

Walla Walla County Conservation

District Sept. 2018 Board Meeting

Date: September 10thth, 2018 Time: 5:00 p.m. Place: District Conference Room

Presiding Officer: Pat McConnell

Supervisors Present: Pat McConnell, Jim Kent, Jeff Schulke and Associates Annie Byerley and Mike Hagerman

Supervisors Absent: Todd Kimball, Ed Chvatal

Representatives of Other Agencies: Bryce Krueger, NRCS

Also present: Renee Hadley, Joanna Cowles Cleveland, Lisa Stearns, Eric Rannestad, Lynda Oosterhuis, Audrey Ahmann, and members of the public Leo Pauly and Nick Plucker

Guest: Shana Joy, Conservation Commission

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Pat McConnell.

Minutes: The Board reviewed the July minutes. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Jeff Schulke to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

Financial Report: The board reviewed the August Financial Report. **Motion by Jeff Schulke and second by Jim Kent to approve the August financial reports and pay the bills, motion passed.**

Checks included 13243 to 13281, total all accounts: \$225,073.77

Financial Report: The board reviewed the Sept. Financial Report. **Motion by Jeff Schulke and second by Jim Kent to approve the Sept. financial reports and pay the bills, motion passed.**

Checks included 13282 to 13311, total all accounts: \$169,711.04

As of this date Sept. 10th, 2018 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the August and Sept. financial reports and further described as follows: August Checks 13243 through 13281. Total August Balance: \$255,073.22 & September Checks 13282 to 13311, Total Sept. Balance: 169711.04

New Business:

1. **NRCS Update:** In Ed Teel's absence, Bryce Krueger, NRCS Soil Conservationist, introduced himself. He described for the board some of the differences in farming approaches from his previous post to what he's seeing in Walla Walla.

2. Review of Personnel Policy and Internal Procedure Manual:

A. Required updates: Sick leave accrual: In accordance with new state law, all employees, regardless of District policy, began to earn 1 hour of sick leave for every 40 hours worked. Language reflecting this change will be presented for board consideration at the October meeting. In another change, state per diem rules now

state that instead of the 3-hour rule, employees must work a total of 11 hours or more in order to be eligible for meal per diem. In addition, the district practice has been to pay employees' actual lodging costs if they are unable to obtain a government rate, though our manual states we follow state per diem rules. The board directed staff to develop a policy that allows the current practice to continue, provided the board is notified whenever this occurs.

B. Recommended: Hadley reported that our current Conflict of Interest policy be updated to meet standards suggested by Enduris. The board agreed to review this at the next meeting. In addition, the current manual uses time served to determine increases of leave (e.g., after 5 years of service employees receive an increase from 8 to 10 hours per month annual leave). Currently the time served accrual begins with the date an employee receives a permanent assignment, not the date of hire. The board requested more information prior to making any changes to the personnel manual in this area.

C. Suggested: Hadley suggests a change be made requiring employees who receive extensive training at district expense compensate the district for that cost should they separate from the district to use those skills elsewhere. The board agreed in principal and McConnell offered to send some draft language.

- 3. Review Application for Associate Supervisor:** After review of his application, **Jeff Schulke moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve Nick Plucker as a new Associate Supervisor, motion passed.**
- 4. Change in meeting dates:** Since the second Monday of both October and November fall on holidays, the board considered alternate dates and chose the second Tuesday for both meetings. These will be Special Meetings.
- 5. SE Area Meeting:** The SE Area meeting will be held on October 23rd in St John. Associates Mike Hagerman and Annie Byerley agreed to represent the board at this meeting. The annual WACD meeting will be held this year in Kennewick. Jeff Schulke and Pat McConnell agreed to attend.
- 6. Reserving Legal Council:** Hadley informed the board that she'd recently learning Enduris does NOT cover the legal costs of Districts or supervisors from claims rising from 1) contractual disputes 2) violation of the Open Public Meeting Act or 3) violations of the Freedom of Information Act. The board asked that Hadley report on what the District Insurance *does* cover. It was the general feeling of the board that we would hire an attorney when needed, not have one on retainer.
- 7. Weed Resistance:** Hadley expressed concern over the growing issue of weed resistance and asked the board what direction the District should take, if any, on the issue. Associate Hagerman reported that many groups are working on the problem and mentioned WSU Extension's work on weed resistance. The board suggested inviting an expert to submit an article for the newsletter and to include this as a topic at the annual meeting.

Public Comments: The chair asked for public comments; there were none.

