

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA  
Wednesday, June 14, 2023**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

Meeting called to order at 8:44 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by phone were as follows: Jim Baye, Chris Laney, Josh Sherwood, and Braidy Haden - LCCD Supervisors; Jo Gilchrist, Lincoln County Commissioners; Cari Roepke and Marika Kearsley, NRCS; Byron Gagnon, Intern with NRCS; Ashley Smith, FSA; Elsa Bowen and Dean White - LCCD staff.

**A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:**

- *1. Jim moved to approve the May 10, 2023 minutes as presented. Chris seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.*

**B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:**

- *2. Jim moved to pay and approve vouchers #12088 to #12117, along with 11 EFT's, totaling \$84,968.72. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *3. Jim moved to submit voucher #8 for the 23-39-DG grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *4. Jim moved to submit voucher #5 for the 23-39-WFF grant in the amount of \$2,485.74 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *5. Jim moved to submit voucher 11 for the 23-39-FR grant in the amount of \$14,215.39 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *6. Jim moved to submit voucher 11 for the 23-39-FR grant in the amount of \$14,215.39 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *7. Jim moved to submit voucher #23 for the 22-39-NR grant in the amount of \$13,817.60 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *8. Jim moved to submit voucher #10 for the Cluster Engineering grant in the amount of \$7,000.00 to Stevens County CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *9. Jim moved to submit voucher #11 for the Cluster Engineering grant in the amount of \$5,456.27 to Stevens County CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *10. Jim moved to submit voucher #12 for the Cluster Engineering grant in the amount of \$5,277.37 to Stevens County CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*

- **11. Jim moved to submit voucher #13 for the Cluster Engineering grant in the amount of \$6,261.29 to Stevens County CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Jim moved to submit voucher #10 for the 23-39-IM grant in the amount of \$2,417.17 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **13. Jim moved to submit voucher #11 for the 23-39-IM grant in the amount of \$53.33 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **14. Jim moved to submit voucher #19 for the 22-27-NR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to Adams CD. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **15. Jim moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for April 25, 2023 through May 24, 2023 be approved. The total amount owed was \$613.36. Josh seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**
- **16. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of May 15, 2023. The total amount owed was \$270.32. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **17. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of May 31, 2023. The total amount owed was \$145.49. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**

After reviewing the statements, the Board members initialed each page of the bank statements for the checking and money market accounts.

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

Elsa noted that for the grants ending on June 30, almost all of the funding will be spent except for \$7,000 that must be returned due to a fencing project recently completed that ended up costing \$7,000 less compared to the original projected cost.

Elsa reported that \$150,000 in District funds from WaFd in Odessa were deposited in a short term 3-month CD WaFd that will earn 5% interest.

Elsa also noted that the annual state audit financial report had been submitted to the State Auditor's office by the end of May as required. No comments have been received back at this time.

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

## C. AGENDA

### Cost Share Update

Hard copies of the Cost Share Action spreadsheet were distributed. Requests for cost share payments were received for various conservation practices including forage/biomass planting, brush management, irrigation systems, livestock fencing, emergency haying, and direct seeding.

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

### DNR SIMs Table Grant Update

Elsa reported that 3 SIMs tables (fire spread simulation tables) have been ordered for the District using \$137,975 in grant funding from DNR. The tables fold up into transportable brief cases and will be arriving in the near future.

### Conservation Commission Grant Approval

Hard copies of the 24-39-IM grant Outcome and Budget description sheet were distributed. Elsa announced that the Master Contract with the Conservation Commission for FY 2024 needed to be approved and signed by the Board in order for the District to receive Commission grant funding for the new fiscal year. The Implementation Grant and addendums for a total of \$128,935 that will be available starting on July 1 for the new fiscal year also needed to be approved and signed by the Board.

**20. Braidy moved to approve the Master Grant Contract with the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**

**21. Josh moved to approve the 24-39-IM grant from the Conservation Commission for \$128,935. Jim seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**

### Resolution 23-02

Elsa reported that the Board needed to approve a resolution to be submitted to the Conservation Commission for the new fiscal biennium starting July 1 which establishes the cost share participant labor rate that will be applied to Conservation Commission grants. The current cost share labor rate for the District is \$22 per hour. Elsa noted that the Conservation Commission recently raised its cost share labor rate to \$25 per hour and proposed that the District raise its cost share labor rate to \$25 per hour for Resolution 23-02.

