

Walla Walla County Conservation

District March. 2019 Board Meeting

Date: March 11th, 2019 Time: 5:00 p.m. Place: District Conference Room

Presiding Officer: Pat McConnell

Supervisors Present: Jim Kent, Ed Chvatal, Jeff Schulke and Associate Annie Byerley

Supervisor Absent: Todd Kimball, Associate Mike Hagerman

Representatives of Other Agencies: Lindsey Williams, WWCC Ag. Resource Center

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

Member of the Public: Victor Valerio introduced himself as the contact person in the Walla Walla area for Congresswoman McMorris Rogers

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

Minutes: The Board reviewed the Jan. minutes. **Motion by Ed Chvatal and second by Jim Kent to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

Financial Report: The board reviewed the February Financial Report.¹ **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Ed Chvatal to approve the February financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 13429 to 13452, total all accounts: \$324,381.85

As of this date March 11th 2019 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the February financial reports and further described as follows: Checks 13429 to 13452, Total February Balance: \$324,381.85

Financial Report: The board reviewed the March Financial Report. **Motion by Ed Chvatal and second by Jim Kent to approve the March financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 13453 to 13473, total all accounts: \$359,101.62

As of this date March 11th 2019 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the March financial reports and further described as follows: Checks 13453 to 13473, Total March Balance: \$359,101.62

New Business:

1. **NRCS:** No report.
2. **Review and approve Annual Budget.** Ahmann presented the budget, which was explained as a Schedule 22 requirement intended to inform the board as to expenditure amounts they can reasonably expect to see over the coming year. After examining the

¹ The February meeting was canceled due to inclement weather.

figures, **Ed Chvatal moved and Jeff Schulke seconded to approve the budget as presented, motion passed.**

- 3. Resolution to Approve RCO grant applications:** Hadley explained that the board is required to pass a resolution approving the district's grant applications to the Recreation Conservation funding office. The projects were reviewed in turn. Stearns explained the McCaw project is to complete phase C of the project. The design is already complete and approved. The Dozier application is to fund the design of the project. (RCO requested we apply for a design grant.) The current site is upstream of the McCaw project and may extend to the confluence of the Coppei. Oosterhuis said after investigating the current status of landowners' screens with Sean Taylor (WDFW/NRCS) she is probably not going to submit a grant application. As landowners' interest increases she will pursue funding and mentioned that the NRCS EQIP program has funds for screens. Hadley explained the Basin Prioritization Plan. This would fund creating a comprehensive prioritized plan for all restoration projects currently identified in other plans and surveys. Funding agencies prefer a basin-wide road-map of projects in priority order rather than selecting projects in a patchwork fashion. **Jeff Schulke moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve the RCO Resolution as presented approving the applications to fund McCaw Phase C, Dozier Design, and the Walla Walla Basin Prioritization Plan, motion passed.**
- 4. Performance Reviews:** It being that time again, Hadley requested the board appoint a committee to conduct the annual performance reviews. Schulke and Byerley volunteered.
- 5. Transition to electronic rain gauges:** Schulke opened discussion of possibly using new automatic weather stations vs. the current system of recording rainfall manually with 2" tube rainfall gauges. Hadley described several options and noted that the automatic gauges require a wireless connection and cost in the range of 1,500 to 2,000 each. Stearns noted that NOAA uses 4" diameter rain gauges. Lindsey Williams mentioned that a company called The Yield is interested in doing a pilot project of several small, real-world weather monitoring stations. She offered to send their contact information to Hadley. The board expressed a preference for replacing existing rain gauges with electronic ones rather than providing larger 4" manual gauges.
- 6. Interagency Cooperation:** Walla Walla Basin Partnership is requesting some assistance from the District in navigating the Ecology grant management system called EAGL. The board agreed and, provided the time involved is minimal, the board felt there was no need to arrange for payment of Ahmann's time. The WWCC approached the District offering student assistance in drafting designs. Hadley reported WWCC is writing a contract with more specifics.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

New Projects:

1. **Natural Resource Investments:** Cowles Cleveland explained the Mud Creek project has been in line for funding in the next biennium. It is in an area that has been difficult for the district to complete projects. Several state agencies have identified this creek as having water quality concerns. The plan is to restore a section of a creek that has been degraded with invasive reed canary grass and impacts from livestock. The project would involve weed control, replanting natives, restoring the natural channel (to about a 2' width), livestock exclusion, etc., and all three landowners were on board, and all normal permitting in progress. However, the Corps of Engineers has declared it a dredging project and is requiring a full biological assessment, a requirement for major construction projects. Kirk Robison, interim director of the Conservation Commission, is tackling the Corps' overreach at the national level as several districts are having the same problem. In the meantime, the landowners either withdrew or are hesitant about proceeding and therefore project is on hold. The board will send a letter in support of the Commission obtaining a programmatic biological assessment to cover all district projects.

Program Updates:

1. **Oosterhuis** reported that planting for the Wildhorse grant has been delayed due to the snow but will be completed later this month. She reported on the Food Producers Workshop and that there is growing interest in the coalition.
2. **Cowles Cleveland** reported that due to the extreme weather, the normal spring planting window will be extended.
3. **Hadley** drew the board's attention to the new negotiated overhead rate that has been approved at 26.58%. The Conservation Commission will meet in Walla Walla this year and we will need to plan a tour Sept. 18th-19th. Ray Ledgerwood announced his retirement in June. We may be returning funds for VSP due to permitting issues. Outreach for the month included mini-sessions.

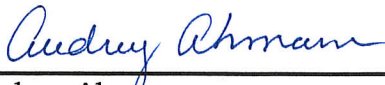
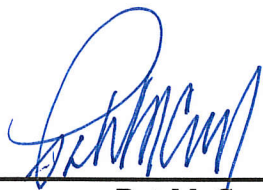
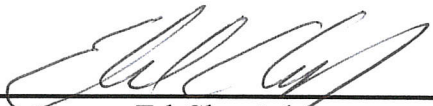
Joint Agency Meetings

1. **WW Water Management Partnerships:** Chvatal reported that in the coming biennium, the Partnership will probably take on more of a role in developing one of the large scale irrigation water projects (e.g., Pine Creek reservoir).
2. **SFRFB meeting:** Cowles Cleveland reported the SFRFBoard is considering adding some adaptive management to projects as part of the usual landowner maintenance requirements. They also discussed requiring more cost share on projects when a second project at the same site for the same purpose is considered (e.g., replacement screen).

Misc. Discussion: Sponsorship of community and regional events was discussed. The board, while supportive of these types of events, was hesitant to expend district funds on a sponsorship and would prefer to spend money on projects. The district could promote awareness of the events and help in other ways. Drone use was also discussed and the board approved of drone use provided the landowner agrees.

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

Respectfully submitted

		
Audrey Ahmann	Pat McConnell,	Ed Chvatal
Assistant Manager, Finance	Chairman	Member

Next meeting: April 8th, 2019

Motions:

To approve the Jan. minutes as written:	Motion: Chvatal Second: Kent Motion passed
To approve the Feb. Financial report:	Motion: Kent Second: Chvatal Motion passed
To approve the March Financial report:	Motion: Chvatal Second: Kent Motion passed
To approve the Annual Budget as presented:	Motion: Chvatal Second: Schulke Motion passed
To approve the RCO Resolution approving the application as presented, to apply for funds for the McCaw Phase C project, Dozier design, and Walla Walla Basin Prioritization plan,	Motion: Schulke Second: Kent Motion passed