

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA
Wednesday, July 13, 2022**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 8:35 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by telephone were as follows: Jim Baye, Chris Laney and Braidy Haden - LCCD Supervisors; Mike Baden, Conservation Commission; Cari Roepke, NRCS; Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher, Connor Nikkola, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

Jeff noted that he would be asking for any public comment before a vote on each motion was taken in the meeting as part of the updated OPMA (Open Public Meeting Act) requirements.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

It was noted on page 5 in the WACD Update section of the June 7 minutes that “The Conservation Commission has allocated \$100,000 again for WACD in FY 2023” should be changed to “The Conservation Commission has talked about allocating \$100,000 again for WACD in FY 2023.”

- *1. Jim moved to approve the June 7, 2022 minutes as amended. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- *2. Jim moved to pay and approve vouchers #11787 to #11822, along with 26 EFT's, totaling \$419,645.53. Braidy seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.*
- *3. Jim moved to submit voucher #12 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$13,383.65 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *4. Jim moved to submit voucher #12 for the 22-39-IM grant in the amount of \$10,107.80 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- *5. Jim moved to submit voucher #11 for the 21-27-NR grant in the amount of \$156.76 to Adams CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *6. Jim moved to submit voucher #12 for the 22-39-FR grant in the amount of \$289,654.42 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- *7. Jim moved to submit voucher #2 for the 22-39-TP1 grant in the amount of \$57,250.79 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*

- **8. Jim moved to submit voucher #4 for the 22-39-DG grant in the amount of \$40,341.78 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **9. Jim moved to submit voucher #12 for the 22-39-NR grant in the amount of \$344.50 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **10. Jim moved to submit voucher #1 for the 22-39-TP2 grant in the amount of \$50,875.00 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **11. Jim moved to submit voucher #4 for the 22-39-WFF grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District gas card statement from Valley Wide Cooperative with a closing date of June 30, 2022. The total amount owed was \$90.33. Braidy seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that this would be that last gas card statement from Valley Wide as new District gas cards from Co-Energy / Pacific Pride have recently been obtained for each District employee with their own name on their gas card. With these new cards, District staff will now be able to pump gas for District vehicles at more gas stations, including Williams Oil / Pacific Pride at the south end of Davenport and at Bronco Farm Supply / Pacific Pride in Ritzville. Motion passed.**

It was noted that it was too early in July this time for the VISA credit card statement to be available for the board meeting.

Delaini passed around bank statements for the board members to initial.

The Board reviewed the report of the current annual leave/sick leave balances for District employees.

- **13. Jim moved to approve the Treasurer's report and Grant's report as presented. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**

C. AGENDA

WACD Dues

Elsa announced that the notice of the annual WACD dues for \$3,488.89 had been received and that they could be paid with Implementation grant funding.

- **14. Chris moved to pay the annual WACD dues for \$3,488.89 with Implementation grant funding. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**

Washington Conservation Society Dues

Elsa noted that the annual \$150 Washington Conservation Society membership notice had been received. Lincoln County CD has applied to the Washington Conservation Society in previous years for various small grants.

15. Jim moved to pay the 2023 dues of \$150.00 for the Washington Conservation Society with Implementation grant funding. Chris seconded. Motion passed.

Cost Share Approval

Hardcopies of the Cost Share Action spreadsheet were distributed. There were 6 requests for Fire Recovery grant payments, 1 request for Direct Seed 3 grant payment, 1 application for NRI grant funding, and 1 application for District 2022 grant funding.

It was noted that the applicant for District 2022 grant funding had contacted the District and noted that he was soon to be deployed by the military and would not be able to complete his project this year. Due to the time needed to obtain permits for many conservation projects, Connor noted that it was not worthwhile for the District to pursue a replacement project because it would be hard to complete before the end of the fiscal year. Elsa noted that the District could reissue the funding for this District funded implementation grant project again as needed and that that the applicant would be placed at the top of the list for District grant funded projects since he had already been approved for funding this year.

Chris asked why one applicant had received two grants for Fire Recovery funding. Elsa noted that this applicant had applied for and received Fire Recovery grant funding in two separate fiscal years.

16. Chris moved to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet as presented and clarified. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.

VSP Update

Connor reported that he had given an update for the recent Lincoln County VSP Working Group on the water monitoring locations across the county that he has been working on this year. Anchor, the contractor assisting the Working Group, has developed a new web mapping tool to assist with VSP efforts in the county. The web mapping tool is not planned for release to the public, but Connor will share the data with landowners upon request. The web mapping tool uses multiple GIS layers, including parcel owner, land use and watershed / HUC (hydrologic unit code) layers. The Working Group will be giving a presentation on monitoring efforts in Lincoln County to other VSP Working Groups at a statewide meeting in August.

Implementation Grant Addendum

The handout for the proposed addendum to the 23-39-IM grant was reviewed. The list of typical conservation district activities to be funded by the grant were discussed. The total amount of the FY 2023 Implementation grant available to the District is \$117,823.00

17. Braidy moved to approve the Implementation Grant Addendum as presented. Jim seconded. Motion passed.

WACD Update

Jeff reported that the WACD Executive Board met at the PMC in Bow for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic first started in spring 2020. Seventeen participants attended in person and other members participated by Zoom. The OPMA act was discussed along with the recommendation, for now, that all conservation district boards record their board meetings. Adverse effects of multiple proposed solar farms in central Washington were discussed. Cindy Pierce was selected as the new WADE President.

