

Walla Walla County Conservation

District April Board Meeting

Date: April 9th, 2018

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: District Conference Room

Presiding Officer: Ed Chvatal

Supervisors Present: Jim Kent, Jeff Schulke (late), Todd Kimball (late)

Supervisors Absent: associate Mike Hagerman and Pat McConnell

Representatives of Other Agencies: Ed Teel, NRCS

Also present: Renee Hadley, Joanna Cowles Cleveland, Audrey Ahmann, Lynda Oosterhuis and member of the public Leo Pauly

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

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

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

Checks included 13107 to 13132, total all accounts: \$384,979.37

As of this date April 9th, 2018 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the April financial report and further described as follows: Checks 13107 through 13132. Total Accounts Balance: \$384,979.37

New Business:

- 1. NRCS report:** Ed Teel reported that the Local Working Group met in March. Ed explained there are three sources of funds the Local Working Group directs; national, state, and local. In the last round 25 plans were developed using federal and state funds; among these were bridges, on-farm energy and air quality projects. There were 16 contracts developed for the local funds. These included forestry, range, and flood to pivot conversions. The 41 contracts totaled \$356,000.

The group set resource concerns for the next funding round. They have about \$500,000 to allocate in the 5 counties. The funds were put into pools with the following distributions:

- Water Quality (confined animal operations) 10%
- Insufficient water (flood to pivot conversions) 30%
- Plant Productivity (Forestry 30%, Rangeland Management) 10%
- Soil Quality: improve organic matter (cover crops) 5%
- Water Quality Degradation Pesticides: transported to surface and groundwater (secondary containment) 5%
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat 5%
- Moisture management, dryland (cover crops) 5%

Ed explained there are no caps and no hold-downs.

Innovative Projects were discussed at the Local Working Group and could include cover crops, alternatives for CRP takeout, and possibly direct seed.

2. **Lease Update** Cowles Cleveland explained the handout showing our progress in meeting the lease goal; thus far we have met \$16,000 of the obligation with more projects lined up. If we meet the total, work may continue under an NRCS Task Order.
3. **Ag Burn permits:** The board wanted to be sure producers are aware of their obligation to follow the BMPS developed by the Burn Task Force, specifically that cereal grain fields are to be seeded in the same season as they are burned. Additional wording will be added to the burn permit application to help highlight this. Staff were directed to reference the applicable BMPs in the new wording.
4. **Outreach Discussion:** Staff requested more guidance on how to educate the public about conservation practices without crossing into solicitation and the issue of reaching folks who are not already actively working with the district or partners. The board suggested working directly with agronomists employed by the farm product suppliers (Wilbur Ellis, Primeland, Cenex, CPS, All-American, McGregor's) as these field men and consultants know their growers and their needs. It was also suggested that we connect with the Farmer's Market, perhaps be featured in the Lifestyles magazine and arrange for live interviews with the local radio station.

Old Business:

1. **CREP letters and maintenance:** Cowles Cleveland reviewed the draft CREP letters that would be provided to participants so they better understand their role in CREP. She also reviewed the contract template provided by the Commission. **Jeff Schulke moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve the draft CREP letters as presented, motion passed.** The state contract will be used with one small change: allowing any board member to sign instead of requiring the board chair.
2. **Vehicle Replacement Options:** Hadley reported that the district doesn't meet the 500 monthly/10,000 miles yearly requirement to use the state motor pool. Staff requested a full-size pickup with extra seating (crew cab). The board suggested looking at a straight lease from a dealer since we likely won't exceed the maximum lease miles.

Public Comments: No comments.

