

Walla Walla County Conservation District

July 12th 2021 Board Meeting

Date: July 12th, 2021 Time: 5:00 p.m. Place: via phone conference

Presiding Officer: Annie Byerley

Supervisors Present: Jim Kent, Annie Byerley, Alyson Buckley

Supervisor Absent: Pat McConnell, Jeff Schulke

Other Agencies: Allisa Carlson, SCC; Amy Amerein, SE Area Rep. and Columbia CD supervisor; Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director

Also present: Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann, Grant Traynor

Members of the Public: none

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Annie Byerley

Minutes: The Board reviewed the June minutes. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Alyson Buckley to approve the minutes as presented, motion passed.**

Financial Report: The board reviewed the July Financial Report. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Alyson Buckley to approve the July financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** Checks included 14146 to 14167, total all accounts: \$431,038.64

As of this date July 12th 2021 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the July financial report and further described as follows: Checks 14146 to 14167, total all accounts \$431,038.64

New Business:

- 1. New staff:** Hadley introduced the board to Grant Traynor who will be focusing on VSP initially. Alison Crowley has also joined the district and will start soon assisting with Mill Creek restoration projects.
- 2. WACD Update:** Tom Salzer informed the board that dues were equalized across all districts and that with some budget tightening WACD was able to reduce everyone's dues by \$400.00. There are two committees (Diversity Equity & Inclusion and Elections Reform) which are making some progress. WACD Annual meeting will include both in-person business meetings and virtual sessions; he encouraged the board to submit resolutions. Finally, he mentioned the SE Area meeting will be hosted by Walla Walla in October and Hadley suggested we aim for the end of the

month; supervisors present had no scheduling conflicts. Hadley then recognized **Amy Amerein** who stated she hopes to hear from fellow supervisors of any topics to be discussed at the SE Area meeting.

3. **NRCS Lease:** Hadley presented the figures from Cowles Cleveland about the current NRCS lease. To date, NRCS has not requested much assistance from staff related to tasks listed in the lease, so we have not expended much.
4. **Biennial Cost Share Policy:** Ahmann reviewed the draft policy which is unchanged from last years. **Jim Kent moved and Alyson Buckley seconded to approve the FY22-23 Cost Share Policy as presented, motion passed.**
5. **Contracts for Review and Approval:** Hadley gave a brief overview of each contract.
 1. Cluster Engineer: allows the district to participate the SCC Cluster Engineer program through Pomeroy CD.
 2. Whatcom CD: allows us to work with staff at Whatcom CD who are familiar with the National Water Quality Initiative, assist us in the assessment and share their report template.
 3. Universal Plan Enrollment Application: allows employees to add dependents to the district medical plan using pre-tax dollars.
 4. Letter to OSU: Hadley wanted board approval to send a letter to Oregon State which gives them our authorization to attend meetings so they can include district priorities in their funding plans.

Alyson Buckley moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve all three contracts and the letter of support as presented, motion passed.

6. **VSP Projects for approval** Hadley presented two VSP projects for approval. One will provide cost share to install riparian plantings on the Russell Creek project, while the other will assist in planting a buffer on Yellowhawk Creek. Both have been approved by the VSP Work Group. The Work Group agreed the projects will assist the county in meeting the habitat goals of the Work Plan. **Jim Kent moved and Alyson Buckley seconded to approve the two VSP projects as described, motion passed.**
7. **DOE Water Quality Letters:** Hadley reviewed past experiences with water quality letters and landowner responses. DOE had a four-year hiatus in sending such letters due to staffing issues and Covid. Now at capacity, they are sending letters again. Hadley will keep the board updated as the process unfolds.
8. **Miscellaneous:** Hadley took a moment to recognize and congratulate Oosterhuis for reaching her 5-year mark with the district and noted her appreciation for Oosterhuis' dedication and recent work with producers in the vineyards. She also mentioned that rainfall cards for the past growing season are coming in and asked the board if the program should continue, which the board supported.

Public Comments: Allisa Carlson reported that the state is opening up more after the pandemic. State restrictions on public gatherings have been lifted but we are required to continue to offer a remote option for public meetings such as a call-in number. She

reminded us to submit NRI project plans. Wildfire Recovery funds will be available and are not set aside for specific fire disasters. She mentioned she is available to complete the new supervisor training to our new folks and reminded them to please complete the Open Government Training by mid-August.


Program Updates: Hadley referred members to Cowles Cleveland's board report. She met with NRCS folks who gave some good feedback on the field checks staff have been competing. Also, some district spring plantings have higher than usual mortality due to the very dry spring and extreme June heat wave. Klundt's board report included spring totals and the notice of the Governor's burn ban through September. Hadley is drafting a newsletter and informed the board that new grants (DOE Floodplain by Design \$690,000; NRCS National Water Quality Initiative 50,000; RCO Last Chance Rd at RM 35.5 construction) are now finalized and work is beginning. The state review panel partially approved the VSP 5-Year Report but apparently this is how they responded to most of the 5-Year reports and they have given us a "pass" to continue. (It was a pass/fail evaluation.) Darrel Sunday is on task to get permits for Russell Creek. Touchet River Mile 42 is not meeting the grant time milestones; we are now working with the state Department of Enterprise Services to get the RFQ out and the design work going. Finally, Lorna Emerich has resigned her part-time position. Hadley also mentioned that the Conservation Commission has just released a draft document setting goals and priorities for our governing agency and asked supervisors to take a look and provide comment.

Joint Agency Meetings

1. **Snake River Salmon Recovery Board:** no update
2. **2050 Plan:** No update
3. **Partnership:** Byerly reported this entity has now closed the doors. She is on the Pollinator Task Force and said the state has granted funding for the work. Byerley also serves on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee for WACD and they have held meetings and are developing a game plan.
4. **Others:** Alyson Buckley is on the Ag. Burn Task Force and described some of the research they are funding.

With no further business, Jim Kent moved and Alyson Buckley seconded to adjourn the meeting, motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,


Audrey Ahmann
Assistant Manager, Finance


Annie Byerley
Chair


Jim Kent
Secretary

Next meeting: September 13, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

Motions:

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| To approve the June minutes as written, | Motion: Kent
Second: Buckley
Motion passed |
| To approve the July financial report, | Motion: Kent
Second: Buckley
Motion passed |
| To approve the FY22-23 Cost Share Policy as presented, | Motion: Kent
Second: Buckley
Motion passed |
| To approve three contracts and a letter of support as presented, | Motion: Buckley
Second: Kent
Motion passed |
| To approve the Russel and Cottonwood VSP projects as described, | Motion: Kent
Second: Buckley
Motion passed |