

Walla Walla County Conservation District

Nov. 8th 2021 Board Meeting

Date: Nov. 8, 2021

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Place: District Conference Room and via phone link

Presiding Officer: Pat McConnell

Supervisors Present: Jim Kent, Pat McConnell, Jeff Schulke

Supervisor Absent: Annie Byerley, Alyson Buckley

Other Agencies: Allisa Carlson, SCC; Tracy Hanger, NRCS

Also present: Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann, Grant Traynor, Alison Crowley, and Cat Garza in person, Lynda Oosterhuis and Joanna Cowles Cleveland by phone.

Members of the Public: none

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Pat McConnell

Minutes: The Board reviewed the October meeting minutes. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Jeff Schulke to approve the October minutes as presented, motion passed.**

Financial Reports: The board reviewed the November Financial Report. **Motion by Jeff Schulke and second by Jim Kent to approve the November financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** November report included checks 14228 to 14250, total all accounts: \$441,343.60

As of this date Nov. 8th 2021 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the November financial report and further described as follows: Checks 14228 to 14250, total all accounts \$441,343.60

Public Comments: None.

New Business:

- 1. Partner Updates:** **Hadley** reported Sean Taylor is no longer working for WDFW and that Mark Grandstaff is going to retire this year. The SE Area meeting was well attended and Hadley thanked the three board members who were able to attend. All resolutions submitted at the meeting were approved and will be considered at WACD. **Tracy Hanger** of NRCS reported the agency is still determining a process for dealing with requests for exemptions to the Covid-19 vaccine mandate. The deadlines for applying for CSP and CRP will be in March (exact dates to be determined.) She mentioned there may be another opportunity for district CRP Task

Orders in 2022. **Allisa Carlson** of SCC reported the search continues for an executive director with Kirk Robison serving as interim director. The comment period for CD interest in Farmland Preservation (conservation easements) will remain open until Nov. 10th.

2. **2022 Election and Appointment:** Garza led discussion of the upcoming elections and appointments; the positions held by Kent and Schulke will be open. Both supervisors plan to reapply for their respective positions. Discussion moved to the manner and timing of the election. The board supported having an in-person election concurrent with the annual meeting, assuming that in-person meetings are still allowed under Covid-19 mandates. An election resolution will be prepared for approval at the December meeting.
3. **Single signature for checks under 1000.00:** Hadley asked the board for their thoughts on adopting a single-signature requirement for amounts less than \$1000. Several districts allow this for more convenient processing of routine invoices (e.g., medical premiums, newsletter postage). However, board members reflected on previous business experience and advised against pursuing such a policy.

Public Comments: None were expressed.

Program Updates:

Alison Crowley reported that Anderson Perry, engineering firm for Floodplains by Design (FbD), met with landowners and completed the stream survey. The CORP and CTUIR agreed to let us use their aerial survey information, saving 30,000 in grant funds. She had a productive meeting with nine of the Mill Creek landowners. One landowner has not signed but expressed a willingness to do so when plans are made (wants to view them before signing anything). On the National Water Quality Initiative grant, she and Garza have completed the leg work and now Whatcom CD will do the modeling, after which the report will be written, completing the grant. The Lower Mill Creek project is design only with 23 landowners involved; an RFQ has been published. This is a fish habitat project related to habitat, flood mitigation, and sediment transfer on the reach from Wallula Ave. to Last Chance. **Hadley** mentioned that the newsletter was sent out and she's received a few comments. Engineers on several projects completed field work and will work on designs over winter. Irrigation Efficiency work included meeting with the 2050 group (led by Ecology) and AgAid, a 5-year multi-university collaboration around water use issues. Cowles-Cleveland, along with the Conservation Corps and other staff, is planting Touchet sites under the Canopy Cover grant (replacing false indigo with natives). She reported that FSA and SCC will no longer provide cost share to assist landowners in bringing CRP and CREP contracts up to standards before reenrolling. She suggests doing site-assessments two years before contracts expire to allow landowners more time to fix problems. **Traynor** reported receiving another VSP survey. In developing guidelines for a proposed commodity buffer program, he asked whether CREP eligible ground should be enrolled. After discussion the board recommended it be included. Next, he mentioned whether "edge of field" ground not adjacent to waterbodies should be eligible. It could pay less as it is less productive. The board advised that parameters be developed as otherwise there would be an avalanche of applications. The board mentioned giving priorities to edges of fields that

receive a significant run-off where sediment settles out or where roadways drain. These areas can serve a good conservation purpose and also be a challenge to farm. Traynor will present ideas at the December meeting. The board also requested more explanation of how the payment rates would be calculated.

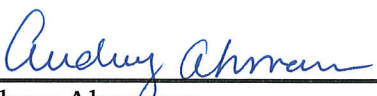


Joint Agency Meetings

1. **Snake River Salmon Recovery Board:** Cowles Cleveland said discussion centered on fish numbers.
2. **2050 Plan:** Hadley helped the group develop goals that are attainable and reminded them of the time-consuming agency review process.
3. **Others:** Hadley reported the Ag. Burn Task Force met 11/3 and there are no actions that would change our burn permit process. In related news, she received a drought report stating our area's moisture levels are 20% below average.

As the business concluded, Pat McConnell announced he will be resigning his position as elected supervisor. He said Jesse McCaw has agreed to be considered as a candidate for the position. McConnell has been an outstanding board member for almost 25 years and will be sorely missed.

With no further business on the agenda, the meeting adjourned without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted,

		
Audrey Ahmann	Pat McConnell	Jim Kent
Assistant Manager, Finance	Vice-Chair	Secretary

Next meeting: December 13th, 2021 at **4:00 p.m.**

Motions:

To approve the October minutes as written,

Motion: Kent
Second: Schulke
Motion passed

To approve the November financial report,

Motion: Schulke
Second: Kent
Motion passed