New Projects for Board Approval

1. **CREP:** Cowles Cleveland reported that Mike Hagerman is seeking to enroll about 3 acres in CREP. Because he is an associate board member, there are some special considerations and limits. The board tabled discussion as the project is still in its early stages.
2. **RCO Grant Applications:** RCO requires a board resolution approving projects as part of the application process. Hadley explained the 5 projects as follows:

- a. **Cottonwood Creek:** located on Byerley near Powerline Rd., this habitat restoration project includes a few small engineered structures and PALS, which are small structures that are not hard anchored. The project cost estimate is 240K.
- b. **Russell Creek Fish Barrier:** located east of 3rd street with 5 landowners. The fish barrier is a historical structure so would be difficult to remove. Log pools can be installed to raise water levels to allow fish passage.
- c. **Jones Creek Screens:** Two screen projects, 100K.
- d. **Walla Walla River Design Grant at RM 35 (Klicker)** This would be a habitat restoration project, design only: 50K
- e. **Walla Walla Area Prioritization Plan:** This involves examining all area plans and prioritizing the work. Funding agencies have asked that a prioritization plan be developed. There was similar prioritized strategy developed for the Tucannon which led to funding of the coordinated work done on that river. 250K

The board asked about the likelihood of success for these applications. Hadley explained that all have merit but Russell and Jones were determined by the RTT to be affecting "local" populations and may score lower. The full text of the resolution is in the meeting preparation materials for board review. **Jim Kent moved and Todd Kimball seconded to approve the RCO Applicant Resolution for the 5 projects in its entirety as presented, motion passed.**

3. Program Updates

1. **Burn.** Hadley referred to Klundt's report showing a spike in burn permit applications.
2. **CREP and Special Circumstances:** One project at a difficult site was approved by County Committee for additional funds for site prep, but even the additional funds are less than half of the contractor estimate per acre. The landowner asked for assistance in seeking additional funds. Cowles Cleveland investigated several funding sources but there are timing problems related to the application windows for these funds. After discussion it became clear that Cowles Cleveland has invested a considerable amount of time to this project (far above what is typical for CREP). The board suggested that she inform the landowner of possible funding sources rather than doing the legwork herself.
3. **Meters/Screens:** Oosterhuis reported good progress being made on screens and that about 7 meter projects are completed. An issue has developed with a previous meter project that was modified with a concrete vault to protect the meter. The vault has water in it, affecting the system. After considerable discussion of options, the board suggested that the landowner consider a sump pump and a replacement meter, which would be cost shared. Oosterhuis will reach out to the landowner to discuss options. She will be walking Blalock next week with Jack Myrick.
4. **Restoration projects:** The Lower Mill Creek project may require some changes due to recent high water events. On the William's Hussmen grant, there are limitations on the chemicals that can be used as it is an organic operation. Hadley clarified that the grant is to provide exclusion fencing and replanting to grasses, but other than the usual

landowner commitment to not damage the project, the grant does not require the district to perform future maintenance. The board requested that Hadley obtain some written clarification on this point from Ecology.

Employee Reports: Nothing specific, board members were referred to board reports.

Joint Agency Meetings

1. **WW Water Management Partnerships:** Chvatal reported that 6 water rights were approved and a new Citizen at Large came on board. They will be reviewing their annual Report to the Legislature.
2. **SRSRB meeting:** will be posting an opening for the position left vacant after John Foltz's promotion to executive director. Project pre-scoring will take place next week.

Misc. Discussion: Hadley announced that the Commission has funded an intern for us. Due to scheduling conflicts, the June meeting will be a Special Meeting held June 4th.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 by the Chairman without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted

| | | |
|--|---|---|
|  Audrey Ahmann Assistant Mngr., Finance |  Ed Chvatal, Chairman |  Jeff Schulke Member |
|--|---|---|

Next meeting: May 14, 2018

Motions:

| | |
|---|--|
| To approve the March minutes as written: | Motion: Kent Second: Schulke Motion passed |
| To approve the April Financial report: | Motion: Schulke Second: Kent Motion passed |
| To approve template for the draft CREP letters for CREP participants: | Motion: Schulke Second: Kent Motion passed |
| To pass the Recreation and Conservation Applicant Application Resolution for 5 projects in its entirety as presented: | Motion: Kent Second: Kimball Motion passed |