

Walla Walla County Conservation District

Sept. 2019 Board Meeting

Date: Sept. 9th, 2019 Time: 5:00 p.m. Place: District Conference Room

Presiding Officer: Jeff Schulke

Supervisors Present: Ed Chvatal, Pat McConnell, Jeff Schulke and Associate Annie Byerley

Supervisors Absent: Jim Kent, Todd Kimball

Representing Other Agencies: Lyndsey Williams, Walla Walla Community College; Nichole Armijo, FSA; Shana Joy and new regional Manager Allisa Carlson, both SCC

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

Member of the Public: Washington State 16th District Representative Skyler Rude

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Vice-Chair Jeff Schulke.

Minutes: The Board reviewed the July minutes. **Motion by Pat McConnell and second by Ed Chvatal to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

Financial Report: The board reviewed the August Financial Report. **Motion by Pat McConnell and second by Ed Chvatal to approve the August financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 13576 to 13603, total all accounts: \$418,884.13

The board reviewed the September Financial Report. **Motion by Ed Chvatal and second by Pat McConnell to approve the Sept. financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 13604 to 13627, total all accounts: \$384,318.10

As of this date September 9, 2019 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the August financial report and further described as follows: Checks 13576 to 13603, total all accounts: \$418,884.13 and checks included in the September financial report and further described as follows: 13604 to 13627, total all accounts 384,318.10.

New Business:

1. Public/Visitors Comments:

Armijo requested that the District host a series of mini-sessions in October instead of waiting until early spring. The new farm bill is out and she explained that FSA staff has important information regarding changes and deadlines. The board agreed that such information should be made available as soon as possible. They

suggested staff organize three sessions in October (in Prescott, Waitsburg, and Touchet) and that sessions be held early in the day.

Rep. Rude: Skyler Rude introduced himself and expressed an interest in water issues and irrigation as there is no one in his caucus leading in that area.

Shana Joy introduced Allisa Carlson as our new Regional manager. Joy updated the board on the upcoming SCC meeting September 18th. There will be discussions regarding elections and other issues. She mentioned that the SCC was recently recognized by the state auditor's office for their stewardship of funds. Finally, she thanked Hadley for getting the annual report out early.

2. **NRCS Update:** Hadley delivered the NRCS update. Tracy Hanger has been named as district conservationist. National deadlines have been moved up. NRCS is understaffed and will be relying on districts to meet their work load.
3. **WDFW:** Hadley informed the board that WDFW funds, in conjunction with NRCS, will be available for the bridge project for a summer of 2020 installation. This will replace a water crossing and open 15 miles of Russel Creek for fish habitat.
4. **Review of Farmer of the Year candidates:** Hadley defined the award types (Farmer or Steward of the year) and gave three nominees for the award. The board agreed all candidates were exceptionally qualified and suggested Hadley make the final call.
5. **SE Area Resolutions:** Hadley reminded the board of the opportunity to bring an issue to the attention of the SCC via the resolution process, but the board had no concerns at this time.
6. **Notification of Extended Leave:** As per district policy, Hadley informed the board that she would be taking leave in excess of one week in December. **Pat McConnel moved and Ed Chvatal seconded that Hadley be allowed to take leave as requested, motion passed.**
7. **SCC Tour:** Hadley described the upcoming tour to the board. It will start with the Walsh Creek project, then travel to the McCaw project, passing many CREP projects along the way, and finally stopping at Titus Creek screen project. Dinner is confirmed with the Walla Walla Community College.
8. **Larger producers:** Ahmann and Hadley asked the board for direction on how the district might focus efforts to help the dryland wheat producers manage risk by providing cost share when implementing innovative conservation practices. The

board agreed to consider this and mentioned cover crops and Weed-It technology as recent developments in agriculture conservation practices.

9. **Reschedule dates for upcoming meetings:** Since the October and November board meetings fall on holidays, the board decided to hold them on October 15th and November 12th. The Nov. meeting will be at 4:00 pm.
10. **Review of and changes to** district procedure and personnel manuals: Proposed changes were distributed to the board. Ahmann explained these were suggested as general policies for all districts. After review, **Pat McConnell moved and Ed Chvatal seconded to add to the travel policy: meal times are breakfast 6 -7 a.m., lunch 12-1 p.m.p., dinner 6-7 p.m.; to add that board members receive a copy of the most recent bank reconciliation with the board meeting prep. documents; and to add the section, as presented, to the personnel manual which makes explicit the district policy of not allowing "off the clock" work. Motion passed.**
11. **Approve Natural Resources Improvement Addendum:** Ahmann explained this addendum could not be approved in June as the Commission had not yet awarded the grant amounts. Hadley described the projects which are the Cottonwood project (Shelton) and the Rea bridge project. The addendum is as follows:
Outcome 1: Design, obtain permits, coordinate with landowner and administer cost share to install the Rea project: \$62,500.
Outcome 2: Design, obtain permits, coordinate with landowner and administer cost share to install the Shelton project: \$62,500.
Ed Chvatal moved and Pat McConnell seconded to approve the addendums as presented, motion passed.

