

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
NRCS / FSA MEETING ROOM-DAVENPORT WA
Wednesday, December 11, 2019**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 8:35 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting were as follows: Jim Baye, Chris Laney and Braidy Haden - LCCD Supervisors; Mike Baden, Conservation Commission; Mark Stedman, Lincoln County Commissioner; Elsa Bowen, Val Vissia, Connor Nikkola, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

Dean noted that the Quad County Sustainable Water Coalition meeting mentioned on page 5 could be changed to the official name of Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition. The Board agreed by general consensus.

- **1. Jim moved to approve the November 13 minutes as amended. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- **2. Jim moved to pay and approve vouchers #10977 to #11005, along with 5 EFT's, totaling \$47,143.06. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that the \$900 for Stowaway Storage was for a 1 year renewal for the storage unit 1 block north of the office. Motion passed.**
- **3. Jim moved to submit voucher 4 for the VSP 3 grant in the amount of \$11,043.20 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **4. Jim moved to submit voucher #6 for the 20-39-IM grant in the amount of \$8,090.17 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **5. Jim moved to submit voucher #5 for the 20-39-NR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **6. Jim moved to submit voucher #40 for the RCPP (WRIA 34) grant in the amount of \$104.16 to Palouse CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **7. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Cenex credit card statement with a closing date of November 10, 2019. The total amount owed was \$357.08. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**

- **8. Jim moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for October 25, 2019 – November 25, 2019 be approved. The total amount owed was \$1,308.86. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. LRF = the Lake Roosevelt Forum expenses. Some of the expenses were for licenses and SD micro cards for the 2 drones to get them ready to fly. Elsa asked if anybody else wanted to attend the Direct Seed Conference so that she could finish with the registration and travel costs on the District credit card. Chris asked to be added as a participant for the one day of standard conference activities at the Direct Seed conference in January. Motion passed.**

After review, the Board initialed each page of the available bank statements for the checking and money market accounts. Board members also signed the new signature page sheets for District accounts at Washington Federal Bank and Key Bank to have Kathy McQuade's name removed from the signature page.

The Board reviewed the report of the current annual leave/sick leave balances for District employees. Jeff noted that the current total annual leave balance is still below the \$65,000 kept in Reserve Fund #30 as required by the state.

Copies of the 11 x 17" budget spreadsheet were distributed for review and approval. Elsa reminded the board members that the budget can be amended by the Board at any time. The final 2019 amended budget column and the proposed 2020 budget column needed to be approved. It was suggested that \$100 could be added to the 2020 column for rain gauges to be the same as for previous years. Elsa noted that the final total income for 2019 dropped from \$1,571,965 to \$889,661 primarily due to less reimbursements for the Direct Seed and Mielke WRP grant than expected.

- **9. Braidy moved to approve the Lincoln County CD final 2019 Budget column as amended. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **10. Chris moved to approve the proposed Lincoln County CD 2020 Budget column as presented with one amendment. Jim seconded. Motion passed.**
- **11. Jim moved to approve the Treasurer's report and the Grant's report as presented. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

C. AGENDA

Elections Resolution

Elsa noted that Resolution 2019-4 regarding the establishment of the date, time and location for the upcoming 2020 elections needed to be approved at the meeting today. The Board agreed by general consensus at the November 13 meeting to hold the

2020 elections on Wednesday, February 12, the day of the February board meeting. Elsa proposed that the elections be held from 10 AM to 2 PM here at the office.

12. Braidy moved to approve Resolution 2019-4 to hold elections for the elected position currently held by Jim Baye here at the office in the USDA Service Center in Davenport at 1310 Morgan St. from 10 AM to 2 PM. Chris seconded. Motion passed. The resolution was then signed by the board members

Policy Manual Update for Online Technology Outreach

Copies of a proposed minor update to the Online Technology Outreach section of the Policy Manual were distributed. The proposed update for approval was to add Instagram along with the already approved Facebook program for social media outreach. Elsa noted that people 40 years or older tend use Facebook, while people younger than 40 tend to use Instagram more for social media announcements and information. Val noted that she can and will link the District's Facebook account with Instagram so that anything she posts on Facebook to promote District programs and activities will also be copied onto the Instagram website.

