

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA
Friday, November 18, 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 Josh Sherwood - LCCD Supervisors; Mike Baden, Conservation Commission; Mark Stedman, Lincoln County Commissioners; Dick Erickson and Casey Wren, NRCS; Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher and Dean White - LCCD staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

It was noted that “Westley” in the NE Area Engineering Cluster Grant Request paragraph on page 5 and repeated in the motions summary section on page 12 needed to be changed to “Westly”.

- *1. Josh moved to approve the October 12, 2022 minutes as amended. Jim seconded. Motion passed.*

B. TREASURER’S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- *2. Jim moved to pay and approve vouchers #11884 to #11914, along with 12 EFT’s, totaling \$124,107.80. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.*
- *3. Jim moved to submit voucher #16 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$706.12 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *4. Jim moved to submit voucher #4 for the 23-39-IM grant in the amount of \$2,035.31 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.*
- *5. Jim moved to submit voucher #2 for the Direct Seed 3 grant in the amount of \$20,032.92 to DOE. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. It was noted that all 15 signup slots for the Direct Seed 3 grant had been filled. Cooperators have been encouraged to submit payment requests for the full 250 acres allowed by the grant, but some cooperators have submitted requests for less to much less than the full 250 acres allowed. The potential result is that some grant money may not be able to be spent and have to be returned back to Ecology. Motion passed.*
- *6. Jim moved to submit voucher #4 for the 23-39-FR grant in the amount of \$57,925.63 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.*
- *7. Jim moved to submit voucher #14 for the 21-27-NR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to Adams CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*

- **8. Jim moved to submit voucher #1 for the NE Lincoln Well Monitoring grant in the amount of \$908.07 to DOE. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **9. Jim moved to submit voucher #15 for the 22-39-NR grant in the amount of \$10,021.88 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **10. Jim moved to submit voucher #16 for the 22-39-NR grant in the amount of \$13,993.95 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **11. Jim moved to submit voucher #1 for the 23-39-DG grant in the amount of \$381.06 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Jim moved to submit voucher #1 for the WaterSMART grant in the amount of \$7,571.58 to USBR. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **13. Jim moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for September 27, 2022 through October 25, 2022 be approved. The total amount owed was \$2,110.62. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Most of the expenses this time were for the NE Area Meeting or for subscription services, such as the subscription to WIX for hosting the District website. Motion passed.**
- **14. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of September 15, 2022. The total amount owed was \$139.92. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **15. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of September 30, 2022. The total amount owed was \$258.93. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that the white 4 door District pickup that has been parked at the Ritzville Service Center this summer for Sheila to use for CRP field reviews in Adams County was recently vandalized by some individual trying to steal gas from the gas tank. The cost to replace the cut gas line was about \$200. Motion passed.**
- **16. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of October 15, 2022. The total amount owed was \$356.91. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

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.

- **17. Chris moved to approve the Treasurer's report and Grant's report as presented. Josh seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**

C. AGENDA

Updates to Agenda

- 18. Chris moved to add the January 2023 PNDSA Conference and holiday leave discussions to the agenda. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

Springbook Accounting Software

Elsa announced that the District received an invoice for 2023 from Springbook (accounting software) for \$6,003.32, and that the cost for 2023 was only about \$400 more than the 2022 cost. Board members noted that the cost is about \$20 per day. Elsa noted that the \$20 per day was well worth it, as Springbook provides support by phone and Internet to help District staff get questions answered and issues solved with the Springbook software.

- 19. Josh moved to approve the 2023 Springbook accounting software fee of \$6,003.32. Jim seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**

County Commissioner Report

Commissioner Mark Stedman reported that the county road crews are back to five 8 hours day for winter and for snow plowing. The county recently had a financial audit completed by the State Auditor's Office, with no major findings. The audit cost the county \$50,000 to \$60,000. County employees will be receiving a 4.5% cost of living increase. The county was recently able to negotiate a new contract quickly with Sheriff's Office Teamsters Union in an open public session, and then after an initial walkout, was also able to successfully negotiate with the Courthouse and Public Works Teamsters Union.

Mark and Jeff attended the annual Columbia Basin Development League meeting in Moses Lake yesterday. Mark noted that government agencies such as the Bureau of Reclamation and NRCS that require landowners and operators to obtain water right permits in order to be eligible for water development projects make it more difficult than it should be obtain water permits for local land that needs it, especially for water sources such as the Columbia River that have available water.

