

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA
Wednesday, May 11, 2022**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 8:34 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by telephone were as follows: Jim Baye, Chris Laney, Josh Sherwood, and Braidy Haden - LCCD Supervisors; Mike Baden, Conservation Commission; Mark Stedman, Lincoln County Commissioner; Brandon Davis, NRCS; Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher, Connor Nikkola, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

- *1. Chris moved to approve the April 13, 2022 minutes as presented. Jim seconded. Discussion was held. It was noted that RFP in the WaterSMART Grant Update section on page 4 is an acronym for Requests for Proposals. Chris asked if there were annual leave and sick leave caps on the hours that District staff could accumulate with regards to motion #13 on page 2 that addressed the Reserve Fund for Employee Liability Coverage. Elsa noted that District employees can only carry over 240 hours or less of annual leave at the end of each calendar year. Once employees accumulate 600 hours of sick leave, they cannot accumulate any more hours and they won't be paid for unused sick leave upon retirement. Motion passed.*

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- *2. Jim moved to pay and approve vouchers #11728 to #11763, along with 24 EFT's, totaling \$180,993.22. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.*
- *3. Jim moved to submit voucher #10 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$7,069.80 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *4. Jim moved to submit voucher #10 for the 22-39-IM grant in the amount of \$12,024.05 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *5. Jim moved to submit voucher #11 for the 21-27-NR grant in the amount of \$172.25 to Adams CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *6. Jim moved to submit voucher #10 for the 22-39-FR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *7. Jim moved to submit voucher #10 for the 22-39-HZ grant in the amount of \$724.68 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*

- **8. Jim moved to submit voucher #2 for the 22-39-DG grant in the amount of \$1,533.27 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **9. Jim moved to submit voucher #10 for the 22-39-NR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **10. Jim moved to submit voucher #6 for the 22-39-DR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **11. Jim moved to submit voucher #2 for the 22-39-WFF grant in the amount of \$1,463.28 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Jim moved to submit voucher #15 for the Mielke grant in the amount of \$34,463.19 to DOE. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **13. Jim moved to submit voucher #14 for the Direct Seed 2 grant in the amount of \$52,697.60 to DOE. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa reported that \$20,000 to \$30,000 in Direct Seed 2 grant funding had to be returned to Ecology at the end of this grant primarily due to some cooperators not requesting the full \$28 per acre cost share reimbursement available for getting direct seeding implemented on their ground with the grant funding. Motion passed.**
- **14. Jim moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for March 25, 2022 through April 25, 2022 be approved. The total amount owed was \$177.45. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **15. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Ag Link credit card statement with a closing date of April 30, 2022. The total amount owed was \$319.46. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that some of the gas receipts were from temporary District employee Glen Riehle conducting CRP field checks in Adams County with the District's white 4 door pickup.**

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.

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

C. AGENDA

Cost Share Approval

Hardcopies of the Cost Share Action spreadsheet were distributed. There were two requests for payment and 3 applications for cost share from the new Direct Seed 3 grant. Two of the applications are from producers in Adams County. Lincoln County CD now has 14 out of 15 slots filled for the Direct Seed 3 grant.

In addition, there was one application for range reseeding through the 22-39-FR fire recovery grant and one request for payment from Lincoln County CD cost share funding.

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

Annual Work Plan

Copies of the FY2023 Annual Work Plan and FY2023 Annual Budget were distributed. The Annual Work Plan and Budget, once approved, are submitted to the Conservation Commission and posted on the District website. All activities and spending must be covered by the Annual Work Plan and Budget, but these documents can be updated during the fiscal year as needed.

Elsa noted that the District had just been approved for a new \$145,000 well level measuring grant for the northeast corner of Lincoln County. A copy of the map for the county area covered was distributed to the board members. The area runs from Harrington and Edwall in the south to Davenport and Reardan to the northeast close to Spokane Arm of Lake Roosevelt. This area of the county was selected due to concerns about groundwater levels in new housing developments in the Davenport and Reardan areas. Well level measuring for this grant would only be done in early spring and in fall to catch the approximate high and low well levels, and an additional 4 to 5 new wells will be sought for monitoring. The new NE Lincoln County well level grant needs to be added to the Annual Work Plan as amended.

