

# Walla Walla County Conservation District

## Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2022 Board Meeting

Date: Feb. 14, 2022

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Place: Conference call

**Presiding Officer:** Jeff Schulke

**Supervisors Present:** Jim Kent, Alyson Buckley

**Supervisor Absent:** Annie Byerley

**Other Agencies:** Dave Maiden, WW Noxious Weed Control Board

**Also present:** Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann; Cat Garza and Grant Traynor.

**Members of the Public:** Jesse McCaw, Dan Milden

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

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

**Financial Reports:** The board reviewed the February Financial Report. Ahmann explained the report is generated by the new Springbrook accounting system. The beginning balance for January matched the ending balance for December in QuickBooks. The ending book balance (305,420.29) includes all activity to date while the adjusted ending balance (352,177.33) matches the bank statement balance.<sup>1</sup> The report included a check register from 1-11-22 to 2-14-22. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Alyson Buckley to approve the February financial report and pay the bills, motion passed.** February report included checks 14304 to 14332, total all accounts: \$305,420.29

**As of this date Feb. 14th 2022 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the February financial report and further described as follows: Checks 14304 to 14332, total all accounts \$305,420.29**

### **New Business:**

- 1. Partner Updates:** Hadley reported that at the request of a producer, FSA and NRCS will present a virtual session on CRP maintenance March 1<sup>st</sup>. The district is coordinating the meeting which will be held in place of mini-sessions. At WACD, Annie Byerley was approved as the new SE Area Director and is now on the WACD board. The new SCC executive director will begin next month. We have another Task Order to do CRP field checks.

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<sup>1</sup> Hadley opened the bank statement which came late and Ahmann reconciled the account; this task will be handed off to another staffer as soon as Ahmann understands the new system.

- 2. NRI Addendum:** Hadley asked the board to approve an addendum for the NRI grant. The projects (to be installed this summer) are the Russell Creek and the Walla Walla River mile 35.5 projects. **Alyson Buckley moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve the NRI addendum as presented, motion passed.**
- 3. Nomination to fill a board vacancy:** Garza reported that the vacancy was advertised as required and two people expressed interest. One declined to fill out an application after learning more about the business of the district and was encouraged to attend meetings. Jesse McCaw was the sole applicant. **Jim Kent moved and Alyson Buckley seconded to appoint Jesse McCaw to serve out the remainder of the elected position formerly held by Pat McConnell, motion passed.** The board welcomed its newest member.
- 4. Noxious Weed Board discussion:** Maiden reviewed the powers of the weed board as defined in the RCW. The state requires control of Class A weeds. There is a very small (about 32,000) pool of local funds for weed control of Class-A weeds and it's limited to non-farm applicants. Generally, the cost share amounts to about 10\$ an acre. If someone has an issue with weed encroachment from a neighbor's property, the weed board acts as a go-between and most of the time has good success in getting voluntary weed control. Maiden said he can offer technical assistance and encouraged the district to send people his way if they have issues with weeds.
- 5. Annual Review of Inventory:** Hadley presented a list of "small and attractive" items (prone to loss) in the district inventory; the board is advised to review the list annually. The district has a procedure for tracking these items.
- 6. Request to surplus items:** Hadley presented a list of items for surplus. Most are outdated and dysfunctional but the plotter still has value. Because printers do not do well if left unused she requested permission to surplus the item; the first step will be to offer the plotter to other districts. **Jim Kent moved and Alyson Buckley seconded to declare the listed items surplus and remove them from the district inventory, motion passed.**
- 7. WA Long-term Care Tax:** Ahmann let the board know that the legislature has delayed implementation of the program for 18 months. Since no taxes were withheld from staff pay, no refunds will be necessary.
- 8. Recap of Annual meeting:** Hadley reviewed the annual meeting which was the best attended in years. There were 46 in the room and 26 attending virtually. She received a positive letter from a producer and a request to host the aforementioned session on CRP.

**Public Comments:** There were no public comments.

**Program Updates:**

**Hadley** referred the board to Cowles Cleveland's report and said RCO has granted the extension on the Cottonwood project which will be design only. Staff are setting up a system to follow so landowners are better prepared for CRP and CREP contract renewals. **Crowley** mentioned all her projects are on-time and within budget. She is hosting a Zoom meeting with the National Water Quality Initiative participants to see what NRCS practices they are doing and what they are interested in adopting. **Traynor** is presenting at the NW Grain Growers meeting and is still looking into low-cost efficient monitoring that doesn't slip into regulation. In response to a question, he said the Touchet Area 1 project is near Prescott just west of the high school, Coppei Area 7 is north of the South Fork of the Coppei, and Touchet 42 is a mile west of Waitsburg. **Hadley** thanked board members who completed the annual reviews and said staff are busy with 18 grants and 10 stream restoration projects. Each new staff is assigned to one or more grants and is completing a permit application.

**Joint Agency Meetings**

1. **Snake River Salmon Recovery Board:** The group is working with grant applications.
2. **Others:** None.




At 4:50, as per RCW 42.30.110 )1) (g) the board of supervisors went into executive session to review the performance of an employee(s) and RCW 42.30.110 (1) (h) and announced a planned return to open session at 5:10.

The board returned to open session at 5:10.

The board tasked the district manager with developing a draft policy for Burn Permit refunds.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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

Next meeting: March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at **5:00 p.m.**

Motions:

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| To approve the January minutes as written,  | Motion: Kent<br>Second: Buckley<br>Motion passed |
| To approve the February financial report,   | Motion: Kent<br>Second: Buckley<br>Motion passed |
| To approve the NRI Addendum for the Russell Creek and the Touchet River mile 35.5 projects as presented.  | Motion: Buckley<br>Second: Kent<br>Motion passed |
| To appoint Jesse McCaw to serve out the remainder of the elected position formerly held by Pat McConnell. | Motion: Kent<br>Second: Buckley<br>Motion passed |
| To declare the listed items surplus and remove them from the district inventory                           | Motion: Kent<br>Second: Buckley<br>Motion passed |