WACD is in good financial shape but has lost some value in its shares in the stock market. PMC sales were up 33% this year over 2021. The PMC has already received \$526,000 in new tree and shrub orders for 2023. PMC expenses are up 10.6% this year and the prices for new tree and shrub stems have been raised 5% to help compensate for increased costs. The cost for the WACD lobbyist has now increased from \$36,000 to \$40,000 per year.

The 2022 WACD Annual Meeting will be held in Wenatchee this year on November 28 – 30. Five conservation districts have sent a letter to the WACD Board expressing their dissatisfaction with how the Board has been operating. The WACD Board will not meet again until September.

Elsa announced that the District had received the official announcement from the Conservation Commission that Chris had been reappointed for another 3-year term as board member. Lincoln County CD will host the NE Area Meeting this year in Davenport sometime during the week of October 17. The District will receive reimbursement for the NE Area meeting costs similar to the reimbursement it has already received from the Conservation Commission for the May 17 Field Tour for hosting costs including the bus, Memorial Hall and dinner costs.

WADE Training and the Direct Seeding Expo

Connor and Delaini attended the annual WADE (Washington Association of District Employees) training this June at the Sleeping Lady resort near Leavenworth with about 200 CD staff and board members from across the state. Connor noted that he attended VSP and drone training sessions and networked with staff from other CD's whom he had never met in person until WADE training. Delaini attended a lot of outreach training sessions. There were no dedicated sessions on DEI (diversity, equality and inclusiveness) but Delaini did attend training on how to make a conservation district's website more accessible to all of its users. There was also a training session given by a west side CD on how it was using services from Verizon to provide real time monitoring data on water well GPM output and well water level to district cooperators.

Board members who attended were asked for comments on the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association (PNDSA) Expo held in June near Colfax. Attendance at about 50 participants was down from previous years and the exhibits and the complexity of the training were also toned down. Most of the participants that attend the PNDSA training nowadays have been direct seeding themselves for years and already know much of the practices and equipment needed to successfully direct seed on their farms.

Hawk Creek Watershed Assessment

Elsa reported that the Department of Ecology had started conducting watershed assessments again in the county with a county road/public right of way assessment this March in the Hawk Creek watershed. District staff participated in a recent webinar with Amanda Richardson from Ecology who used a PowerPoint presentation to show 8

livestock operations or horse pastures along Hawk Creek or its tributaries that represented a potential water quality concern to Ecology due to impacts by domestic livestock on the creek channel and/or creek bank. Ecology is not planning on sending out any letters to the livestock operators at this time but is planning on visiting the same sites again next March and sending out letters if riparian conditions do not improve or become worse. Elsa is planning on contacting the owners/operators of the 8 sites and noted that the Cattlemen's Association and the property owners in the Hawk Creek watershed are already aware of Watershed Assessment being conducted by Ecology in the watershed.

NE Well Level Monitoring Grant Agreement

Copies of the new grant agreement for \$145,000 with Ecology to conduct well level monitoring in the NE part of the county were included in the board member packets. A map of the well level monitoring area was included in the grant agreement. The NE part of the county was selected for additional well level monitoring following the Lincoln County Well Level grant completed in 2021 due to the concentration of new housing developments with private wells primarily in the Reardan and Davenport areas. Some new wells in the new housing development areas along with some wells in the NE part of the county that have already been sampled in the 2018 – 2021 Lincoln County Well Level Grant are targeted for twice a year to quarterly sampling in the NE county well monitoring grant for a total of 24 -36 wells. Sustainable water supply solutions will also be sought and targeted for declining groundwater areas in the NE county study area.

Delegation Authority over Late Summer/Early Fall

With harvest and fall seeding approaching, there will be no regular board meetings in August and September as in past years and so a delegation of authority to conduct District business decisions such as advertising for RFP's (Requests for Proposals) for the new NE well monitoring grant was sought.

18. Chris moved to approve a Delegation of Authority to the Board Chairman and District Manager to conduct District business as needed until the next Board meeting in October with the option to consult with other Board members as needed. Jim seconded. Motion passed.

Review of High Tunnel Project Applications

Elsa reported back to the Board on potential issues with the high tunnel project applications process in the county. One cooperator in the county has expressed an interest in applying for grant funding from District implementation grant or other grant funding from the District to install a high tunnel project to grow greenhouse crops. Concerns were previously raised about multiple signups for high tunnel projects and which project applications would be eligible and how the District would prioritize funding between high tunnel projects along with other types of conservation projects funded by the District. Mike noted that he not aware of any other conservation districts currently funding high tunnel projects. The general consensus of the Board was that funding of high tunnel projects was not a current conservation priority in the District and that high tunnel projects would probably not be funded by the District. Funding for high tunnel projects may still be available from NRCS.