18. Josh moved to approve the Annual Work Plan as amended with the addition of the recently received NE Lincoln County well level measuring grant. Jim seconded. Motion passed.

New District Email Server and Email Address

Elsa asked if the new lincolncd.com email addresses are working OK for board members. Dean noted that he can not get his old emails from wadistrict.net copied over to his new lincolncd.com email address. Tom Salzer with WACD is having similar problems and at this point in time has not found any solutions to this email transfer problem. The newly hired IT employee for Conservation Commission has also recently resigned and is not able for assistance.

LWG Meeting

The EQIP Local Working Group meeting was held remotely on April 28, with Mike Baden serving as the facilitator. The LWG meeting had 17 participants but only one participant was a producer.

Adams CD Technical Assistance Agreement Addendum

Elsa announced that Adams CD has received some new cost share funding and is looking for additional technical assistance from Lincoln County CD to implement new

conservation projects. Approval from the Board was needed for an Addendum to the Technical Assistance Agreement with Adams CD.

19. Jim moved to approve the Addendum to the Technical Assistance Agreement with Adams CD to include the new funding receive by Adams CD for more cost share projects. Josh seconded. Motion passed.

Wildlife Proviso Grant Update

Applications for fire recovery funding are still being accepted for cost share from the Department of Wildlife for producers in the county who were adversely affected by the Whitney Fire. Deferred grazing (DG) projects are already being reimbursed with cost share funding.

WaterSMART Grant Update

Elsa reported that the final WaterSMART grant from the Bureau of Reclamation had been approved and that copies of the contract had been emailed to board members. A press release was also sent to local newspapers and Elsa recorded a 5-minute radio press release. Elsa has been working to resolve some misconceptions with 9th District Legislator Mary Dye concerning the separate WaterSMART grant and the PL-566 grant received by Grant County CD for \$750,000 to investigate the feasibility only of connecting deep well irrigators with declining well levels in the Odessa Subaquifer Area to surface water from the CBIP (Columbia Basin Irrigation Project) water. Elsa reemphasized that the WaterSMART and PL-566 grants will work together as possible but that both grants are separate grants that were awarded separately and that will be implemented separately.

Elsa announced that she had negotiated contracts between the District and CBDL (Columbia Basin Development League) for \$30,000 for facilitating the establishment of the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition, along with a \$20,000 contract between the District and Landau Associates / GeoEngineers for doing the technical review of groundwater levels for the 4 county Sustainable Water Coalition Area that includes Adams, Franklin, Grant, and Lincoln counties. CBDL has announced that it will voucher for a flat monthly fee of \$2,500 over the life of the facilitation contract. Both contracts needed approval and needed to be signed by the Board.

The other \$50,000 in WaterSmart grant funding is available to the District to help assist with the facilitation of the grant for the Sustainable Water Coalition.

20. Josh moved to approve and sign the contract between Lincoln County CD and the Columbia Basin Development League to serve as the Facilitator for the establishment of the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition with \$30,000 in funding from the WaterSMART grant. Chris seconded. Motion passed.

21. Josh moved to approve and sign the contract between Lincoln County CD and Landau Associates / GeoEngineers to serve as the technical contractor for ground water review for the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition with \$20,000 in funding from the WaterSMART grant. Jim seconded. Motion passed.

VSP Update

Elsa noted that Connor has been working on water quality monitoring at selected VSP stations on streams across the county. At a recent NE Area Managers meeting, District managers raised concerns with needing more money from the Conservation Commission in order to pay for all of the water quality monitoring now being requested

by the VSP Technical Panel. Mike noted that the state Legislature did not add any more money from operational funding to the Conservation Commission budget allocation to help pay for the additional requested water quality monitoring for VSP.