13. Jim moved to approve adding the use of Instagram along with Facebook to the Online Technology Outreach section of the Policy Manual. Braidy seconded. Motion passed. The board members then signed the policy manual update signature page.

County Commissioner Report

Mark Stedman reported that the county has been updating its budget for 2020 and has had to move \$350,000 in the county health insurance pool to keep it financially solvent. The contract bargaining transparency dispute with the Teamsters Union is ongoing, and because of this, county employees who are members of the Teamsters Union have not had an approved contract with the county for the last 3 years, but they have still received a 2% CPI increase during this time. All road construction projects in the county that have closed roads will soon be open for travel again, including the Rocklyn Road project at Church Road.

Commissioner Stedman, Jeff, Val and Dean attended the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition meeting in Moses Lake yesterday. Commissioner Stedman noted that attendance has dropped considerably compared to earlier meetings. The decreased participation can be attributed to current lack of grant funding to help establish the coalition and the structure for the organization. Interested members appear to be unwilling to commit time and effort until the organization structure is available to define the commitments needed from members for the organization to function as intended. Commissioner Stedman noted that a county commissioner and conservation district staff and a supervisor attended the meeting, but that no county commissioners or CD staff from Adams, Franklin, or Grant county attended the meeting like they should have been to participate in the water coalition. Mark also noted that the Columbia Basin Development League already has the organized structure and membership to help move the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition forward. Dean noted that in his presentation yesterday, Kevin Lindsey with GeoEngineers noted that he would like to see the GWMA information already generated for the 4 county area be made available on a public website, and that he would also like to see the GIS geology layers, including the various Wanapum and Grand Ronde basalt flows, be updated with information from

new wells drilled since the original layers were generated in the early 2010's so that geology cross-section profiles could be generated for well sites anywhere in the 4 county area on the public website to help inform the public where the primary aquifer(s) water for individual wells are located in the area. Elsa commented that the WaterSMART grant application to BOR to establish the water coalition organization had been submitted to and accepted by BOR, and that Lincoln County CD as the lead agency is now waiting for the grant application to be approved.

Lake Roosevelt Forum Report

Connor and Jeff attended the Lake Roosevelt Forum. Connor noted that he did a lot of networking at the conference, and that much of the Forum was devoted to the local Native American tribes and their efforts to reintroduce salmon back into the Columbia River above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams. Helix Tubes were discussed as new technology structural solutions that are capable of moving salmon and other fish over the top of the dams and can take the place of fish ladders. The Reardan FFA Ag Issues teams gave their presentation on restoration for the southern population of Orca (killer whales) and it was well received.

Jeff noted that if the tribes proceed forward with the reintroduction of salmon above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams, there is a virus that may become a serious problem in the warmer water behind the dams along with populations of predatory northern pike minnow that would be a threat to the survival of any introduced salmon. Jeff also noted that there was a very diverse audience representing many different interest groups that attended the Forum.

Fall Recognition Dinner

Elsa noted that she had ordered the insulated Yeti cups with the Lincoln County CD logo for the retired board members to be honored and that they should be arriving at the office around December 16. The question remained as to whether or not to hold a recognition dinner or just send the cups to these retired board members, as not a lot of interest has been shown in attending a recognition dinner as a group. Board members agreed by consensus that a better option would be to purchase admission passes/wrist bands for the retired board members to attend the upcoming Ag Expo in early February and then have lunch with them in Spokane and give them their cups.

