

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
HELD REMOTELY OVER ZOOM
Wednesday, February 10, 2021**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 8:32 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting on Zoom or by telephone were as follows: Jim Baye, Josh Sherwood, Braidy Haden and Chris Laney - LCCD Supervisors; Cari Roepke, NRCS; Elsa Bowen, Val Vissia, Connor Nikkola, Delaini Disher, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

- **1. Chris moved to approve the January 13, 2021 minutes as presented. Jim seconded. Motion passed.**

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- **2. Jim moved to pay and approve vouchers #11367 to #11392, along with 70 EFT's, totaling \$84,002.27. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Most of the EFT's were generated by online tree sale orders. Motion passed.**
- **3. Jim moved to submit voucher #18 for the VSP 3 grant in the amount of \$10,419.39 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **4. Jim moved to submit voucher #8 for the 21-39-IM grant in the amount of \$12,290.49 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **5. Jim moved to submit voucher #19 for the 20-39-NR grant in the amount of \$26,157.12 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **6. Jim moved to submit voucher #1 for the 21-39-HM grant in the amount of \$950.51 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **7. Jim moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for December 24, 2020 through January 25, 2021 be approved. The total amount owed was \$790.82. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Some of the bills included a drone license test which Connor took and passed, needed repairs on the sonic meter, and tree sale supplies. Motion passed.**
- **8. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Cenex credit card statement with a closing date of January 10, 2021. The total amount owed was \$69.33. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**

Delaini will be mailing out the bank statements for the board members to initial and forward on to the next board member in a timely manner.

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

Elsa noted that the out-of-date grants had been removed from the Treasurer's Report. For a quick grants update, Elsa noted that a 2 year extension was being pursued on the 25 North grant from DNR and a 1 year extension is being pursued on the Direct Seed 2 grant from Ecology. Connor is working on an ALEA grant application from WDFW for a tree and shrub replanting project for areas on the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area that were burned by the Whitney Fire. The recently submitted Direct Seed 3 grant application has been added to the list of approved grants from Ecology. The \$100,000 WaterSMART grant application to BOR for establishing the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition has been submitted but the District will not hear back until July if the application was approved.

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

C. AGENDA

NRCS Report

Cari reported that she and Elsa had been working on the CRP 2021 task order and have submitted it to NRCS and the Conservation Commission for approval. Handouts of the task order were distributed. Some questions have been raised about the monetary amounts. Cari is hoping that all of these issues can be quickly resolved so that the task order agreement can be received back by next week to start work on the CRP 2021 signup. Elsa noted that over \$93,000 would be available for District staff to work on GIS maps, Conservation Plan development, and perform 50 field stand certifications.

Cari has been conducting interviews for the Soil Conservationist position in Davenport and the Range Conservationist position in Ritzville. Cari made a selection for the Soil Conservationist position and forwarded it to Human Resources for review. Cari also made a selection for the Range Conservation position and forwarded it to the Area Conservationist. Cari has subsequently heard that these selections have been placed on hold for an undetermined amount of time.

The FSA and NRCS lease for the current Davenport Field Office has been extended to 2023. After that, FSA will be soliciting new bids for the Davenport Field Office space.

Programs continue to be a large workload for the West Palouse Team. Only one of the CSP renewal applications was accepted. For EQIP, there are 30 applications in Lincoln County and 15 applications in Adams County for the WPT to process and rank

by the end of February. For CSP there 2021 CSP classic and 2022 CSP renewals for the WPT to process by the deadline of March 26.

Internal Audit Schedule

Elsa announced that the Internal Audit needs to be conducted in the near future but has not yet been scheduled. Two board members are needed to attend. Mike Baden will participate by Zoom. Elsa will get back to Jeff and Jim with a proposed audit date in the future. The internal audit can not be held in the conference room but can be held in person in the kitchen in the office with appropriate protective measures taken.