CRP Signup 58 Task Order

Elsa reported that 100% of the Adams County and 98% of the Lincoln County renewals and new applications had been accepted by FSA for the CRP 58 signup. District staff are currently working on compiling for CRP contracts expiring in 2022. Over the last 3 years, District staff have completed 1,200 CRP plans for Adams and Lincoln counties.

Elsa noted that the District had offered a job to Heidi Hennings from the Ritzville area to work on CRP field review work but that the West Palouse Team had hired Heidi to work for NRCS through a Pheasants Forever funded position. Heidi has recommended another college graduate for Lincoln County to consider hiring. Elsa will be reviewing this college graduates resume, and if hired by the District, could be hired out to work on cost share projects in Adams County.

WACD Update

Jeff announced that the WACD Executive Board will be meeting remotely by zoom this coming Monday on May 16 at 6 PM. The WACD Board is considering the establishment of a Financial Investment Committee to help manage the WACD investments in the stock market that is especially needed during this time of stock market volatility. The Annual Meeting in late November/early December is tentatively being investigated for the Yakima/Ellensburg area. Spokane CD is lobbying for the Annual Meeting to be held in the Tri-Cities again. The PMC had a great year for tree and shrub sales. All elected and appointed Board Supervisors will be officially certified at the Conservation Commission meeting at Spokane CD next week after the field tour. North Yakima CD is the only CD that has not paid WACD dues for this year, as Adams County CD has paid WACD dues for the year.

Planning for May 17 Conservation Commission Tour

Elsa announced that preparations are being made by District staff for Lincoln County CD to host the Conservation Commission Tour on next Tuesday, May 17. This will be the first in person Conservation Commission Tour since the original Lincoln County CD tour was cancelled back in May 2020. About 30 participants have registered so far for the tour. The tour bus will leave Airway Heights at 1 PM and is scheduled to return back to Memorial Hall in Davenport by 5 PM. The Tahoe will be picking up board members at Memorial Hall to join the tour. Due to time constraints, there will only be field stops at the Dewald grassed waterway project north of Davenport and at the Allington Bay boat dock at dried up Pacific Lake north of Odessa. If there is any time left by the time the bus returns back to Davenport, tour participants will be encouraged to take the short walk uphill to visit the Davenport Community Garden. Elsa, Delaini and Val Vissia as a volunteer spent some time yesterday cleaning up the Garden for the tour yesterday

Other selected District projects including the Echelbarger grassed waterway, Audubon Lake planting, Living Snowfence 2 (and Snowfence 1), the WSU Wilke Memorial Windbreak, the Whitney Road Fire and wildfire preparation and prevention projects, and well level monitoring activities and selected results are included with photos, descriptions, maps and charts in the spiral bound tour book and will be described on the tour bus as these project areas are passed traveling from east to west

on the tour and back to Davenport. A slide show will be developed and will run during the dinner but no speaking presentation will be done in order to allow tour participants to socialize more with each other during the dinner. Jim noted that he will be hosting Chris Pettit, the new Conservation Commission Executive Director, at his farm to show direct seed farming practices and crops in the Davenport/Reardan area after the Conservation Commission Tour and meetings next week.

County Commissioners Report

Mark reported that Sheriff Wade Magers will be resigning on June 30, 2022. Lincoln County needs a new interim Sheriff on July 1 and has been advertising for the position in local newspapers. Six candidates have applied for the position so far. Since the current Sheriff ran as a Republican candidate, the interim Sheriff will be selected from the 3 candidates recommended from the Lincoln County Republican Committee. The County Commissioners will appoint the top candidate from the Republican Committee as the interim Sheriff to fill the current position until it expires and the next general elections for Lincoln County Sheriff is held in fall.

The CBDL (Columbia Basin Development League) is looking for grants to expand outreach to the local counties and to increase diversity on the CBDL board, as there are no Hispanic members currently on the board.

