the May Financial report:	Motion: McConnell Second: Kent Motion passed
To approve the 2018 Action Plan from the internal audit as presented:	Motion: Kent Second: McConnell Motion passed
To approve the Annual Financial Report and submit it to the SAO:	Motion: Kent Second: McConnell Motion passed
To approve the Annual Plan of Work as presented:	Motion: Kent Second: McConnell Motion passed
To approve the new Associate application form as presented:	Motion: McConnell Second: Kent Motion passed
To declare as surplus a 2008 V22" monitor:	Motion: McConnell Second: Kent Motion passed