In a related matter, Elsa notified the Board that the deposit slip book got lost while making a recent deposit in the Davenport branch of US Bank at the drive-in window. The deposit book was inside the deposit bag to make the deposit as has always been done in the past. When Elsa and Delaini got back to the office they noticed that the deposit book, which contained up to 1 year of deposit slip copies, was missing. US Bank was contacted immediately and asked if it could find the deposit book anywhere inside the bank, but the bank has not been able to find the deposit book anywhere and has also not appeared to be overly concerned about the loss of the book. Elsa has requested a letter from US Bank that verifies the loss of deposit book and documents all of the steps taken afterward to find it. Elsa has also contacted Mike Baden and notified him of the loss of the deposit book and requested information on the mitigating steps that need to be taken for the next 3 year audit.

Jim asked if there were other banks that could be used for regular banking in place of US Bank. Elsa noted that Wheatland Bank won't accept District funds because they are public funds, and that the next closest bank would be Key Bank 30 miles away in Wilbur, which would not work for daily deposits. Jeff requested that the letter from US Bank be notarized. Elsa and Delaini will review alternative methods for making deposits in the future such as only using the original slip for the deposit to be made to be placed in the deposit bag in place of the entire deposit book.

Alan Stromberger Memorial Funds

Elsa reported that she had heard back from Austin Miller, the ag science and ag shop instructor for Sprague High School, and was notified that Sprague High School and FFA would like to use the \$200 in Alan Stromberger Memorial Funds to help pay for a new welcome to Sprague sign. Chris asked where other funds would be found to help pay for the entire cost of the sign. It was noted that the Sprague Ag Shop may be able to cut and make their metal sign. By general consensus the Board agreed to approve the \$200 in memorial funds for Alan Stromberger to be donated to Sprague High School to help fund the creation of a new welcome to Sprague sign. Elsa will notify Austin of the decision.

PNW Canola Association

10. Braidy moved to approve \$100 to join the PNW Canola Association. Chris seconded. Motion passed.

Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Expo Attendance

Elsa noted that District staff will be requesting that registrations for staff and board members wishing to attend the June 14 - 16 PNDSA meeting at the Whitman County Fairgrounds outside of Colfax be allowed to be covered by the current Direct Seed 2

grant. A handout of the Cropping Systems Summer Expo flyer was distributed. Elsa asked if board members are currently planning on attending the PNDSA meeting near Colfax. Chris and Josh are currently planning to attend and the other board members will decide later if they will be attending.

DNR Crew Agreement Extension

The interlocal agreement with DNR needs to be extended and re-signed in order to obtain the planting services of DNR work crews on District projects such as the Cobb Ranch WRP riparian planting project this spring.

11. Chris moved to extend and re-sign the interlocal agreement with DNR to obtain the planting services of DNR work crews for local District projects. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.

University of Idaho Riparian Buffers Listening Session

The University of Idaho and The Lands Council are asking for crop and livestock producers to participate in an online listening session to share their views on installing riparian buffers on their land. A handout on the listening session flyer was distributed. Two listening sessions will be held in the morning on February 23 and February 26. The reward for participating in the listening session will be a \$40 gas card. Jim asked if the Waters of the US jurisdiction would be reverted back to the extending all the way up tiny streams like it was before with the recent change in the Presidency. Dean noted that he compiled a comment letter on this subject for the District about 5 to 6 years ago and could look it up in the pre-2017 minutes if needed.

Elsa also noted that she and Connor had been speaking with WSU about a proposed CRP and wildlife study. There currently is not much funding available for this proposed study. Connor will look more into the results that WSU is looking for and get back to the Board.

Cost Share Approval

A copy of the list of proposed projects and applicants for the Lincoln County CD project funding was distributed. Connor grouped the projects by the NRCS practice standard. All of the requests received by the District for project cost share assistance have been include in the list. Elsa requested direction from Board members on which projects it would like to fund for 2021. District staff have not ranked the projects but have confirmed that they all fit within established District priorities on the Annual Plan.

