



Walla Walla County Conservation District

Dec. 2022 Board Meeting

Date: Dec. 12, 2022

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Place: In person and via Zoom

Presiding Officer: Jesse McCaw

Supervisors Present: Jim Kent, Alyson Buckley

Supervisor absent: Jeff Schulke

Other Agencies: Allisa Carlson, SCC

Also present: Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann, Grant Traynor, Kayla Peterson

Members of the Public: Don Schwerin, Dan Milden

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Jesse McCaw.

McCaw invited the public to comment; there were no comments.

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

Financial Reports: The board reviewed the December Financial Report. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Alyson Buckley to approve the December financial reports and pay the bills, motion passed.**

As of this date December 12th 2022 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the December financial reports and further described as follows: Checks 14539 to 14562, revenues 121,248.48 and expenses 121,001.18 total all accounts \$114,503.89

- 1. Partner Reports: Carlson** reported on the WACD meeting. Dean Longmire was reelected. A resolution to assist lawmakers in developing a bill on district elections will incorporate the recommendations of the Joint Committee on elections. Some legislators want supervisors to submit an extensive financial disclosure like other elected officials. The plan is to develop a disclosure process that meets the public desire for accountability while respecting the privacy of supervisors. SCC is releasing the first round of funding awards for the Sustainable Farm and Field grant program; not all proposals met eligibility requirements. At the end of January, the SCC plans to award Food System grants intended to improve market access to local farmer production.

- 2. Addendum for Salmon Recovery Projects:** The board discussed the proposed grant addendum to fund Conservation Conversations and the purchase of equipment such as weed-whackers and a trailer (16,000). **Jim Kent moved and Alyson Buckley seconded to approve the SRF funding addendum for Conservation Conversations and equipment as presented, motion passed.**
- 3. Request to approve Equipment Loan Policy:** Hadley presented a proposed conservation equipment loan policy. The policy was developed after review of other districts' policies. After discussion, **Jim Kent moved and Alyson Buckley seconded to approve the equipment loan policy as presented, motion passed.**
- 4. Approval of increased cost-share for VSP project:** Traynor explained that two VSP riparian projects (East Little Walla Walla and Dry Creek) went over the cost share budget previously approved. The budget was based on estimates by an experienced contractor. However, invasive weeds (blackberry) were denser than expected and there were other cost increases. After discussion, **Alyson Buckley moved and Jim Kent seconded to increase the cost-share available for East Little Walla Walla and Dry Creek riparian projects as presented, motion passed.**
- 5. Board Performance Committee:** Hadley asked the board for volunteers to complete employee performance reviews in January and the district internal audit in late spring. McCaw and Buckley volunteered to complete the performance reviews and Kent and Schulke the internal audit.
- 6. Review of draft Annual Meeting agenda:** The board reviewed the agenda as presented. The district has applied for three pesticide credits. **Jim Kent moved and Alyson Buckley seconded to approve the annual meeting agenda as presented, motion passed.**
- 7. Reminder of election filing:** Hadley reminded the board of the approaching application deadline for applying for an elected position.
- 8. Request approval of light refreshments for VSP meetings:** The SAO requires the board to approve the purchase of light refreshments or meals for meetings. The VSP Work Group will now be holding some evening meetings. **Alyson Buckley moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve the blanket expense authorization for refreshments at VSP Work Group meetings, motion passed.**

Program Updates: Hadley explained that instead of each staff member updating the board at every meeting, one or two will present a more in-depth review. This is more the norm at other districts. She presented a table of burn program


refund requests which showed that many producers were unable to complete their planned field burns. **Peterson** attended the Farm Symposium in Spokane. Regenerative agriculture was featured and defined as reducing inputs and tillage to focus on protecting biological activity in the soil, with a goal of achieving better bio health. Folks shared that offering rental of a no-till drill was equivalent to 'dangling the carrot' to help farmers convert to different tillage practices. Integrating livestock was discussed such as grazing cover crops prior to planting which allows the energy of the cover crop to be converted to manure and beef. Peterson will be reaching out to local cattlemen with the message that the district offers cost share and is not enforcement. **Hadley** presented recent work on stream restoration. An engineering firm is developing a design for an area of the Coppei Creek near Lewis Peak. The plan is to remove part of a second levee and add log structures. The goal is to allow more stream movement, increase capacity, reconnect the floodplain, and discharge flood energy. The preliminary design will be complete by March. The flood potential will remain but with less destructive power. The second design presented is for a site on the Touchet one mile downstream of Prescott. The area is adjacent to a field managed by a Prescott school employee so there is an educational component. There are deeply incised banks and the plan is similar to the one proposed for the Coppei. Costs are very high and Hadley has applied for multiple grants to fund the work. These two projects were prioritized by other agencies.

Public comment: The meeting using Zoom has worked better than teleconference.

Hadley also discussed that the district will be reducing engagement with local water forums as the Irrigation Efficiency program is changing to funding only TA for active projects. WACD had a fruitful discussion of DEI issues where DEI was defined as valuing "who is at the table" and "who you can help." Hadley shared with the board she was tasked to facilitate a meeting with a sensitive topic. The board provided guidance with a few suggestions to keep the meeting professional and on topic

With no further business on the agenda, at 6:10 **Jim Kent moved and Alyson Buckley seconded to adjourn the meeting, motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,


Audrey Ahmann
District Staff


Jesse McCaw
Chair


Jim Kent
Vice-Chair

Next meeting: Jan. 9. 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

Motions:

To approve the Nov. minutes as written,

Motion: Buckley
Second: Kent
Motion passed

To approve the December financial report,

Motion: Kent
Second: Buckley
Motion passed

To approve the approve the SRF funding addendum for equipment and Conservation Conversations as presented,

Motion: Kent
Second: Buckley
Motion passed

To approve the equipment loan policy as presented,

Motion: Kent
Second: Buckley
Motion passed

To increase the cost-share available for East Little Walla Walla and Dry Creek riparian as presented,

Motion: Buckley
Second: Kent
Motion passed

To approve the annual meeting agenda as presented,

Motion: Kent
Second: Buckley
Motion passed

To approve the blanket expense authorization for refreshments at VSP Work Group meeting,

Motion: Kent
Second: Buckley
Motion passed

To adjourn the meeting,

Motion: Buckley
Second: Kent
Motion passed