**22. Jim moved to approve raising the cost share participant labor rate for grant funding from the Conservation Commission to \$25 per hour for Resolution 23-02. Josh seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**

### Resolution 23-03

Elsa also reported that the Board needed to approve a resolution to be submitted to the Conservation Commission which establishes the cost share reimbursement rate for Conservation Commission grants. Discussion was held. The current cost share reimbursement rate is 75% and has been for quite some time. District cooperators who receive grant funding from Conservation Commission grants are required to cover 25% of the cost for installing and implementing their project. Most cooperators are able to

meet most or all of their 25% cost share portion through their labor invested in installing their project, which has now been set at the \$25 per hour rate. Elsa noted that the District could set the cost share reimbursement rate as high as 99% but recommended that the rate be left at 75% for Resolution 23-03 in order that more projects can be funded with Conservation Commission grant funding.

**23. Chris moved to maintain the cost share reimbursement rate at 75% for Conservation Commission grants for Resolution 23-03. Josh seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**

#### **Voluntary Stewardship Program Grant Approval**

Elsa announced that the District had received a new VSP grant for \$240,000 from the Conservation Commission for the new fiscal biennium from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025. Most of the grant funding will be used to fund cooperator cost share projects approved by the county VSP Working Group. The next VSP Working Group meeting is scheduled for 7-8 PM on June 27.

**24. Braidy moved to approve the new VSP grant for \$240,000 from the Conservation Commission for the July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025 biennium. Chris seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**

#### **Elections Approval**

Hard copies of the 2023 elections certification letter from the Conservation Commission to Jim were distributed. Jim has been reelected as a District Board Supervisor for a new 3 year term that will be in effect until May 21, 2026. Elsa noted that the 800 ballots returned to the District for Jim's reelection has skewed the overall rate for CD Supervisor elections returns in the state of Washington. Elsa proposed that in order to make the mailing of 8,250 paper ballots to all of the registered voters in Lincoln County next year more worthwhile, the back side of the ballots should have the highlights of yearly District activities printed on them as part of outreach activities to county residents.

#### **Ecology Visit to Hawk Creek Watershed**

Elsa reported that Department of Ecology staff had conducted another roadside tour of the same potential water quality concern sites this spring in the Hawk Creek watershed north of Davenport that were identified last spring on their first roadside tour in the area. Elsa noted the some of the sites from last year were dropped by Ecology as potential sites of concern while other sites remain on their list. Lincoln County CD serves as a facilitator/moderator between Ecology and property owners/operators for potential water quality concern sites identified in the county by Ecology. It was noted that Amanda Richardson, who had been the Ecology contact for the Hawk Creek watershed assessment, had accepted a new position and that another Ecology employee would be taking her place.

#### **CRP Task Order Update**

Elsa reported that all CRP contracts for the current CRP 60 signup Task Order will be completed by June 30, and that the completion of the Task Order will transfer the task of obtaining signatures for the new CRP contracts back to FSA. As of today, there are still 29 contracts in Adams County and 4 contracts in Lincoln County yet to complete. There were 5 CRP applications in Lincoln County that were not accepted by FSA.

### **WACD Update**

Jeff reported that the WACD Board met remotely on May 15. Elsa gave a report on District projects and activities as part of the focus on NE area CD's for this meeting. Elsa noted that Delaini, Debra and Elayne were attending WADE (Washington Association of District Employee) training at the Sleeping Lady in Leavenworth today. They are part of the 289 participants attending WADE training this year. The PMC has sold \$444,550 worth of trees and shrubs so far this year. The performance evaluation forms on WACD Director Tom Salzer have been returned, with mostly good ratings seen.

Roylene Comes at Night, NRCS State Conservationist, gave a report and noted that NRCS would like to have 2 new employees working in the Davenport office for the next 5 years on IRA funded projects through the District. Elsa would be the supervisor for these employees and NRCS would reimburse the District for the costs of the employees. Cari would give these employees their specific work assignments.

Elsa noted that the office redesign plan is still being updated. At this time, the maximum size of cubicles for District employees will be limited to 6 ft. X 9 ft. Cari temporarily passed around the latest office redesign drawing. It was noted that up to 15 NRCS + District employees will be expected to fit and work in the current east side of the office, while a maximum of 5 FSA employees are expected to be working in the west side of the office. One new break room will have to accommodate the 20 employees in the office. It was also noted that since the District has not paid office rent (and cannot pay office rent to NRCS according to GSA) for many years, Lincoln County CD does not have much if any say on the office redesign plan.

Elsa noted that the Conservation Commission has made \$14 million available for fire recovery and prevention funding, and that she has been working with Spokane CD to look into hiring 1 new employee to work part time in the Davenport and Spokane offices on fire recovery and prevention efforts.