The county has received a \$10 million grant to expand fiber optic broadband Internet availability to local towns in the county. Odessa, Sprague and Harrington have been selected as the first towns to receive fiber optic broadband Internet access with this grant. The county will own the fiber optic cables installed across the county with the grant. IT companies want to connect the large cloud Internet servers already located in Ephrata with another large Internet hub in South Dakota. The fiber optic lines for this project have currently been proposed to run through from Ephrata through Lincoln County in route to South Dakota. The county commissioners are currently negotiating with the IT companies on the proposed routing and installation of the fiber optic lines needed for the project.

Jeff asked about the legislative redistricting for Lincoln County. Mark noted Lincoln County will become part of District 9 to the south that includes Senator Mark Schoesler and Representatives Mary Dye and Joe Schmick.

Conservation Commission Report

Mike reported that there have been some changes with the budget and with open public meeting requirements. The current state budget surplus has now allowed for \$2.7 million to be available for engineering assistance to conservation districts across the state. Instead of the typical \$80,000 available to the NE Area Engineering Cluster in each 2 year biennium, there will now be \$200,000 available for the NE Area cluster for the upcoming FY 2023 – 2025 biennium. State agencies have been scrambling to decide how to allocate the upcoming additional funding in their budgets and most of the final budget allocations have yet to be made.

With the rescinding of COVID-19 emergency restrictions, meetings subject to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) will no longer be required to be held remotely as of June 1. Conservation districts will now need to provide a physical location again to hold board meetings. Public agencies still have the option to hold meetings remotely if it is deemed necessary and considered to be in the public interest, and participants of public meetings still have the option to participate remotely. Public agencies are encouraged

to review their policies on remote attendance and update them if needed. Public agencies are also required to allow for the option of verbal public comment to be submitted by phone or video during the meeting if feasible. In addition, board meeting agendas must be posted online at least 24 hours before the meeting, and public comment must be allowed before any official actions (votes) are taken. Public agencies can place public comment at the start of the agenda or take public comment at multiple times during the meeting before official actions are taken.

Fire recovery reports for Fire Recovery Initial Technical Assistance funding are due by June 30.

NRCS Report

Brandon Davis attended the board meeting in place of Cari who was away on training. Board members introduced themselves to Brandon and Brandon briefly described his career background. Brandon reported that additional funding for EQIP funding has finally been approved and will soon be available to fund additional projects. The West Palouse Team had 31 EQIP applications in Adams with only 1 contract funded up to now. Lincoln County also had 31 EQIP applications with only 8 contracts funded. The Local Working Group meeting was held remotely on April 28. Future LWG meetings are expected to be held in person.

The WPT has received 79 applications for classic CSP and 21 renewal requests for CSP. The acceptance rate for applications in the CRP 58 signup has been between 98 and 100% in Adams and Lincoln counties. The deadline for NRCS and Lincoln County CD to complete the new CRP contracts is July 29.

The WPT has hired Heidi Hennings who will start work in the Ritzville office in June. Elsa noted that NRCS has also started advertising for the Administrative Assistant position in Davenport that was last held by Linda Knutson.

Miscellaneous

Elsa announced that separate rooms have been reserved for board members attending the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association meeting (Cropping Systems Expo) in Colfax in June. The meeting dates for the Expo have been shortened to June 14 – 15, with the Advanced Soil Health Day to be held on June 14 and the Full Day Expo program to be held on June 15.

FSA Report

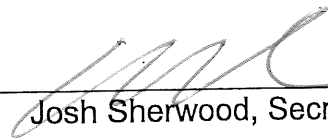
There was no report from FSA.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Chairman Jeff Schibel adjourned the meeting at 11:00 AM. The next board meeting is scheduled as an in-person meeting on Wednesday, June 8, 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 21 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the April 13 minutes as presented.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #11728 to #11763, along with 24 EFT's, totaling \$180,993.22.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #10 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$7,069.80 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.
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