

Walla Walla County Conservation District

Jan. 2020 Board Meeting

Date: January 13th, 2020 Time: 4:00 p.m. Place: District Conference Room

Presiding Officer: Jeff Schulke

Supervisors Present: Ed Chvatal, Todd Kimball, Jeff Schulke

Supervisors Absent: Jim Kent, Pat McConnel, Associate Annie Byerley

Other Agencies: Tracy Hanger, NRCS, and Allisa Carlson, SCC

Guests: Ammon Felix, Walker (full name not recorded)

Also present: Lynda Oosterhuis, Lisa Stearns, Joanna Cowles Cleveland, Cat Garza, and Audrey Ahmann

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Vice-Chair Jeff Schulke.

Minutes: The Board reviewed the December minutes. **Motion by Todd Kimball and second by Ed Chvatal to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

Financial Report: The board reviewed the January Financial Report. **Motion by Todd Kimball and second by Ed Chvatal to approve the January financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 13714 to 13743, total all accounts: \$352,271.92

As of this date January 13th, 2020 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the January financial report and further described as follows: Checks 13714 to 13743, total all accounts \$352,271.92

New Business:

1. **NRCS update:** Hanger reported that updates to the Farm Bill will be presented at the Annual Meeting.
2. **NRCS Lease update:** Cowles Cleveland presented a quarterly report on the lease. The district completed a lot of work in the final quarter of the year for NRCS.
3. **Discussion: Green New Deal and Agriculture:** Schulke welcomed guests Ammon Felix and Walker (full name not recorded). Felix has lived in Walla Walla 4 years and Walker is a senior studying biochemistry at Whitman. Felix explained they are part of the SunRise Movement, a youth-led grassroots organization working to help adoption of the goals of the Green New Deal (GND). They have organized a Town Hall meeting hoping to bring the agriculture community into the discussion of the GND. They will have panelists representing the farming community and others with an interest in how the GND might affect agriculture. Points raised during the discussion included that conservation and sustainability are already widely

embraced by the farming community and it was hoped that proponents of the GND might seek to build on existing work and not adopt a punitive model. The guests were thanked and several board members expressed an intent to either attend the event themselves or encourage others to do so, but not as representatives of the WWCCD at this time.

4. **Election Update: Annual Meeting Agenda:** Ahmann informed the board that the election may be canceled because the sole applicant for the position was the incumbent (Pat McConnell) and the requisite number of nominating signatures were turned in. **Ed Chvatal moved and Todd Kimball seconded to proceed to inform the voting public that the incumbent, Pat McConnell, has been re-elected to the currently open position by reason of being the only person filing for the position by the filing deadline and with the required 25 validated signatures and therefore, pursuant to WAC 135-110-370, no poll site, absentee or mail balloting will be performed. Motion carried.** Ahmann then drew the board's attention to the Annual Meeting Agenda in their packets.
5. **2019 Budget vs. Actual:** The board reviewed a handout showing the budget vs. actual numbers for 2019. In response to questions, Ahmann explained that funds for projects not expended in 2019 (e.g., RCO Russel) are available for 2020 installation, and that the majority of office lease costs were employee salaries, so are not listed under Office Lease. In past reports, the majority of lease expenses were for consultant (cultural resources) and could be recorded as office lease costs.

Program Updates: Cowles Cleveland reported that two CREP projects are installed and one in process. A Floodplains by Design grant application which, if funded, will reactivate historic side-channels and floodplain, is nearly complete. Oosterhuis reported she's fielding calls from folks needing their meters read. The data-logging meters use varying software and cables, which makes downloading the information challenging. She is looking for a low-maintenance, low tech meter for replacements. She reported that irrigators who recently replaced meters through district programs are getting requests from Ecology to submit water usage reports.

Joint Agency Meetings

1. **Snake River Salmon Recovery Board.** There was no December meeting but the 2020 grant round is in progress.
2. **WW Water Management Partnership:** Chvatal reported that the Partnership's main contribution has been to demonstrate that all water-saving options have been explored, lending support to the idea of piping in new water or a reservoir.
3. **Food Coalition:** Oosterhuis said the coalition is wrapping up their feasibility study. One point in the area's favor (in terms of food production) is the wide variety of crops that can be grown here. A core group within the coalition is applying for funding for a facility to process and market salsa.

Misc. Discussion and Public Comment:

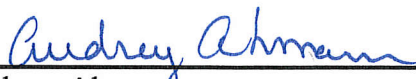
Allisa Carlson, our regional manager from the SCC, gave the following updates to the board: There is proposed legislation to change how special purpose districts manage elections, but CDs might be exempted because we have election guidance and oversight by the Commission. She thanked the board for the comments they submitted on the subject. There will be some WAC changes proposed by SCC regarding elections, such as holding all CD elections during the same week in March. In the special budget, RCPP has been funded but not additional funds for CREP or community fire resilience funds. SCC has hired a VSP scientist to review the 5-year reports and develop a Quality Assurance Project Plan for monitoring VSP success.

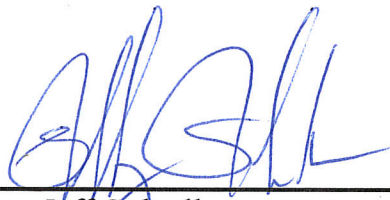
Cowles Cleveland noted that she is working on a pre-proposal for a design grant for a reach of the Touchet below Prescott.

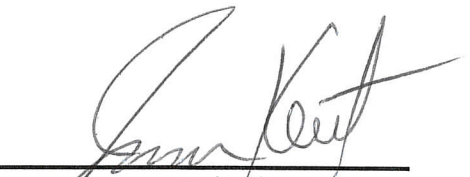
Ed Chvatal mentioned that Hadley needs to email the Partnership in her capacity as District Manager to inform them that he is still the Conservation Districts' representative on the Partnership Boppard.

With no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted,


Audrey Ahmann
Assistant Manager, Finance


Jeff Schulke,
Vice Chair


Ed Chvatal
Secretary

Next meeting: February 10th, 2020

Motions:

To approve the Dec. minutes as written,	Motion: Kimball Second: Chvatal Motion passed
To approve the January financial report,	Motion: Kimball Second: Chvatal Motion passed
To cancel the election (see above for full text),	Motion: Chvatal Second: Kimball Motion passed

