

Walla Walla County Conservation

District April 2019 Board Meeting

Date: April 8, 2019

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: District Conference Room

Presiding Officer: Ed Chvatal

Supervisors Present: Jim Kent, Todd Kimball, Jeff Schulke and Associate Annie Byerley

Supervisor Absent: Pat McConnell, Associate Mike Hagerman

Representatives of Other Agencies: Tracy Hanger, NRCS; Lindsey Williams and Cean Pacheco, both of WWCC Ag. Center of Excellence; Shana Joy, SCC Reg. Manager (via phone)

Also present: Renee Hadley, Lynda Oosterhuis, Lisa Stearns, Joanna Cowles Cleveland, and Audrey Ahmann

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 Jeff Schulke and second by Jim Kent to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

Financial Report: The board reviewed the April Financial Report. **Motion by Todd Kimball and second by Jeff Schulke to approve the April financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 13474 to 13497, total all accounts: \$351,917.59

As of this date April 8th 2019 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the April financial reports and further described as follows: Checks 13474 to 13497, Total all accounts: \$351,917.59

New Business:

- 1. NRCS:** Tracy Hanger, interim District Conservationist, reported that NRCS is working on final rules for the new Farm Bill. April 19th is the deadline for the EQIP signup. Producers may be able to update existing CSP contracts; look for a deadline in May. Producers should contact NRCS as she expects more definite information in the coming week. At the Local Work Group meeting, it was mentioned that Soil Health and Cover Crops could be combined, which may result in additional cost share for producers for soils monitoring if also adopting cover crops in their operations.
- 2. Update on Associate Mike Hagerman:** Kent reported that Mike Hagerman spoke with board chair Pat McConnell about stepping down as an associate board member due to other commitments. He hopes to eventually return to the board. The board accepted his resignation.
- 3. Internal Audit:** Ahmann requested an audit committee be formed to conduct the 2018 Internal Audit which should be completed before the May 13th meeting. Todd Kimball volunteered and the board agreed that Pat McConnell should assist.

4. Annual Plan of Work: The board reviewed a draft Annual Plan of Work for the coming year (July to June). It was noted that “seeking funds” is taking up more district time. The board also noted that it appears staff will be very busy. **Jeff Schulke moved and Jim seconded to approve the Annual Plan of Work as presented, motion passed.**

5. Annual Review of RCW 89.08: The meeting materials included an SCC Operations Brief #3-2008 detailing the legal obligations and responsibilities as outlined in 89.08 for supervisors. The board discussed the brief and their responsibilities as supervisors.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Comments from Regional Manager: Shana Joy encouraged the board to continue to monitor the progress of the state operating and capital budgets. Proposed budgets show no loss to Commission funding. She also mentioned that Carol Smith has been chosen as the new Executive Director after the retirement of Mark Clark.

Special Presentation: Associate Annie Byerley and guest Lindsey Williams reported on their recent trip to Equator as part of the Ag. Forestry class. They reported that in Ecuador, 47% of the population is involved in informal agriculture. The country is self-sufficient in food, exports fish, meats, etc., and is a major producer for the cut flower market. The Equator constitution includes protection of the environment through the “rights of nature” but this is not enforced.

Program Updates:

- 1. Oosterhuis** reported the planting is complete at Garrison and Pi-Hi. A Whitman class volunteered and several mentioned they had seen the video on our website. The Food System Coalition had 85 responses to their producer survey. There were requests for assistance in obtaining dry storage and local transportation. Both Walla Walla and College Place share some of the goals of the Coalition, such as making a commercial kitchen available for small producers.
- 2. Cowles Cleveland** reported CREP is moving along. The Dry Creek project is installed and reenrollments are going well. FSA is unable to process these until the new Farm Bill rules are released, but the district CREP team is completing the field checks and paperwork. Once FSA is given the go-ahead, the reenrollments should proceed quickly.
- 3. Hadley** mentioned that we returned some VSP funds. She is working on the Touchet River assessment with Columbia CD, expecting this will lead to projects for landowners in that area. We received a response from the Commission to our request for assistance in possibly obtaining a programmatic permit from the CORPS. Such a permit would clarify when the CORPS needed to be consulted for a project. Kirk Robinson of the Commission replied that some districts are not experiencing these problems and urged the district to seek a local solution.

Joint Agency Meetings

- 1. WW Water Management Partnerships:** Chvatal said the Partnership is still seeking funding.

- 2. SFRFB meeting:** Cowles Cleveland reported discussions of the USACE Mill Creek General Investigation Study which is open for public comment. The CORPS goal is to assess the flood risks and develop a plan to address them. Other considerations (habitat, aesthetics) can be considered and added to the resulting plan but the CORPS cannot fund these. Cowles Cleveland also reported that the Regional Technical Team reviewed the pre-applications. The district submitted two: Phase C of McCaw and a design-only project. The SFRFB expects about 1.5 million of funds; the pre-aps totaled 2.4 million.


Misc. Discussion: April 22nd there will be a meeting with Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rogers. Hadley also mentioned that some VSP projects are exempt from CORPS permitting review because they are associated with exempt ag. processes.

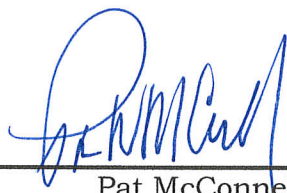
Executive Session: The board stated they would go into executive session at 6:50 for 10 minutes to review the performance of a public employee as per RCW 42.30.110 (1)(g). The board came out of executive session at 7:00.

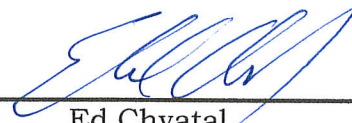
Employees pay increase: The board reviewed pay increases as presented. **Ed Chvatal moved and Todd Kimball seconded to approve the pay increases as presented, motion passed.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted


Audrey Ahmann
Assistant Manager, Finance


Pat McConnell,
Chairman


Ed Chvatal
Member

Next meeting: May 13th, 2019

Motions:

To approve the March minutes as written:	Motion: Schulke Second: Kent Motion passed
To approve the April Financial report:	Motion: Kimball Second: Schulke Motion passed
To approve the Annual Plan of Work as presented:	Motion: Schulke Second: Kent Motion passed
To approve the employee wages increases as presented:	Motion: Chvatal Second: Kimball Motion passed