

Walla Walla County Conservation District

June 14th 2021 Board Meeting

Date: June 14th, 2021 Time: 5:00 p.m. Place: via phone conference

Presiding Officer: Jeff Schulke

Supervisors Present: Pat McConnell, Jim Kent, Annie Byerley, Alyson Buckley

Supervisor Absent: none

Other Agencies: Allisa Carlson, SCC

Also present: Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann, Joanna Cowles Cleveland, Lynda Oosterhuis

Members of the Public: Grant Traynor, Keith Farrens

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

Minutes: The Board reviewed the May minutes. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Annie Byerley to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

Financial Report: The board reviewed the June Financial Report. **Motion by Pat McConnell and second by Jim to approve the June financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 14121 to 14145, total all accounts: \$249,284.65

As of this date June 14th 2021 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the June financial report and further described as follows: Checks 14121 to 14145, total all accounts \$249,284.65

New Business:

- 1. NRCS Update:** Hadley reported that the acting District Conservationist is Carolyn out of the Pasco office. FSA is reopening the CRP signup with higher rental rates and allowing new submissions. She also mentioned she sent a letter on behalf of the district to WSU Extension requesting they fill the 3 vacancies in our region.
- 2. Rotation of the Board:** After discussion, the following rotation was suggested: Annie Byerley, Chair, Pat McConnell, Vice-Chair; Jim Kent, Secretary; Alyson Buckley, Treasurer; Jeff Schulke, Member. **Pat McConnell moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve rotation of the board as proposed, motion passed.**

3. **Policy, Board Rotation:** After discussion, the board decided to adopt a policy specifying how board positions would be rotated. The general practice has been to move each member “up” with Vice-Chair becoming Chair, Secretary becoming Vice-Chair, etc. **Annie Byerley moved and Pat McConnell seconded to adopt a policy to rotate the board by having each member move up one seat, motion passed.**
4. **Approval of the Master Contract:** Ahmann explained the Master Contract with the Conservation Commission sets forth the boiler plate language common to all SCC grants, with tasks and amounts approved by adding addendums to the contract, **Annie Byerly moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve the FY 22-23 SCC Master Contract as presented, motion passed.**
5. **Approval of FY 22-23 Addendum:** The draft addendums were discussed; Ahmann explained the funding amounts shown were estimates. After review, **Pat McConnell moved and Annie Byerly seconded to approve the CREP, Irrigation Efficiency, and Implementation Addendums as presented, motion passed.**
6. **Signature Page:** Ahmann explained the Signature Page allows the Chair and Vice-Chair to delegate responsibility for signing grant-related documents to other board members and certain staff. It must be signed by both the Chair and Vice-Chair. McConnell and Byerley agreed to stop by the office and sign the document.
7. **Review and Approve VSP Contract:** The board reviewed the FY 22-23 VSP contract between the county and the district. Hadley explained there was a lot of work to do, including meeting with reviewers and revising the 5-Year report and completing the 2-Year report. Reviewers requested more monitoring of VSP progress. **Annie Byerley moved and Pat McConnell seconded to approve the FY 22-23 VSP Contract with Walla Walla County as presented, motion passed.**
8. **Review and Approve Sunday contract:** Hadley explained that with some large grants (Floodplain by Design, 5 RCO contracts, VSP) we have a heavy workload. Darrel Sunday of Sunday Consulting has agreed to assist the district under a personal service contract, not as an employee. He will be tasked with permitting and assisting with habitat projects such as Russel Creek. The board suggested we have Enduris review the contract. Assuming Enduris would not suggest any major changes, **Pat McConnell moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve the Sunday Consulting project after it has been reviewed by Enduris, motion passed.**

Public Comments: Regional Manager Carlson (SCC) gave an SCC update. There are big changes to how NRI is funded. Instead of funding individual projects, districts will receive an allotment and can chose the NRI projects from those entered in the SCC project database, the Conservation Project Data System (CPDS). Districts may use up to 25% of the funds for technical assistance instead of TA included as a percent of project cost. Districts can also apply for District Implemented Projects instead of limiting funding to only landowner projects.¹ Hadley shared with the WWCCD Board of supervisors that

¹ A DIP project could be a large stream restoration project in which a landowner is supportive but not implementing him or herself, as opposed to landowner projects like installing fencing or cover crops.