New Projects for Board Approval/Program Updates

1. **CREP:** Cowles Cleveland reported that all the projects ready for signature at this meeting had been previously approved.
2. **Water Quality grants:** Staff are writing grant applications to fund the following projects:
 - A. CREP on non-CREP eligible streams: riparian buffers on properties too small to warrant full CREP projects and for landowners with land technically eligible for CREP but for whom the CREP program is not a good fit. The main limitation is that the buffers must meet Ecology specifications in terms of buffer width.
 - B. False Indigo Replanting: planting areas where False Indigo has been removed, including larger trees to provide canopy cover and possibly shade out false indigo.
 - C. WW River to RM35 construction funds: for construction in '22 of the project funded for design next year. The area is Frog Hollow to Last Chace Rd.
 - D. Mill Creek RM 17: to design a project to improve fish habitat and reconnect the floodplain. Two recent high-water events did significant damage and all the stakeholders are interested in taking action.
 - E. Stiller streamflow grant: implement water quality monitoring to allow the recharge project to resume.

Program Updates

1. **Meters/Screens/Irrigation Efficiency:** Oosterhuis reported Dunning has been paid for the screen installations. She detailed the assistance given to Blalock. Sean Taylor gave them some direction on using their screen.
2. **CREP:** There are 3 new contracts before County Committee for fall installation. All reenrollments were complete: 386 acres for 23 miles were reenrolled. Brian Cochran will be here in late September to review 8 contracts; landowners will be notified. The board discussed maintenance costs of small projects. The state cap is \$2,700 per acre but Walla Walla has a local cap of \$2,000 per acre, which is sufficient for larger projects. However, for smaller projects with higher per acre costs of things like mob/demob, the maintenance is exceeding \$2,000. The board decided to allow projects to go up to the state cap on a case by case basis. **After discussion, Jim Kent moved and Jeff Schulke seconded that the Kregger and Burns projects be allowed to incur costs up to but not beyond the \$2,700 cap, motion passed.**
3. **Education/Outreach:** Our intern Eric Rannestad did a good job creating attractive instructive visuals for the fair along with a well-designed instructional booklet. Hadley also reported that it appears we will be able to use VSP funds to implement some small projects. Former intern Robert Fowler created a story map on the Gardena Farms Pipeline project which will be linked to the website.

- 4. Restoration Projects:** Stearns said the McCaw project was substantially complete, needing only fall planting of the disturbed areas. Much of the construction was directly observed by Snake River Salmon Recovery Board employee Ali Fitzgerald. Stearns reported on the installation process and said that some replanting had already taken place. Hadley reported that the Jones project was on track though there are concerns with higher than expected costs. Fencing will be completed on Williams's project in November.

Employee Reports: Hadley reported that the Annual Report has been submitted on time. The final soil health testing showed the potassium draw-down was very steep. Each producer in the trial was given some advice about optimum planting time. She was included in a "meet and greet" of the Undersecretary for Agriculture. There was mention of soil rental rates being low and the take-away was that these rates were artificially lowered in order to lessen the cost of the Farm Bill. With the resignation of the former WADE president, Hadley is now the President.

Joint Agency Meetings


- 1. WW Water Management Partnerships:** Byerley said that their report to the Legislature is being revised. This report informs the legislators of Partnership work as the legislature begins to consider the next biennium budget.
- 2. SFRFB meeting:** Cowles Cleveland reported the last meeting was intended to inform area legislators on the SRFBoard history and progress.
- 3. Local/Regional Food meetings:** Oosterhuis attended several area meetings on direct marketing of ag. products. The local food coalition has a USDA grant to develop a Food Hub, which is a way to maximize production and distribution of locally produced foods. For example, the Food Hub might obtain a flash freezing unit that can be shared by 10 or more producers, or coordinate grower consolidation so small farmers could team up with one distributor. She also attended the Cascadia Grain Conference, a meeting of producers, malt buyers, and researchers interested in developing a local grain industry. There is local interest in starting a Trout Unlimited group which could be a source of grant funds.

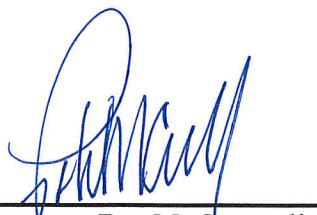
Misc. Discussion and Public Comments:

Hadley mentioned that the purchase of the Dodge Ram pickup made the Ranger superfluous. The board decided to surplus the vehicle: **Jeff Schulke moved and Jim Kent seconded to declare the Ford Ranger as surplus and sell the vehicle, motion passed.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted


Audrey Ahmann
Assistant Manager, Finance


Pat McConnell,
Chairman


Jeff Schulke
Member

Next meeting: October 10th, 2018

Motions:

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| To approve the July minutes as written: | Motion: Kent
Second: Schulke
Motion passed |
| To approve the August Financial report: | Motion: Schulke
Second: Kent
Motion passed |
| To approve the Sept. Financial report: | Motion: Schulke
Second: Kent
Motion passed |
| To approve Nick Plucker as an Associate Board member | Motion: Kent
Second: Schulke
Motion passed |
| To allow the Kregger and Burns CREP projects to incur maintenance costs up to the state limit of \$2,700 per acre | Motion: Schulke
Second: Kent
Motion passed |
| To declare the 2006 Ford Ranger surplus and sell the vehicle, | Motion: Schulke
Second: Kent
Motion passed |