



# Walla Walla County Conservation District

## March 2023 Board Meeting

Date: March 13, 2023

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: In person and via Zoom

**Presiding Officer:** Jeff Schulke

**Supervisors Present:** Jim Kent, Don Schwerin

**Supervisor absent:** Jesse McCaw, Alyson Buckley

**Other Agencies:** Bryce Krueger, NRCS; Allisa Carlson, SCC

**Also present:** Renee Hadley, Audrey Ahmann, Grant Traynor, Joanna Cowles Cleveland, Lynda Oosterhuis, Kayla Peterson, Roberta Winter.

**Members of the Public:** Dan Milden

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

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

**Minutes:** The Board reviewed the February meeting minutes. **Motion by Don Schwerin and second by Jim Kent to approve the February minutes as presented, motion passed.**

**Financial Reports:** The board reviewed the March Financial Report. Ahmann informed the board a previously approved check was reported lost by the recipient and needed to be voided. **Motion by Don Schwerin and second by Jim Kent to approve the voiding of check 14589 for 5049.11; motion passed.** After further review, **motion by Jim Kent and second by Don Schwerin to approve the March financial reports and pay the bills, motion passed.**

**As of this date March 13th 2023 the Board by a majority vote does approve for payment checks included in the March financial reports and further described as follows: Checks 14615 to 14647, revenues 143,997.14; adjustment 5049.11, and expenses 130,634.87; total all accounts \$114,781.19**

**Employee Report:** Peterson reported that WSDA requested district participation in soils sampling; several producers are interested. WSDA will pay for testing; producers receive reports. The state soils map will be updated with the results. Peterson also reviewed CRP status review evaluation methods. Staffers conduct transects and categorize plant species present as dominant, common, or rare. In 2023, the 18 CRP

contracts to be reviewed expire in 2024, giving producers time to consider options before reenrollment.

**Partner Reports: Krueger** explained that status reviews are used to develop conservation plans and contracts. CSP signups are paused to the end of March. NRCS plans to hire more staff to handle the workload of the Inflation Reduction Act. **Carlson** gave legislative updates, mentioning that the riparian bill and the elections study bill went under. Jim Kent was awarded a 10-year pin and certificate from WACD in honor of his 10 years as board member, while Jesse McCaw was awarded a one-year certificate.

1. **2023 Budget: Ahmann** reminded the board that in January the 2023 budget was adopted on a provisional basis to allow Hadley time to review the budget more thoroughly and correct the entry of the beginning balance<sup>1</sup>. The only change to the budget was the entry of the beginning balance. **Jim Kent moved and Don Schwerin seconded to approve the 2023 Budget as presented, motion passed.**
2. **Reapprove Resolution: Cowles Cleveland** explained that changing the name of the Cottonwood Creek Pals project to Cottonwood Creek Restoration means the board needs to approve a new resolution. **Jim Kent moved and Don Schwerin seconded to approve the project application resolution for Cottonwood Creek Restoration, #23-02, motion passed.**
3. **Discussion/Guidance on Ag. Forestry parameters:** Discussion resumed from Feb. meeting regarding CD staff enrolling in the Ag. Forestry program. Discussion included cost and benefits. The 6,000 tuition covers travel (meals, hotel, air) but not mileage and is more than the district generally pays for training. Benefits are personal growth and development of a “big picture” outlook related to agriculture. Don Schwerin moved that the district pay the full cost of tuition and half of the staff time devoted to the program. Schulke made a friendly amendment to include a one-year commitment upon completion of the program, limited to one staff member at a time, and adding criteria for selecting staff. For the final motion, **Don Schwerin moved and Jim Kent seconded to approve paying 100% of the tuition plus half of participant time in the Ag. Forestry program, limiting the program to one participant at a time; if more than one staff apply, selection will be made according to the needs of the district and may consider seniority; participants will sign a letter of intent agreeing to repay the tuition to the district should they fail to complete the course**

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<sup>1</sup> The amount is the same, but was entered in Springbrook in the wrong place.

**or leave the employ of the district within one year of completing the program.** Motion passed.

**Program Updates:** **Oosterhuis** reviewed her recently completed W.SARE project, Beneficial Insects in the Vineyard. W.SARE is a USDA program funding projects bringing research information to producers. The grant funded her study of research into beneficial insects for vineyards and then demonstrating to producers how to apply this research to their operations. She worked with the Enology program of the community college and found the majority of students had no ag. experience. She developed a manual (posted on the WWCCD website), held a workshop June 2022 and has a current mailing list of 38 folks active in vineyards, most of whom are interested in further conservation-related education. **Hadley** reviewed the Lower Mill Creek Design. The site is from just above Wallula Ave to Last Chance Road. It has minimal riparian vegetation and no floodplain connectivity. There are homes at flood risk. CTUIR developed an initial plan and our engineering team has drafted a preliminary design. From here the design will be reviewed by RCO (funding agency) then engineers will develop a final design; staff will then apply for funds to construct. Hadley also mentioned a March 15th outreach event to help landowners understand the working of a natural river system. For CD operations, three staffers are taking NRCS training called "Working with American Indians." Upon completion, Cowles Cleveland will be a 3<sup>rd</sup> Tier Planner, one of a handful with that level of certification in the state. Also, FEMA is completing a new flood risk map and the County is completing an update to the Shoreline Protection Plan with no significant changes.

Joint agency meetings: Cowles Cleveland said the Snake River Salmon Recovery meeting was canceled.

Executive Session: At 7:30 the Board went into Executive Session to review the performance of a public employee per RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g) and announced a return to open session at 7:50.

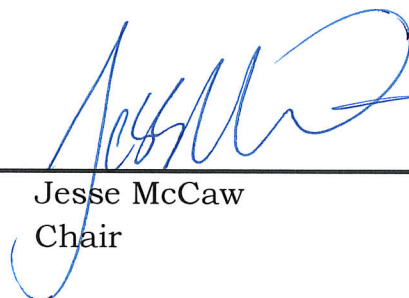
At 7:50 the Board returned to open session. No further business was conducted.

With no further business on the agenda, at 7:50 the meeting was adjourned without a formal motion.

Respectfully submitted,



Audrey Ahmann  
District Staff



Jesse McCaw  
Chair



Jim Kent  
Vice-Chair



Next meeting: April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Motions:

To approve the Feb. minutes as written,

Motion: Schwerin  
Second: Kent  
Motion passed

To approve voiding check 14589,

Motion: Schwerin  
Second: Kent  
Motion passed

To approve the March financial report,

Motion: Kent  
Second: Schwerin  
Motion passed

To approve the 2023 Budget as presented,

Motion: Kent  
Second: Schwerin  
Motion passed

To approve the project application resolution for Cottonwood Creek Restoration, #23-02,

Motion: Kent  
Second: Schwerin  
Motion passed

To approve paying 100% of the tuition plus half of the staff time of participants in the Ag. Forestry program, limiting the program to one staff participant at a time; if more than one staff apply, selection will be made according to the needs of the district and may consider seniority; participants will sign a letter of intent agreeing to repay the tuition to the district should they fail to complete the course or leave the employ of the district within one year of completing the program,

Motion: Schwerin  
Second: Kent  
Motion passed