Ahmann was nominated for WADE Employee of the year for her contributions to the district.

Program Updates: **Oosterhuis reported** is beginning insect monitoring on the WSARE project. She attended some Irrigation Efficiency program training where they learned of changes to the program. Among other things, projects will no longer require participants to relinquish water rights in perpetuity in order to qualify for funds; now irrigators may just need to agree to not use their full water right during defined times. **Cowles Cleveland** reported wrapping up the CRP field checks and CREP reenrollments. There may be an open period for CREP beginning in August. Due to lack of interest in the program, CRP signups have been reopened with higher rental rates. In response to questions from the board, Hadley offered to report back as to whether this was part of a national trend or specific to the Pacific Northwest. **Hadley** reported that reviewers of the 5-Year report questioned the adaptive management approved by the VSP Work Group in that report. The reviewers want additional monitoring. Outreach includes completing an education video with the Walla Walla Community College (WWCC) and participating in the Armed to Farm program which is an outreach program for vets seeking to enter farming. Cat Garza is finishing up obtaining soil samples for the Soil Health Initiative, and Hadley congratulated Garza on finishing her Associate's Degree in Soil Sciences from WWCC.

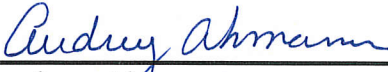

Joint Agency Meetings

1. **Snake River Salmon Recovery Board:** Virtual project tours were completed. The next grant round may have more funding for the region. We may be allowed to amend our current grant applications to add unused funds.
2. **2050 Plan:** This group is hoping to bring local stakeholders together to represent water rights holders to Ecology, CTUIR, and Oregon. The water bank is going to be handled by Ecology. The district has the data for the water rights plans but not the authority to provide oversight of the plans. Local water plans can continue for the time being; Ecology does not intend to adjust or enforce any changes to the plans for at least the next two years. Also, in reviewing the 2050 plan, DOE has indicated they won't fund anything unless it's in the plan, so Hadley was working to get screens, meters, shallow water aquifer recharge, and irrigation efficiency added to the plan.
3. **Partnership:** Annie Byerley reported the final meeting was held June 1st. An additional meeting will be held near the end of the month to approve the final vouchers.
4. **Others:** Blue Mountain Land Trust completed an easement to protect fish along the Touchet.

Board members and staff thanked outgoing Chair Schulke for his leadership during a tough year of remote meetings and adaptation.

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

Respectfully submitted,

		
Audrey Ahmann	Annie Byerley	Jim Kent
Assistant Manager, Finance	Chair	Secretary

Next meeting: July 12, 2021 at **5:00** p.m.

Motions:

To approve the May minutes as written,	Motion: Kent Second: Byerley Motion passed
To approve the June financial report,	Motion: McConnell Second: Kent Motion passed
To approve the rotation of the board,	Motion: McConnell Second: Kent Motion passed
To adopt a policy to rotate the board by having each member move up one seat,	Motion: Byerley Second: McConnell Motion passed
To approve the FY 22-23 Master Contract with the State Conservation Commission,	Motion: Byerley Second: Kent Motion passed
To approve the CREP, Irrigation Efficiency, and Implementation Addendums as presented,	Motion: McConnell Second: Byerley Motion passed
To approve the FY 22-23 VSP Contract with Walla Walla County as presented,	Motion: Byerley Second: McConnell Motion passed
To approve the Sunday Consulting project after it has been reviewed by Enduris,	Motion: McConnell Second: Kent Motion passed