

# Walla Walla County Conservation District

## January 2021 Board Meeting

Date: Jan. 11, 2020      Time: 4:00 p.m.      Place: Via phone conference

**Presiding Officer:** Jeff Schulke

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

**Supervisors Absent:** Pat McConnell, Todd Kimball

**Other Agencies:** Tom Salzer, WACD; Tracy Hanger, NRCS; Mary Collins, Palouse CD supervisor and SE Area Rep.

**Also present:** Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann

**Members of the Public:** Alyson Buckley

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

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

**Financial Report:** The board reviewed the January Financial Report. **Motion by Ed Chvatal and second by Jim Kent to approve the January financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 14018 to 14035, total all accounts: \$353,924.20

**As of this date January 11th, 2021 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the January financial report and further described as follows: Checks 14018 to 14035, total all accounts \$353,924.20.**

**Partner Updates:** **Hanger** updated the board on program deadlines; landowners with CREP reenrollments expiring in 2021 should contact FSA as soon as possible. **Tom Salzer** of WACD drew the board's attention to the WACD website which has information on the legislative session of particular interest to districts. **Mary Collins** introduced herself as our SE Area Representative and a Palouse CD supervisor. She reported that Palouse CD is continuing to work though Covid restrictions impact work. She also reminded supervisors about vacancy for a second SE area Representative. **Allisa Carlson** said the Governor's budget was released and most CD requests are funded; the House and Senate will now develop their budgets as part of the final budget development. **Hadley** said that the WSU Extension Agronomist position is open and WSU has not filled it. She

plans to send a letter on behalf of the district encouraging WSU to do so. Kent mentioned that a committee was set up to recruit candidates but none of the applicants met the requirements.

### **Old Business:**

**Leave policy:** At the December meeting the board asked Hadley to develop a policy to encourage staff to use leave time instead of paying it out. Current policy allows employees to be paid for excess hours over the cap (240 hrs.) at the end of the year. After discussion, **Ed Chvatal moved and Jim Kent seconded to modify the policy as follows: A maximum of 240 hours of Annual Leave may be carried forward from one year to the next. Employees with annual leave hours above this cap may request the hours be carried forward to the following year; if the annual leave is not taken due to work load requirements and the Board approves the request. The excess leave must be used in the first 90 days of the following calendar year. Motion passed.**

### **New Business:**

- 1. Resolution for RCO grant applications:** Hadley explained the RCO process requires the board to pass a resolution approving grant applications. Five projects were described four designs (three based on the Touchet River Conceptual Plan) and one construction. Maps were distributed and the merits of the projects discussed. **Jim Kent moved and Ed Chvatal seconded to approve the RCO Applicant Authorization Resolution for the 5 projects as presented, motion passed.**
- 2. Review of 5-Year plan:** The board reviewed the Water Quality Challenges and Goals, Riparian, and Fisheries sections. The board asked that the plan be reviewed and edited for brevity. The full plan will be presented during the Feb. board meeting and the board will review these select sections with the whole.
- 3. CD Elections Update:** Ahmann informed the board that the elections resolution was submitted to the Commission. Alyson Buckley was the sole applicant. The newsletter and website invited the public to request ballots, and these will be sent out as soon as possible.

**Program Updates:** Hadley reported on behalf of employees. In reference to Oosterhuis' report, Hadley mentioned that the Blalock screens continue to be an issue. The air-burst system does not work well and the computer operating system is becoming outdated and difficult to maintain. While the district may look to the CD for assistance, there are generally no grants to fund repair or maintenance of an existing system. Oosterhuis is helping with meter readings and working with landowners on a change in point of diversion application. The WSARE program (Beneficial Insects in the Vineyards) is going well. Cowles Cleveland is contacting

landowners with expiring CREP contracts and coordinating 11,000 areas of CRP field checks. She was asked to create a presentation for the SCC board on how an expanded buffer may impact Eastern Washington CREP. On VSP, Hadley reported that we are on track to submit the 5-year report in March and completed planting on the Coppei VSP project. On another tack, the landowner who stalled the RCO Russell Creek fish passage removal project has verbally agreed to proceed with the project but has not signed. The project is planned for installation this summer. She also reported that the newsletter was sent out.

## Joint Agency Meetings

- 1. Snake River Salmon Recovery Board.** The new grant round is in progress.
- 2. WW Water Management Partnership:** The board of the partnership suggested that WWCCD take over local water plans (LWPs). This required legislative action, so Hadley drafted a bill and sent it to Ron Schultz, policy advisor for the SCC, for review. Hadley will request that the partnership transfer to us related information so we don't lose the work they've done. Chvatal mentioned there was also talk of transferring water banking to the Watershed Council but they declined. The Council is under new leadership and Hadley hopes to renew ties with them. Blue Mountain Land trust has also had leadership changes. They are working on "donation" easements (in which the landowner donates the value of the easement instead being paid for it). Finally, the Walla Walla 2050 plan will be setting new priorities for projects and may include using projects already identified in other plans.

With no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 without a formal motion.

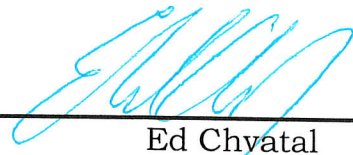
Respectfully submitted,



Audrey Ahmann  
Assistant Manager, Finance



Jeff Schulke  
Chair



Ed Chvatal  
Secretary

Next meeting: February 8th, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

### Motions:

To approve the Dec. minutes as written,      Motion: Kent  
Second: Chvatal  
Motion passed

To approve the January financial report,      Motion: Chvatal  
Second: Kent  
Motion passed

To change the personnel manual annual  
leave policy as detailed above,

Motion: Chvatal  
Second: Kent  
Motion passed

To approve the RCO Applicant  
Authorization Resolution for 5 projects as  
presented,

Motion: Kent  
Second: Chvatal  
Motion passed