Elsa noted that all the engineering designs have already been completed for the watering facility projects but that additional Engineering Cluster funding should be available to develop the needed engineering designs for the other types of projects. The Fuel Break / Firewise projects would not include grazing but would mostly involve brush beating and tree thinning and limbing to improve home safety and forest health.

The Board suggested that grassed waterways be funded in 2021. Connor reported that he would have to recontact the grassed waterway project applicants to confirm that they are still interested in implementing their proposed waterway project. Connor also noted that Rob Dewald was just funded last year for a previously completed grassed waterway project.

12. Chris moved to approve the funding of 5 out of the 6 grassed waterway projects on the Cost Share Approval list, with the Dewald project ranked last as an alternative project. Jim seconded. Motion passed.

WACD Report

WACD has changed the date for Legislative Days to March 10 - 17. The next WACD Board meeting will be held remotely by Zoom on February 16 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Jeff and Ryan participated in a tour around the NE Area looking for candidates for the second NE Area board member. Only one candidate from Pend Oreille CD expressed an interest in the position. The second NE Area board member position will be discussed at the February WACD Board meeting.

The North Yakima CD has sent a letter WACD expressing its disagreement with the DEI resolution (diversity, equality, and inclusiveness). This issue will also be addressed at the February board meeting. WACD is searching for volunteers for a committee that will be addressing DEI.

The PMC is doing well and has continued to be free from COVID-19.

Conservation Commission Report

There was no report from the Conservation Commission.

Miscellaneous Items

Val asked if the board members had received her email with her letter of resignation effective April 30. Val may continue working a little longer if needed to help out with the Cobb Ranch WRP planting. Jeff thanked Val on behalf of the Board for her years of service and the experience that she has brought to the District.

Dean described the two sample well level measuring summaries from the well level grant that he emailed to board members. One of the summaries was for well levels from an irrigation well measured by airline and the other was from a municipal well measured by the sonic meter and Etape. Only the most vital information such as the well level measurement date, well water level and well water ground level elevation are included in the summaries. Dean will be emailing and sending out well level summaries to well level operators in the near future. Dean also described the PDF of screenshots he took on the first day of the WSU SoilCon Soil Health Week for the presentation on the Washington State Soil Health Initiative that was implemented starting in June 2020.

Elsa reported that staff from FSA, NRCS and the District met recently to discuss some concerns with operating procedures in the office. As a result of the meeting, all employees on both sides of the office have agreed to wear masks while working inside the office. The FSA office will be advertising for 2 positions that will soon be vacant.

Today is Elections Day for one elected board supervisor position. Val and Linda Knutson with NRCS will be conducting the official ballot count tomorrow and forward the results to the Conservation Commission.

FSA Report

There was no report from FSA.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Jeff Schibel at 9:57 AM. The next board meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 10, 2021 starting at 8:30 AM. With the Executive Order from Governor Inslee banning any in-person public meetings until the end of the COVID-19 pandemic or until the executive order is rescinded, the March board meeting and all future board meetings will be held remotely by Zoom with the option to call in by phone.

Respectfully submitted,



Josh Sherwood, Secretary



Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 12 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the January 13, 2021 minutes as amended.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #11367 to #11392, along with 70 EFT's, totaling \$84,002.27.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #18 for the VSP 3 grant in the amount of \$10,419.39 to the Conservation Commission.
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- 7. M/S/P that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for December 24, 2020 through January 25, 2021 be approved. The total amount owed was \$790.82.
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- 10. M/S/P to approve \$100 to join the PNW Canola Association.
- 11. M/S/P to extend and resign the interlocal agreement with DNR to obtain the planting services of DNR work crews for local District projects.
- 12. M/S/P to approve the funding of 5 out of the 6 grassed waterway projects on the Cost Share Approval list, with the Dewald project ranked last as an alternative project.