New Projects for Board Approval:

VSP: Lisa Stearns presented two VSP projects for board approval after Hadley explained that the projects needed both the VSP Work Group approval and the district board approval. The first is a project to establish native grass cover and pollinator habitat on a section of Mill Creek, which Stearns estimates to be about 12 acres and should cost about \$5,000 to complete. **Pat McConnell moved, and Ed Chvatal seconded to approve the VSP Mill Creek conservation cover and pollinator habitat project.** The second site is similar and is on Pine Creek. **Ed Chvatal moved, and Pat McConnell seconded to approve the VSP Pine Creek conservation cover project.**

National Water Quality Grant: Hadley reported on her work regarding the lower Mill Creek area. The National Water Quality Initiative through NRCS might be a good fit for addressing this reach. In response to questions, Hadley made the following points:

- The reach is Lower Mill Creek from Gose to the mouth of the Walla Walla
- Concerns include documented TMDLs, the erratic stream morphology, and if the Corps decides to raise the levies, potential higher flows and flooding downstream
- The project might also fit a Flood Plains by Design grant
- Will require a lot of landowner outreach and participation
- May focus on the last three miles

Hadley showed the board a representative project area lacking vegetation that could be impacted by high flows if not addressed. The first step (which Hadley has completed) was to get staff approval at partner agencies (CTUIR and RCO). With board approval she will now approach their respective boards. The supervisors were highly supportive, especially liking the “big picture” approach and that we are being proactive.

Program Updates:

1. **Oosterhuis** mentioned CREP maintenance is in progress. She reported on the Grain Conference attended in July, where the focus was on rebuilding a regional grain system. Topics included identifying processing bottlenecks, alternative cropping systems, cover crops and using livestock to terminate them. She also reported on the Food System Coalition and that a Whitman intern is investigating the best business models for this coalition.
2. **Cowles Cleveland reported that** all the reenrollments were turned in to FSA on time. Contracts and packets will go out along with the State contract agreement. All but 3 CREP contracts were reenrolled. She is working on status reviews for NRCS.
3. **Hadley:** Hadley mentioned the district is providing landowners with technical assistance through VSP. The 2-year report was completed and submitted on time. Shana Joy and Hadley looked at three SCC funded projects (Imp and two Fire Recovery) as part of the SCC project inspection process; there were no concerns.
4. **Stearns** reported that the additional funds for the McCaw Phase B project were approved and the additional work completed.

Joint Agency Meetings

1. **Snake River Salmon Recovery Board.** Cowles Cleveland reported that one region was unable to spend all their RCO funds and agreed to allocate the remainder to the SRSRB. Yancy Reser resigned his position and the county commissioners will appoint his replacement. The RCO will be reducing the grant application process which is thorough but time consuming.
2. **Walla Walla Basin Partnership:** The state legislature has asked the group to develop a 30-year plan; the original legislation was for a 10-year endeavor. There is increasing friction over water in the basin.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted

		
Audrey Ahmann	Jeff Schulke,	Ed Chvatal
Assistant Manager, Finance	Vice Chairman	Secretary

Next meeting: October 15th, 2019

Motions:

To approve the July minutes as written,	Motion: McConnell Second: Chvatal Motion passed
To approve the August financial report,	Motion: McConnell Second: Chvatal Motion passed
To approve the Sept. financial report,	Motion: Chvatal Second: McConnell Motion passed
To approve extended leave for Hadley in December/January,	Motion: McConnell Second: Chvatal Motion passed
To add meal times to the district travel policy, to add including the most recent bank reconciliation to board members' packets, to make explicit the district policy of not allowing "off the clock" work,	Motion: McConnell Second: Chvatal Motion passed

To approve the Natural Resources
Investment addendum,

Motion: Chvatal
Second: McConnell
Motion passed

To approve the VSP Mill Creek
conservation cover and pollinator habitat
project

Motion: McConnell
Second: Chvatal
Motion passed

To approve the VSP Pine Creek
conservation cover and pollinator habitat
project

Motion: Chvatal
Second: McConnell
Motion passed