

Walla Walla County Conservation District

Special June Board Meeting

Date: June 4th, 2018

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: District Conference Room

Presiding Officer: Ed Chvatal

Supervisors Present: Pat McConnell, Jeff Schulke, Todd Kimball

Supervisors Absent: Jim Kent, associate Mike Hagerman

Representatives of Other Agencies: Ed Teel, NRCS

Also present: Renee Hadley, Joanna Cowles Cleveland, Audrey Ahmann, Lynda Oosterhuis, Robert Fowler, and members of the public Annie Byerley and Nick Plucker.

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

Minutes: The Board reviewed the May minutes. **Motion by Pat McConnell and second by Todd Kimball to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

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

Checks included 13171 to 13192 total all accounts: \$351,186.93

As of this date June 4th, 2018 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the June financial report and further described as follows: Checks 13171 through 13192. Total Accounts Balance: \$351,186.93

New Business:

- 1. NRCS report:** Teel announced that Bryce Krueger, a soil conservationist, has transferred to our county. The Local Work Group met and among other things, the funding pool will now include wildlife plantings and cover crops. The fund has about 500,000. The irrigation efficiency fund may be used for conversions that improve efficiency rather than focusing mainly on hand lines to pivots. Teel also applied for a National Water Quality Incentives fund for the Mill Creek watershed. CRP participants have the option of extending contracts for one year as a bridge to the new farm bill; however, the time to apply is very short and all extended contracts will be new contracts subject to a new, much lower rental rate (about a 43% reduction locally). Cowles Cleveland added that CRP signup window ends in mid-August.
- 2. Implementation Fund Addendum:** Although the Implementation grant hasn't been officially awarded, the Commission announced that it would be increased to \$90,000. The amounts on the addendum reflect this change. After reviewing the addendum, **Pat McConnell moved and Todd Kimball seconded to approve the Imp grant addendum as presented, motion passed.**
- 3. Rotation of Board:** With the SCC approval in May of newly re-elected and appointed board members, the board rotated offices. **Todd Kimball moved and Jeff Schulke**

seconded to rotate officers as follows: Pat McConnell, Chair; Kimball, Vice-chair; Kent, Secretary; Schulke, Treasurer; Chvatal, member; motion passed.

Old Business:

- 1. Vehicle Replacement:** Hadley informed the board the vehicle fund totals \$26,000. The board authorized Hadley to find a truck, preferably with two bench seats.
- 2. Associate Supervisors and Cost Share:** Hadley explained that current law views associates as public officers, and as such they are not allowed to receive cost share (that is, have a beneficial interest in a district contract) above \$1,500 a month. There is some advice from the Commission that cost share projects for associates be approved carefully to make it clear that associate supervisors are not given priority over other project applicants.
- 3. New Associate Supervisor:** Annie Byerley has been attending meetings and has applied to be an associate supervisor. **Pat McConnell moved and Todd Kimball seconded to appoint Annie Byerley as an associate member beginning with the July meeting, motion passed.**

New Projects

- 1. CREP:** The Hagerman project is ready for board approval. This is a small 3 acre project; the district cost won't exceed 1,500. **Jeff Schulke moved and Pat McConnell seconded to approve the Hagerman project, motion passed.** There are 9 CREP projects up for renewal. Almost all are in good condition and will need very little work.
- 2. Meters:** There are several meter projects being proposed to use the remainder of the meter funds as the grant winds down; Oosterhuis referred the board to the list in her board report. There were several projects considered and the limiting factor is the ability of the installation contractors to install more meters (in addition to those already in process) in the time remaining. Only the simplest meters could be done. **Pat McConnell moved and Todd Kimball seconded to approve the proposed meter projects, motion passed.**

Program Updates

- 1. Meters/Screens:** Oosterhuis reported the meter grant will end this month. Four screens are done (BPA funds) and the 5th is in progress. She is working with the intern Robert Fowler to map Blalock. The most complex task is finding the old water pipes which are currently buried, leaky, concrete lined, and unmapped. The team is considering replacing the diversions with wells and possibly not follow existing pipeline routes but just install new ones or put in wells. Blalock has continuing problems with the air blast system during low flows; when material is "blasted" off the screen, flows push it back against the screen. Oosterhuis also reported problems with a somewhat outdated Commission GPS device being used instead of the even more outdated District GPS unit.