Conservation Commission Report

Mike reported that approval of supplemental budget items such as salmon recovery is a high priority item for the Conservation Commission and should be approved in the near future. The state legislature has allocated \$10 million in funding to the Commission for salmon recovery that is available to all CD's this time. It is still worthwhile for Lincoln County CD to apply for this funding because projects that improve water quality downstream can be considered as benefitting salmon recovery efforts.

Another high priority item is developing the budget for the next biennium. One issue that the Commission is addressing is how to get funding allocated to DNR to work on fire recovery and Firewise projects identified by CD's in their local areas. When fire season arrives, DNR personnel are busy fighting multiple fires and are not available to work on funding conservation projects. Jeff asked if any additional funding would be allocated to the counties in the state already working on VSP. Mike noted that no additional funding is projected to be available but that \$250,000 would be allocated as in previous years to the VSP counties per biennium.

Mike noted that regional managers are looking to hold monthly district manager meetings to discuss issues of concern. He also noted that long time Communications Director Laura Meyer had resigned and that a search was on to find a permanent replacement.

NRCS Report

Cari reported that COVID-19 issues had surfaced again last week when Lincoln County was rated as having high community transmission last week and office staff were supposed to wear masks again. As of this week, Lincoln County has dropped to medium community transmission and so masks are now not required and cooperators are still allowed to enter the office. If COVID gets significantly worse again, the front door may be locked again, staff will have to wear masks, and monthly Board meetings will not be able to be held in the office conference room.

A recently hired Administrative Assistant for the Davenport office only lasted 4 days until quitting. A replacement has been hired by the state office but has not started work yet in the office. Approved CSP contracts need to be obligated in 6 weeks. Cari thanked District staff for their work on the current task order for CRP signup 58. By the time the task order is scheduled to be done on July 29, District staff will have processed file documents and written contracts for 300 to 400 new CRP contracts. Elsa noted that Todd Baarstad with WDFW had completed 24 SAFE contracts for Lincoln County cooperators.

County Commissioner Report

Dean read a brief email report from Commission Mark Stedman who was not able to attend the meeting. Primary ballots are in the mail. The county continues to plan and design for the installation of county owned fiber optic networks in all towns across the county. Plans and activities for the upcoming Lincoln County Fair in late August are taking shape. Dave Orvis has been appointed as Public Works Director and Dave Sanford has been appointed as the Head Road Supervisor.

FSA Report

There was no report from FSA.

Request for Public Comment

Jeff asked for any public comment before the start of the executive session. There was no public comment.

Executive Session

The Board went into executive session under option 1(g) of RCW 42.30.110 at 10:20 AM for an estimated 40 minutes to discuss personnel matters. The Board came back out of executive session at 11:01 AM. No actions were taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Chairman Jeff Schibel adjourned the meeting at 11:07 AM. The next board meeting is scheduled as an in-person meeting on Wednesday, October 12, 2022 starting at 8:30 AM at conference room in the USDA Service Center in Davenport. A telephone call in number will be available for those people wishing to participate by phone. There are no board meetings scheduled for August and September due to harvest and seeding.

Respectfully submitted,



Josh Sherwood, Secretary



Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 18 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the June 7, 2022 minutes as amended.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #11787 to #11822, along with 26 EFT's, totaling \$419,645.53.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #12 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$13,383.65 to the Conservation Commission.
- 4. M/S/P to submit voucher #12 for the 22-39-IM grant in the amount of \$10,107.80 to the Conservation Commission.
- 5. M/S/P to submit voucher #11 for the 21-27-NR grant in the amount of \$156.76 to Adams CD.

- 6. M/S/P to submit voucher #12 for the 22-39-FR grant in the amount of \$289,654.42 to the Conservation Commission.
- 7. M/S/P to submit voucher #2 for the 22-39-TP1 grant in the amount of \$57,250.79 to the Conservation Commission.
- 8. M/S/P to submit voucher #4 for the 22-39-DG grant in the amount of \$40,341.78 to the Conservation Commission.
- 9. M/S/P to submit voucher #12 for the 22-39-NR grant in the amount of \$344.50 to the Conservation Commission.
- 10. M/S/P to submit voucher #1 for the 22-39-TP2 grant in the amount of \$50,875.00 to the Conservation Commission.
- 11. M/S/P to submit voucher #4 for the 22-39-WFF grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission.

It was noted that it was too early in July this time for the VISA credit card statement to be available for the board meeting.

- 12. M/S/P to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District gas card statement from Valley Wide with a closing date of June 30, 2022. The total amount owed was \$90.33.
- 13. M/S/P to approve the Treasurer's report and Grant's report as presented.
- 14. M/S/P to pay the annual WACD dues for \$3,488.89 with Implementation grant funding.
- 15. M/S/P to pay the 2023 dues of \$150.00 for the Washington Conservation Society with Implementation grant funding.
-
- 16. M/S/P to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet as presented and clarified.
- 17. M/S/P to approve the Implementation Grant Addendum as presented.
- 18. M/S/P to approve a Delegation of Authority to the Board Chairman and District Manager to conduct District business as needed until the next Board meeting in October with the option to consult with other Board members as needed.