

Walla Walla County Conservation District

February 8 2021 Board Meeting

Date: Feb. 8th, 2021 Time: 4:00 p.m. Place: Via phone conference

Presiding Officer: Jeff Schulke

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

Supervisor Absent: Todd Kimball

Other Agencies: Ryan Baye, WACD; Tracy Hanger, NRCS; Allisa Carlson, SCC.

Also present: Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann, Cat Garza

Members of the Public: Alyson Buckley, Derrick Noll

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

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

Financial Report: The board reviewed the February Financial Report. **Motion by Ed Chvatal and second by Pat McConnell to approve the February financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 14036 to 14058, total all accounts: \$370,491.00

As of this date February 8th, 2021 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the February financial report and further described as follows: Checks 14036 to 14058, total all accounts \$370,491.00.

New Business:

- 1. Partner Updates: Ryan Baye** of WACD reminded the board that the WACD weekly email includes information on proposed legislation of interest to districts. He invited supervisors to consider becoming an area representative. It requires attendance at one meeting a month and to represent the SE Area if an issue is of importance to this area in particular.
- 2. NRCS overview: CREP and Continuous CRP Plans:** Hanger mentioned that the general CSP signup will continue for the next few weeks. She then thanked the District for its assistance last summer in completing CRP work. She described the difference between CREP and Continuous CRP; both involve restoration and protection of riparian areas, but CREP is limited to specific waterways. She explained

that often Continuous CRP acres are adjacent to CREP eligible acres, and since the planning for both are so similar, she would like district staff allowed to do both CREP and Continuous CRP plans. This also benefits landowners who then have a single point of contact. The board agreed this was reasonable.

- 3. Review of the District 5-Year plan:** The board reviewed the 5-Year plan. Hadley explained it had been condensed as requested. Additions included adding participation in the Walla Walla 2050 plan. The board reviewed sections and suggested several changes, such as adding that a benefit of cover crops is capturing carbon and that the district will explore alternatives to burning. **Pat McConnell moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve the plan as presented with the suggested changes, motion passed.**
- 4. Review of the VSP 5-Year Report:** Hadley explained that the VSP 5-Year Report is due 5 years after the county opted in to VSP, not five years since the plan was approved. The district is the technical lead for the county. The county did not meet the goal for meters. Meters failed for technical reasons, such as sediment and failed batteries. In response to questions, she explained the work group can adjust the work plan and will be looking for ways other than meters to address aquifer recharge concerns. Local water plans also are not the best metric as they sunset. The board does not have a role in approving the report, but thanked Hadley for the information.
- 5. Election Results:** Garza reported that ballots were counted and Alyson Buckley has been elected to the board. The SCC will approve her election at their May meeting at which time she will be an official board member.
- 6. Meeting time March 8th:** The March meeting will take place before Daylight Savings begins: the board agreed to meet at 5:00 p.m. as per our normal schedule.
- 7. Annual Employee Review:** Hadley asked board members to assist with employee reviews. Kent and Chvatal volunteered. These will be done by Zoom near the end of the February, probably the 23rd.

Public Comments: Hadley invited comments. **Mr. Noll** asked if the district had worked on air quality cost shared projects and explained he has experience with an Oregon program where wood stove users received rebates for insulating homes and converting to electrical heating systems. Hadley referred him to the Sustainable Living Center in Walla Walla as they have an energy audit program for homeowners. **Allisa Carlson** reported the WACD and SCC are seeking volunteers for two committees on elections and diversity. There continue to be no in-person meetings until the region moves to Phase 2. She also mentioned the Ecology-EPA court settlement that will require Ecology to revise its ag. BMPs by the end of the year.

Program Updates: Hadley reported on behalf of employees. **Oosterhuis** is helping Whitman Mission find ways to deal with invasive reed canary grass on their ground. Plans are in place to plant hedgerows at the community college and Woodward Canyon Winery; this is part of the WSARE grant work. **Cowles Cleveland** will be leading the field checks on 11,000 acres of CRP. She and Oosterhuis worked with the SCC to get funding to complete tree release on many older CREP projects where trees are in danger of being girdled. **Hadley** spoke of the Russell Creek fish passage project where last of 5


landowners has still not signed, though he agreed to the project initially and has recently indicated he will sign. The search for a new project manager for stream restoration continues.

Joint Agency Meetings

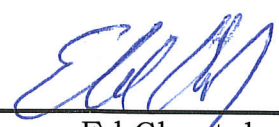
1. **Snake River Salmon Recovery Board.** Presentations for the next round of grant funding will take place next week.
2. **WW Water Management Partnership:** The Partnership had a forum with Yakima folks on their successful water management, but our stakeholders are more diverse, making collaboration more challenging.

With no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted,


Audrey Ahmann
Assistant Manager, Finance


Jeff Schulke
Chair


Ed Chvatal
Secretary

Next meeting: March 8th, 2021 at **5:00** p.m.

Motions:

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| To approve the Jan. minutes as written, | Motion: Kent
Second: Chvatal
Motion passed |
| To approve the February financial report, | Motion: Chvatal
Second: McConnell
Motion passed |
| To approve the District 5-Year Plan as presented with changes as described, | Motion: McConnell
Second: Kent
Motion passed |