

Walla Walla County Conservation District

October 2020 Board Meeting

Date: Oct. 12, 2020 Time: 5:00 p.m. Place: Via phone conference

Presiding Officer: Jeff Schulke

Supervisors Present: Ed Chvatal, Jim Kent, Associate Annie Byerley

Supervisors Absent: Todd Kimball, Pat McConnell

Other Agencies: Allisa Carlson SCC, Tom Salzer WACD, Lindsey Williams WWCC

Also present: Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann

Members of the Public: none

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

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

Financial Report: The board reviewed the October Financial Reports. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Ed Chvatal to approve the October financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 13937 to 13967, total all accounts: \$ 125,449.62

As of this date October 12, 2020 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the October financial report and further described as follows: Checks 13937 to 13967, total all accounts \$125,449.62.

Old Business:

- 1. Adding WDFW as a voting member of the Commission:** Hadley reviewed the previous discussion of WDFW's request to become a voting member of the state Conservation Commission. There are currently 10 members. It was noted that, based on board member's personal experience, larger boards can become unwieldy and that individual voices can become diminished. It was the consensus of the board that WDFW continue its role as advisory to the SCC. The board also expressed appreciation of the way WDFW has supported both voluntary conservation and conservation districts.

New Business

1. **Election:** Ahmann explained a few changes in the election procedures. Instead of publishing the Intent to Pass an Election Resolution, the district will now be required to publish the actual resolution after adoption at a board meeting. There will no longer be nominating petitions or automatic re-election of incumbents. Instead, candidates just apply by the filing deadline. Write-in candidates are allowed. The board considered the possibility of publishing candidate statements. (Districts that do so are advised to have a policy.) After discussion, **Jim Kent moved and Ed Chvatal seconded to not publish candidate statements.** Hadley mentioned that Ed Chvatal (appointed) and Todd Kimball (elected) have both indicated they will not be seeking another term as supervisors. After recognizing the invaluable contribution both have made to the board, the board discussed recruitment of new members. Annie Byerley indicated she was willing to apply for the appointed position. The district will announce the openings via the newsletter, website, and other ways.
2. **Comments: Carlson and Salzer:** Allisa Carlson offered SCC assistance in the upcoming supervisor election. There is a Q&A forum held twice a month plus there will be a district election call-in meeting at the end of the month. There are several handbooks, short videos, and fact sheets to help inform prospective supervisors. She reported that there is no special session planned by the governor. The SCC expects to release the second half of the Imp. funding. Tom Salzer reported on the Plant Material Center and its return to function under Covid. Area Association meetings will be handled remotely. The fall WACD meeting will also be remote and supervisors are encouraged to participate. As a virtual meeting, some national leaders in conservation will be able to join some of the sessions. Finally, WACD is monitoring state elections, where some turnover is expected.
3. **USDA update:** Hadley said there continues to be some friction over producers not understanding the role of the district in completing field checks. She said thankfully NRCS and FSA are giving producers consistent information on why the field checks were needed, that the district only recorded site conditions, and had no role in any action taken by FSA.
4. **Resolution to Adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update:** Hadley referred the board to the information that was sent in advance of the meeting. After discussion of the key points, **Jim Kent moved and Ed Chvatal seconded to approve a resolution to adopt the 2020 revisions to the Walla Walla County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan as shown on the record of revision, motion passed.**

Public Comments: No public comments were offered.

Program Updates: **Hadley** reported on behalf of employees. Referring to Cowles Cleveland's report, she noted that Brian Cochran (SCC CREP Coordinator) conducted site visits and had no concerns. Hadley also suggested board members review Cowles Cleveland's notes on the CRP status reviews. Board members reiterated their support of district efforts in this area. Hadley mentioned that there will be some fall planting on various projects, some using the Washington Conservation Corps. She is also coordinating with NRCS on the new National Water Quality Initiative grant which will cover Mill Creek from the mouth up to Blue Creek.

Joint Agency Meetings

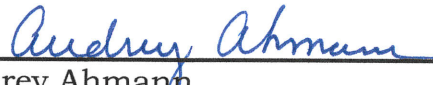
- 1. Snake River Salmon Recovery Board.** The recent meeting focused on preparation for the upcoming grant round.
- 2. WW Water Management Partnership:** No update.

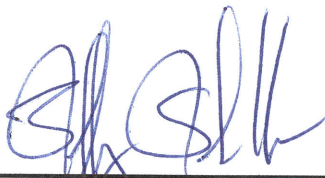
Update to the 5-Year Plan: Hadley explained that instead of tackling the entire plan at once, we could instead go over sections of the plan at each meeting and update it over time. The board reviewed the sections on Soil Erosion and Quality, Air Quality, and Range and Pasture. Hadley agreed to review the sections with NRCS as well. Some key points of the discussion included:

- CRP acres being returned to crop production is a concern
- Most producers have adopted some type of low-disturbance tillage
- The general public seems unaware of this major shift in ag., so focus on educating the public may be in order: suggested working with the Blue Mountain Land Trust (Learning on the Land series) to increase local awareness of the good work being done by local producers.
- Public needs to know most of our air quality issues emanate from outside the county.
- Major erosion on larger rivers in county: the plan could focus on what the district can do, and then advocate for the next level of support (e.g. CORPS or BPA) as these larger scale projects are beyond the scope of district funding sources.
- The cattlemen are few and not inclined to approach the district, so additional outreach and possibly workshops should be part of our plan.
- The district can offer assistance to small and irrigated pasture producers, but are less able to do so for large rangeland operations.
- It was acknowledged that reaching producers is always a challenge.
- Clarkston NRCS has a rangeland specialist who completed a CSP plan for pasture and rangeland and might be a good resource.

With no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted,


Audrey Ahmann
Assistant Manager, Finance


Jeff Schulke
Chair


Ed Chvatal
Secretary

Next meeting: October 12th, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Motions:

To approve the Sept. minutes as presented,

Motion: Chvatal
Second: Kent
Motion passed

To approve the October financial report,

Motion: Kent
Second: Chvatal
Motion passed

To have a policy of NOT publishing supervisor candidate statements,

Motion: Kent
Second: Chvatal
Motion passed

To approve a resolution to adopt the 2020 revisions to the Walla Walla County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan as shown on the record of revision,

Motion: Kent
Second: Chvatal
Motion passed