VSP Update

Connor recently finished mailing 600 of the new VSP flyers to landowners in the Hawk Creek area, inviting them to participate in the VSP program in Lincoln County. Jim invited to Connor to come his farm to gain more experience with exploring VSP eligible practices that might be applied on other farms in the county. Val reported that she will be giving short VSP presentations at Highline Grain Grower meetings on the following dates and locations across Lincoln County in late winter 2020:

- February 18 – Odessa
- February 20 – Almira
- February 25 – Reardan

WSU Farmers Network Training

Elsa announced that the WSU Farmers Network had begun advertising for two upcoming training sessions in January at the Courtyard Marriot motel in Pullman. The first training session addresses "Soil Health in Eastern Washington: Little Things, Big Impact" from 8 AM to 4 PM on January 15. The second training session addresses "Palouse Soil Acidity in 2020" from 8 AM to 4 PM on January 16. The registration cost for each training session is \$70 which includes lunch, and there is a discount if participants register for both training sessions. Dean noted that he would be interested in attending the Soil Health training session on January 15th.

14. Jim moved to approve registration and travel for up to 5 staff or board members to attend the WSU Farmers Network training sessions in Pullman on January 15 and 16. Chris seconded. Motion passed.

WACD Annual Meeting Report

Elsa noted that attendance looked like it was down from last year but that about the same number of voting members were at the meeting this year. NRCS reported that nationwide it is losing about 10% of its employees from retirement and other cause, and that it is not able to replace employees as fast as they are leaving the agency. There have been many changes to public records requirements. Conservation districts are recommended to review and update the public records section of their Policy Manuals as needed. Elsa also noted that CD board members were reminded again that if 3 or more of them are together at a time in the same location, such as the annual WACD meeting, they can not discuss district business, as this would be a violation of the Public Meetings Act.

Jim noted that PMC (Plant Materials Center) report had some good information. The PMC is currently growing and selling about 1.7 million conservation trees and shrubs a year, worth about \$1.3 million. The PMC works to ensure that the plants grown receive the equivalent of 300 hours below 40°F to reach winter dormancy for storage. The PMC has recently had to raise prices 5% to pay for required wage increases. Elsa announced that Jim received his 5 year pin as a district board member and that Josh, Braidy and Chris were recognized as new board members for Lincoln County CD. Jim noted that the WACD dues for the District for 2020 will drop from \$4,560 last year to the \$3,888.89 equal dues amount for all CD's.

A resolution proposing that water right transfers across the state would no longer be allowed to be transferred out of the watershed of origin was passed at the WACD meeting. Okanogan County has expressed issues with significant amounts of water rights being sold and transferred downstream out of the county, leaving less water available to be used in Okanogan County. Other meeting participants expressed concerns that water rights are individual private property rights that should not be infringed. This resolution has no legal status and not much might happen with it, other than that individual conservation districts have been asked to provide comments on this water rights transfer resolution. Jeff noted that BOR and Ecology have recently released a letter that will allow water right holders outside of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement area to sell their water rights to dryland producers just east of the East Low Canal to purchase in order to be eligible to receive Columbia Basin Irrigation Project water from the new pipelines to be built to supply water a limited distance east of the canal. If and when the East High Canal were to be built for the second half of

the CBIP project, dryland producers would not be required to obtain water rights to obtain CBIP surface water.

Jeff announced that WACD and the Conservation Commission were able to obtain B & O insurance for conservation district board members so that they will be protected again from future lawsuits that may be filed against a conservation district. Mike noted that several state legislators gave presentations at the WACD meeting, and that it was still important for CD's to let their local state legislators know what CD's do and what benefits they provide for their area. Elsa provided a survey comment on the WACD meeting noting that it would be much more beneficial if resolutions brought to the annual WACD meeting for approval were read and discussed during the regular daytime sessions as opposed to addressing them after dinner. Executive sessions were also discussed at the meeting. Mike reminded the Board that issues that affect all employees or that can be generally applied to all employees should be addressed in the regular meeting session, and that no motions can be made in Executive Sessions.