Mark announced that he is resigning as County Commissioner for District 1 (Odessa, Harrington and Sprague areas) on December 31, after 10 years of serving as Commissioner since 2012. The Lincoln County Republican Party now needs to submit 3 candidates for District 1 Commissioner to replace him, preferably before December 31. If the list of 3 candidates is not submitted to the Commissioners before December 31, then fellow Commissioners Rob Coffman and Scott Hutsell will need to appoint the new Commissioner for District 1 to serve until the next election.

Mark asked if there were other issues in the county that the Commissioners should be aware of and address. Elsa noted that some culverts on the recently renovated Old Coulee Rd N between Almira and Bagdad Road have been set too high and that some District assisted grassed waterway projects are not draining properly. Mark

advised Elsa to contact Dave Sanford with Public Works. Elsa also asked who might be available to replace Mark's position on the Lincoln County VSP Working Group, and who be attending future Lincoln County CD meetings to represent the County Commissioners. Jim asked if Lincoln County might grow its business tax base in the future. Mark commented that the primary activity in the county now is private housing construction, especially in the northern part of the county, and so it is not likely that Lincoln County will be expanding its business tax base in the future but instead will become more of a bedroom community for residents working outside of the county or for residents who are retired.

Jeff thanked Mark for all of the support that he given to Lincoln County CD as a County Commissioner over the last 10 years.

Conservation Commission Report

Mike reported that Food System mini grants should be available from the Commission in the near future. A new Conservation Commission Representative from the West Area will be selected at the next Commission Board meeting. There is still some fire recovery funding available for small projects. Elsa noted that an aerial seeding and fencing project for the Seven Bays fire will soon be submitted to the Commission. Mike complemented the NE Area on its recent annual meeting hosted by the District here in Davenport with its good discussion of local and WACD issues and on the good cooperation between the 5 CD's working together to help complete projects and solve problems.

Grants Update

Elsa reported that Dean has conducted the fall well level measurements for 14 of the previously measured wells from the Lincoln County well level grant for the new Northeastern Lincoln County Groundwater Conditions Monitoring grant, but there has not been time yet to select or measure new wells for the NE well levels grant. Dean has also done the fall well level measurements and transducer downloads for the 5 WSU/USBR grant wells along with the 3 Hawk Creek Ranch Estates well level measurements (private pay).

Farren Reinbold, the new manager for the Lincoln County Noxious Weed Board, has asked the District to serve as grant financial administrator for a potential \$50,000 grant (not received yet) to map invasive plant species across the county. Foster Creek CD has also asked the District to serve as grant financial administrator/pass through for a potential \$325,000 Fire Recovery grant from the Conservation Commission (also not received yet).

The WaterSMART grant subcommittee has recently submitted a proposal to have the Columbia Basin Development League serve as grant administrator for future grant funding to continue support for the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition (CBSWC) after the current WaterSMART grant from the Bureau of Reclamation expires in 2023. The CBDL has estimated that it would take \$280,000 a year to continue funding for the establishment and operation of the CBSWC into the future. There are no identified sources of funding found yet for this proposal. All towns and communities across the entire Columbia Basin with Class A and Class B municipal wells will be invited to join the CBSWC.

CRP Task Order

Elsa reported that NRCS had 11 more CRP field stand evaluations to finish in Lincoln County in early November, but NRCS staff was scheduled to attend an all-state meeting in early November and early snowfall was also predicted. Elsa worked with Cari and with the Conservation Commission to develop a Task Order for \$2,824.03 for District staff to conduct these 11 CRP field stand evaluations so that all CRP cooperators with contracts expiring in 2023 in Lincoln County would know if their CRP fields would meet or not meet their CP1 or CP2 stand requirements before applying for the next CRP signup in 2023. Elsa and Delaini went to the field to finish the CRP field stand evaluations before the early November snowfall arrived.

20. Chris moved to approve the Task Order from the Conservation Commission to conduct the last 11 CRP field stand evaluations in Lincoln County for \$2,824.03. Josh seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.

NE Area Engineering Cluster Grant Update

Elsa reported that she had met with Horrocks Engineering out at the Westly project along Hwy 231 and was informed that a check dam would also be required to hold back water temporarily so that Rolf Westly could pump water out with his tractor and PTO water pump to remove it away from his hayfield. The estimated cost of the engineering design has now been raised from \$3,000 to \$4,000.

Dairy Farm CNMP Plan

Elsa reported that Washington State Department of Agriculture has sent a notice to Zeigler Family Farms, a new dairy located just north of Hwy 28 and west of Harrington, requiring that a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) be completed for the dairy within 2 years. The dairy is a small dairy 12 milking cows on 65 acres. Zeigler Family Farms has requested help from the District for help in having the CNMP completed by the deadline. Elsa has asked Columbia Basin CD (formerly Grant County CD) for assistance in completing the CNMP for Zeigler Family Farms.