2. **CREP:** The landowner with the CREP fence project reviewed last month has agreed to bring the fence up to specifications. The district will inspect the fence and pay the cost share. On another issue, Cowles reported that Brian Cochran is checking as to whether the state can appeal the drastically reduced CREP rental rates. Also, new requirements for the CRP2 will slow contracting. Instead of a landowner simply signing a CRP2 to initiate the process (leading to a contract for County Committee approval) now the process requires two phases (application and contract development) both of which require significant work for the short-staffed FSA office and separate CC approvals. The CC does not meet in July, which means, in effect, only those applications (for renewals as well as new contracts) that are entered by FSA in time for the June meeting will possibly have a contract in place for approval at the August meeting in order to meet the August 17th deadline. The board expressed concern over the delay.
3. **VSP, Restoration, Outreach, Ecology:** Hadley reported that our intern is going through and updating the Wetland Inventory for the VSP program. The County is pleased with our VSP progress. We may reach out to ag. producers in the Mill Creek area as VSP is supposed to include all ag. activities in the county including small producers. Additional outreach will extend to larger ag. corporations in the western portion of the county. Hadley reported on outreach (Make-A –Splash, Return to the River Salmon Festival, and Bio-Blitz) and that the Mill Creek project is under construction. McCaw is “good to go” and should be installed in late July or August. Ecology’s Martyn Quinn came by and spoke to staff. He reported that Ecology is extremely short staffed. They will be working with the cities of Walla Walla and College Place on their water quality issues. Two landowners may get letters regarding livestock and water quality. Hadley also reported that a landowner is struggling to get a contractor to install his fence for his Ecology project; none of the contractors are interested in his project. It is a cobbly site and difficult to fence. She is trying to get the Conservation Corps lined up although they already have a full schedule. If the landowner is unable to get a contractor to install the fence by the end of September Hadley may need to cancel the Ecology grant. Hadley also has volunteered to be the next Vice-President of WADE.

Public Comments: No comments.

Employee Reports: Ahmann mentioned that due to the early meeting, a board member will need to come in to open bank statements and sign checks for bills that haven’t arrived.

Joint Agency Meetings


1. **SRSRB meeting:** Cowles Cleveland reported that a large project is using the bulk of the available funds. If canceled, our projects might be funded. The Corps of Engineers has designated the Mill Creek Channel as a project for funding at the national level; their priority is flood control but fish passage would be a consideration as well.
2. **WW Water Management Partnerships:** Chvatal and Annie Byerley reported that the revised annual Report to the Legislature has two main messages. First, the Partnership has established that over-appropriation means at this point, now that larger projects have been completed, there is no more water available for lease or water banking.

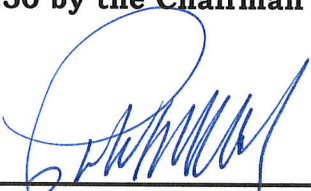
Secondly, the Partnership has demonstrated its ability to bring together people from diverse interests to solve water issues. Remaining options to increase flows are 1. Convert irrigated land to dryland, 2. Pipe water in from the Columbia, or 3) Build a reservoir. Converting irrigated to dryland is not considered a realistic option. Ecology has funding to build a reservoir but no agency to handle the huge project. The Partnership may continue as it has the structure to represent stakeholders who will want a voice in the development of a reservoir.

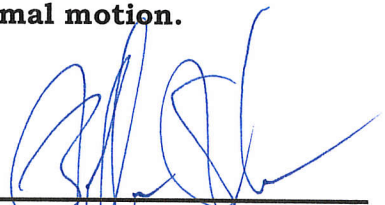
Misc. Discussion: A riparian planting visible from a public road along the Touchet River needs some upkeep. While this project was not installed under the CREP program, it was planted according to CREP guidelines and appears to the public as a CREP project. The District may be able to assist the landowner; Kimball agreed to speak with the landowner and explore options for improving the site.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 by the Chairman without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted


Audrey Ahmann
Assistant Mngr., Finance


Ed Chvatal, Pat McConnell
Chairman


Jeff Schulke
Member

Next meeting: July 9th, 2018

Motions:

To approve the May minutes as written:	Motion: McConnell Second: Kimball Motion passed
To approve the June Financial report:	Motion: Kimball Second: McConnell Motion passed
To approve the FY19 Implementation grant addendum as presented,	Motion: McConnell Second: Kimball Motion passed
To rotate the offices of the board,	Motion: Kimball Second: Schulke Motion passed
To appoint Annie Byerley as an associate supervisor,	Motion: McConnell Second: Kimball Motion passed
To approve the Hagerman CREP project,	Motion: Schulke Second: McConnell Motion passed
To approve the list of meter projects as presented,	Motion: McConnell Second: Kimball Motion passed