Task Order for CRP

Elsa announced that a new task order is being developed by the Conservation Commission to address the workload in the recently announced CRP signup. About 300 CRP contracts each will be expiring in Lincoln and Adams counties with this new signup. Up to \$150,000 may be available to pay for District staff assistance for this new CRP signup that typically includes file folder development and job sheet development. NRCS will now be required to verify that all future mid management practices have been applied to CRP contract areas.

Conservation Commission Report

Mike reported that almost all of the proposed changes to CD board member elections were approved at the last Conservation Commission meeting. The one proposal that wasn't approved was the proposal to require all CD's to hold their elections during the same week in March each year. The Conservation Commission is asking for comments from CD's on a proposal to add a WDFW employee to the Commission Board of Directors. A new reporting form for Implementation Grant projects will be released in 2020 that CD's will be required to complete and report how implementation grant money has been spent for the year. Mike also reminded the Board that Lincoln County CD needs to update its Long Range/5-year plan in 2020, which should be educational for the 3 new board members.

Local Working Group Meeting

Elsa announced that the Local Working Group meeting to discuss EQIP funding priorities will be held next Monday on December 16 from 9 AM to 12 noon at the Wheat Growers meeting room in Ritzville.

Tri-State Grain Growers Herbicide Resistance Listening Session

Copies of the Tri-State Grain Growers Meeting Herbicide Resistance Listening Session email that was forwarded by Hal Johnson were distributed. Participants at the session to complete survey questions on strengths and opportunities to deal with herbicide resistance, weaknesses and threats, and next steps to take. Elsa asked the Board if any action should be taken on the herbicide resistance (HR) issue. Board

members agreed by general consensus that herbicide resistance should be included in any future conservation plans that are developed or revised for local producers.

NRCS Report

There was no NRCS report.

FSA Report

There was no FSA report.

Miscellaneous Items

Braidy announced that the next local WSU Oilseed Cropping Systems (WOCS) workshop will be held on January 28 from 8 AM to 4 PM in Wilbur.

Elsa asked who was planning on attending Legislative Days in Olympia on January 22, with the prep day for speaking with local state legislatures on January 21, so that she could finalize room reservation arrangements. Jim and Jeff said they would be attending Legislative Days for sure.

With Legislative Days on January 21 & 22, the proposed January meeting date of January 23 from the November board meeting was no longer deemed to be workable. The Board agreed by general consensus to reschedule the January board meeting to Wednesday, January 29, recognizing that there would be only 2 weeks between the January meeting and the February board meeting on February 12.

Elsa asked if any board members not going to Legislative Days would be able to attend the next VSP meeting on Tuesday, January 21.

Mike reminded the Board that Lincoln County CD is scheduled to host the May 2020 Conservation Commission tour and dinner on May 19th. Board members asked for everyone to brainstorm about ideas and locations to show the Commission for the tour. Elsa will look into getting a dinner catered at the Lincoln County fairgrounds kitchen.

Executive Session

The Board went into executive session under option 1(g) of RCW 42.30.110 at 11:50 AM to review and discuss personnel issues for about 40 minutes. The Board extended the Executive Session several times for one additional hour of time total. The Board came back out of executive session at 1:30 PM. The following motion was made as a result of the Executive Session:


15. Jim moved to authorize wage increases for employees, effective January 2020, at the Manager's discretion. Chris seconded. Motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no Public Comment.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Jeff Schibel at 1:31 PM. The next board meeting has been rescheduled for Wednesday, January 29, starting 8:30 AM in the conference room here in the USDA Service Center in Davenport.

Respectfully submitted,



Josh Sherwood, Secretary



Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 15 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the November 13 minutes as amended.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #10977 to #11005, along with 5 EFT's, totaling \$47,143.06.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher 4 for the VSP 3 grant in the amount of \$11,043.20 to the Conservation Commission.
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