CBDL Meeting

Jeff distributed some handouts from the 58th Annual CBDL meeting yesterday in Moses Lake. One handout was the meeting program with the agenda, presenters, and officers. The second handout was a Columbia Basin Project Economic Contribution flyer that noted that Columbia Basin Irrigation Project creates \$2.66 billion in annual crop production value, with another \$2.67 billion supported by CBIP crops in local food processing and animal processing plants. Jeff noted that 2.7 to 2.9% of all food products in local grocery stores come from the CBIP.

One of the guest speakers was Mike Wade with the California Farm Water Coalition, who noted that up to 1 million acres in the San Joaquin Valley had to be fallowed this year due to the lack of canal water for irrigation. The lack of irrigation water has serious implications for food price increases since much of the produce grown and shipped across the country comes from the San Joaquin Valley. Farmers are resorting to drilling wells to replace the lack of canal water, but the wells do not produce near enough water to replace the surface water.

Jeff noted that large amounts of CBIP water has seeped into groundwater aquifers in the Quincy subbasin area. Local producers are only allowed to drill wells up to 200 feet deep to tap this water for irrigation, which costs about \$50 per acre per year plus

pumping costs. This overall cost is relatively low and is significantly less than what most deep well irrigators east of the CBIP project have to pay to irrigate their crops.

White Bluffs VSP Contract Update

Elsa noted that there have been several Voluntary Stewardship Program project cancellations. The Houger livestock watering facility project has been found as a partial replacement for the other VSP projects that have been cancelled. The Houger project is included in the Cost Share Action spreadsheet. Elsa proposed that \$7,000 of available VSP project money be transferred to the contract with White Bluffs Consulting to provide additional GIS and VSP monitoring assistance. A Lincoln County VSP Work Group meeting will be held on Monday to discuss the approval of the Houger project and the transfer of \$7,000 to White Bluffs Consulting.

21. Jim moved to approve the transfer of \$7,000 to White Bluffs Consulting to provide additional GIS and monitoring assistance for Lincoln County VSP. Josh seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.

Cost Share Approval

Hardcopies of the Cost Share Action spreadsheet were distributed. There were 5 requests for payment along with 2 grant applications for the Fire Recovery, Direct Seed 3, VSP, and NRI grants.

22. Chris moved to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet as presented. Josh seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.

Technical Assistance MOU with Adams CD Update

Elsa reported that she had recently visited three technical assistance projects in Adams County. Brandon Spencer has just finished install livestock watering troughs and has incorporated some new features in his troughs and pumping system. Brandon uses metal 2.5-gallon fire extinguishers to wash off the solar panels to help keep them clean in summer. He has installed a windmill to help pump water from the new well when the solar panels aren't able to generate electricity. Brandon is also using black plastic floating hexagons in his water troughs to cover the water and reflect sunlight in order to reduce algal growth while still providing water access to the cows.

John Harder had made his own metal troughs and will be installing up to 1 mile of black plastic hose buried below the frost line to supply well water to his troughs. Hans Hennings will be installing large tractor tire water troughs.

Board Meeting Schedule Update

Elsa asked the board members if they were planning on attending the 2023 Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association Conference on January 10 and 11 in the Tri-Cities. The regularly scheduled board meeting is for January 11. Since all 15 slots have been filled for the Direct Seed 3 grant, District staff are not planning to sponsor a booth at the Direct Seed meeting this time. The general consensus of the board members present is that they weren't planning on attending the Direct Seed meeting this January, and so January board meeting can still be held on January 11.

The December meeting is scheduled for December 14. Jeff noted that he will most likely will not be able to attend the meeting on the 14th. The general consensus of the Board was to keep the December meeting on the 14th.

WACD Update

Jeff noted that the monthly WACD Board meeting will be held this Monday at 6 PM over Zoom. Elsa reported that Jeff, Josh, Braidy, Chris are planning to attend the Annual WACD meeting in Wenatchee on November 28 – 30. Elsa has already made hotel reservations under the board member's names. Elsa and Delaini will be creating a poster display for the annual meeting that will take \$100 off of the cost of Elsa's registration.

A packet of letters from 5 conservation districts who have expressed their dissatisfaction with communications from WACD and its response to addressing DEI (diversity, equality and inclusiveness) goals was distributed. The 5 CD's, primarily from the west side of the state, have concerns on how meeting DEI goals will affect their efforts to get conservation on the ground and believe that they are already offering conservation assistance without discrimination as far as they know. One item that has apparently caused much dissatisfaction is that the recommendations from the DEI Committee were not presented at the 2021 Annual WACD Meeting as intended, like the recommendations from the Elections Committee were presented, and instead were voted on by the WACD Board and not brought before the 2021 WACD meeting attendees.

