

Walla Walla County Conservation District

November 2020 Board Meeting

Date: Nov. 9, 2020 Time: 4:00 p.m. Place: Via phone conference

Presiding Officer: Jeff Schulke

Supervisors Present: Ed Chvatal, Jim Kent, Pat McConnell, Todd Kimball,
Associate Annie Byerley

Supervisors Absent:

Other Agencies: Lindsey Williams WWCC

Also present: Renee Hadley, Lisa Stearns, Audrey Ahmann

Members of the Public: none

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Ed Chvatal (Schulke joined meeting at 4:15).

Minutes: The Board reviewed the October minutes. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Pat McConnell to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

Financial Report: Ahmann reported that a check was listed on the October report but not included in the totals at the end of the report. She submitted a revised October financial report with **ending balance of 125,343.65** The board reviewed the revised October Financial Reports. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Pat McConnell to approve the revised October financial report, motion passed.** The board reviewed the November Financial Report. **Motion by Pat McConnell and second by Jim Kent to approve the November financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 13968 to 13989, total all accounts: \$ 208,243.67

As of this date November 9, 2020 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the November financial report and further described as follows: Checks 13969 to 13989, total all accounts \$208,243.67.

Old Business:

1. **Annual Meeting and Election** Ahmann explained some of the changes to the board.
 - a. The SCC is advising districts to consider mail-in elections instead of poll site elections. The process looks to be fairly straightforward. The

Public Comments: Lindsey Williams was invited to comment and reported that all classes at the Community College are in session with safety measures in place but they're looking at the full year being done via remote learning. The new CC president is former provost Chad Hickox.

Program Updates: **Hadley** reported on behalf of employees. Referring to Cowles Cleveland's report, she mentioned that the CRP work is expected to be done by the mid-December deadline. NRCS and FSA sent out a joint letter so that folks understand that in order to renew CRP, a field status review must be completed. In response to questions, Hadley explained staff also submitted completed conservation plans which specify practices and required actions for projects to remain in CRP. Some producers were frustrated with these plans although the flexibility they were seeking was not restricted by staff decisions but by program rules. In further discussion, the board decided that completing status reviews was an acceptable role for district staff but developing a conservation plan that might place requirements on a grower could be problematic. The consensus of the board was that we should inform NRCS that the district does not want to do future CRP plans. Hadley will discuss this with Tracy and inform the board. Switching gears, Hadley said the DOE Canopy Cover planting is scheduled with the DOE Conservation Crew. On VSP, Stearns and Oosterhuis have done a good job in canvassing the screen and meter projects. Overall, the screens are holding up well and in use, although meters are not. Hadley noted that meters are not required, just reporting of water usage. It was asked if meters on well water were still functioning. Stearns will look into that and report back. Hadley asked the board to review Stearns' report on McCaw Phase C. And in good news, Stearns' Floodplains by Design grant application has ranked 4th and will likely be funded. The next Touchet project is funded.

Joint Agency Meetings

1. **Snake River Salmon Recovery Board.** No update.
2. **WW Water Management Partnership:** No update.

Update to the 5-Year Plan: Delayed until next meeting.

Executive Session: As per RCW 42.30.110 (1)(g) to review the performance of a public employee, the board went into executive session at 5:35 for 30 minutes. The board came out of executive session at 6:04. McConnell will reach out to the employee and report back to the board.

With no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 without a formal motion.

main issue will be letting folks know they need to request a ballot, and Hadley suggested using the newsletter email list, regular newsletter, and advertising. Ahmann then asked about the annual meeting and election timing. Board members mentioned that pesticide credits were offered via on-line courses. It was the consensus of the board that attempting to line up on-line speakers and credits for our annual meeting would be impractical and that there would be little attendance of a virtual annual meeting. Ahmann offered to check the RCW regarding the requirements (if any) that we hold an annual meeting. The board decided to forego passing an election resolution until the December meeting.

- b. Recruitment: Hadley reviewed the qualifications for the elected position; primarily that the person must reside in the district boundaries. Recruitment is going slowly. Several likely candidates live within city limits and are ineligible. Ahmann mentioned we can delay our election since it won't need to coincide with an annual meeting. The board will continue to seek candidates.

New Business

1. **Audit:** Ahmann explained the audit is underway. The auditor is focusing on payroll and cost share. There will be a remote audit entrance conference on Friday and the board is invited. Todd Kimball volunteered to phone in.
2. **Direct Deposit for Payroll:** Hadley is following up on setting up payroll be completed via direct deposit. This will ease some end-of-month issues and allow for remote processing of payroll when getting to the office is an issue. The plan is to have it in place by January payroll. It will cost about \$100.00 to initiate and then \$25.00 a month for the service. Ahmann will control the amount while Hadley will have final approval for the transaction. The system will only be set up for payroll. Kimball mentioned that direct deposit is becoming a standard procedure. **Ed Chvatal moved and Todd Kimball seconded that the District proceed to implement payroll direct deposits, motion passed.** Hadley mentioned that Jeff Schulke will need to come in and sign the paperwork.
3. **SE Area and WACD Meetings:** Hadley attended two meetings virtually and reported on the following highlights. WWCCD received special recognition for our work assisting NRCS and WACD. Tom Selzer has set up a "5 things you need to know" monthly update which is an easy way to keep abreast of developments that affect districts. She provided a link to this in her report. McConnell thanked Hadley for her detailed report on the meeting. Hadley asked the board to consider attending the WACD annual meeting December 1-3, which will be conducted virtually.

Respectfully submitted,

		
Audrey Ahmann	Jeff Schulke	Ed Chvatal
Assistant Manager, Finance	Chair	Secretary

Next meeting: December 14th, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

Motions:

To approve the Oct. minutes as written,	Motion: Kent Second: McConnell Motion passed
To approve the revised October financial report,	Motion: Kent Second: McConnell Motion passed
To approve the November financial report,	Motion: McConnell Second: Kent Motion passed
To proceed to implement on-line payroll direct deposit,	Motion: Chvatal Second: Kimball Motion passed