### **Conservation Commission Report**

Jeff reported that Kirk Robinson, the acting Executive Director for the Conservation Commission, has made note of the historic amount of funding that has been allocated by the Legislature to the Conservation Commission this year. The Executive Director search committee has prepared an RFP to advertise starting July in order to find a suitable contractor to facilitate the search for a new Executive Director. The Executive Director search committee consists of 9 members, with 5 members from the Conservation Commission and the other 4 members from outside of the Conservation Commission. Ron Schultz is currently out of office for health reasons. Bill Eller is developing an emergency plan for the Conservation Commission in the event that some staff members are not available to work for the Commission for a period of time. The next Conservation Commission tour and meeting will be held on July 19-20 at Cascadia CD and there will be an option available to participate in the meeting online.

### **NRCS Report**

Marika distributed hard copies of the West Palouse Team report for June. Please refer to the hard copy for the full report. The initial allocation of EQIP general funding has been spent. The state received an additional \$2 million for EQIP IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) funding, but the West Palouse Team did not receive any of this funding. Chris commented that NRCS and the District need to get information on how direct

seeding benefits soil conservation, through EQIP and CSP funding from NRCS and through District grant funding, to landowners and especially trust officers, who all too often will not allow their renters to try direct seeding practices on rented land.

The WPT received 22 CSP regular and 18 CSP IRA applications, with all eligible applications being approved. All CSP IRA applications must be obligated by June 16. The WPT must spend all of the IRA money by the deadline or the remaining funding will have to be returned to the state office. IRA funding is more targeted towards soil health, carbon sequestration, and air quality projects.

District staff have completed writing contracts for 151 CRP applications in Lincoln County and 36 applications in Adams County so far out of the 250 total contracts in the CRP task order. There were 156 CRP applications in Lincoln County and 176 applications in Adams County. The deadline for Continuous and SAFE CRP applications is July 31

Michelle Ingersoll, the latest Program Assistant hired through TEYA, was recently let go. NRCS is seriously considering hiring a regular NRCS employee to serve as the Program Assistant in the Davenport office. Bryon Gagnon is working as a temporary NRCS Intern in the Davenport office up through July 28. Bryon is a student at the University of Arizona in Yuma, Arizona. Marika will continue to serve as the acting DC for the WPT in Cari's place until July 17.

### **County Commissioner Report**

Jo reported that CRAB (County Road Administration Board) is meeting at Lincoln County Public Works today. The County Commissioners are still looking for funding to repair damage done to Hesseltine Road in early spring and are looking for any available help from CRAB. Representative Joe Schmick recently met with the County Commissioners. Lincoln County is part of the COG (Council of Governments) for Eastern Washington. COG frequently meets in Lincoln County since the county is centrally located. COG is requesting input from state and federal agencies such as DNR and BLM.

Elsa announced that the next WaterSMART meeting for the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition will be held on Thursday, June 15 in Moses Lake.

### **FSA Report**

Ashley reported that July 14 is the deadline for producers to sign up for the ERP (Emergency Relief Program Phase II) and PARP (Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program) signups. Spring crop reporting is due by July 15. All but 5 of the 156 CRP applications in Lincoln County have been approved by FSA. The Davenport FSA office is now fully staffed except for the permanent CED position. After September 30 and current Farm Bill expires, FSA will not be able to work on new contracts for its main programs offered to farmers until a new Farm Bill is approved, and instead will be working on maintenance tasks for existing contracts and office records.

### **Request for Public Comment**

Jeff asked if there was any more public comment for the meeting. There was no public comment.

Chairman Jeff Schibel adjourned the meeting at 10:43 AM. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 12 as an in-person meeting starting at 8:30 AM in the conference room at the USDA Service Center in Davenport.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Josh Sherwood, Secretary

  
Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 24 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the May 10, 2023 minutes as presented.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #12088 to #12117, along with 11 EFT's, totaling \$84,968.72.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #8 for the 23-39-DG grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission.
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- 20. M/S/P to approve the Master Grant Contract with the Conservation Commission.
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- 22. M/S/P to approve raising the cost share participant labor rate for grant funding from the Conservation Commission to \$25 per hour for Resolution 23-02.
- 23. M/S/P to maintain the cost share reimbursement rate at 75% for Conservation Commission grants for Resolution 23-03
- 24. M/S/P to approve the new VSP grant for \$240,000 from the Conservation Commission for the July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025 biennium.