Jeff noted that a discussion on DEI issues is scheduled for Monday, November 28th at the annual meeting from 12:30 to 2:30 PM.

NRCS Report

Dick gave the NRCS report for Cari who was away on training. Dick introduced Casey Wren, the new Soil Conservation Technician in the Davenport office who started several months ago and has been working recently with CRP field stand evaluations.

Dick reported that 4 CSP renewals have been approved at this time, and up to 6 out of 13 total CSP renewal applications may be approved. All of the CRP field stand evaluations in Lincoln County have now been completed. Forty-one applications for EQIP have been received in Lincoln County along with 29 applications for CSP Classic. The West Palouse Team has been working on processing 70 CSP payments and is about half done.

There are 2 permanent positions along with a SCEP student position yet to be filled in the Davenport office. An all-employee meeting was held in Ellensburg in early November for the first time in several years. NRCS is projected to receive a lot more money in 2023, especially for large dollar projects.

Job Announcement Update

Elsa announced that two District job positions had been advertised for a Financial Administrator and Outreach Assistant and for a Natural Resources Technician and that job applications had been received. Only 2 applications have been received so far for the Financial Administrator and Outreach Assistant position. Quite a few applications have been received for the Natural Resources Technician position, but few of the applications have shown the requested preferred experience, and there have been no local applicants so far. The job announcements end on December 1.

Elsa and Delaini will review and rank the applications and report back to the Board in December.

Jim asked about the possibility of rehiring former employee Kristen Balko, if she does return to the state of Washington in 2023 as has been preliminarily reported. Elsa noted that Kristen would work well in a program manager/grants writing position if she returns to the local area and seeks to work for the District again.

Hedreen WRP Planting Update

Elsa reported that 1,600 potted plants were planted at the Hedreen Wetland Reserve Program project in early November, in spite of the cold and the early snowfall, which fortunately did not stick at the project site along Crab Creek. Up to 3 DNR work crews were utilized to finish the planting by the second day. For next spring, 6,000 pots plus willow poles will be planted at the WRP project, but there is no 2023 fall planting scheduled.

Holiday Leave

It was noted that District staff will already have Thursday, November 24 off for Thanksgiving Day along with Monday, December 26 due to Christmas on Sunday, December 25th, and Monday, January 2 due to New Years Day on Sunday, January 1.

23. Josh moved to give District staff administrative holiday leave for Friday, November 25 and Friday, December 23. Chris seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.

Request for Public Comment

Jeff asked for any more 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 11:30 AM for an estimated 1 hour to discuss personnel matters. The Board came back out of executive session at 12:32 PM. No actions were taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Chairman Jeff Schibel adjourned the meeting at 12:33 PM. The next board meeting is scheduled as an in-person meeting on Wednesday, December 14, 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.

Respectfully submitted,



Josh Sherwood, Secretary



Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 23 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the October 12, 2022 minutes as amended.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #11884 to #11914, along with 12 EFT's, totaling \$124,107.80.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #16 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$706.12 to the Conservation Commission.
- 4. M/S/P to submit voucher #4 for the 23-39-IM grant in the amount of \$2,035.31 to the Conservation Commission.
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- 6. M/S/P to submit voucher #4 for the 23-39-FR grant in the amount of \$57,925.63 to the Conservation Commission.
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- 12. M/S/P to submit voucher #1 for the WaterSMART grant in the amount of \$7,571.58 to USBR.
- 13. M/S/P that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for September 27, 2022 through October 25, 2022 be approved. The total amount owed was \$2,110.62.
- 14. M/S/P to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of September 15, 2022. The total amount owed was \$139.92.

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- 16. M/S/P to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of October 15, 2022. The total amount owed was \$356.91.
- 17. M/S/P to approve the Treasurer's report and Grant's report as presented.
- 18. M/S/P to add the January 2023 PNDSA Conference and holiday leave discussions to the agenda.
- 19. M/S/P to approve the 2023 Springbook accounting software fee of \$6,003.32
- 20. M/S/P to approve the Task Order from the Conservation Commission to conduct the last 11 CRP field stand evaluations in Lincoln County for \$2,824.03.
- 21. M/S/P to approve the transfer of \$7,000 to White Bluffs Consulting to provide additional GIS and monitoring assistance for Lincoln County VSP.
- 22. M/S/P to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet as presented.
- 23. M/S/P to give District staff administrative holiday leave for Friday, November 25 and Friday, December 23.