

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
Lincoln County Public Works Meeting Room
Wednesday, April 14, 2021**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 8:30 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by telephone were as follows: Chris Laney and Josh Sherwood (phone) - LCCD Supervisors; Mike Baden (phone), Conservation Commission; Cari Roepke, NRCS; Elsa Bowen, Val Vissia and Dean White - LCCD staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

- **1. Chris moved to approve the March 10, 2021 minutes as presented. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- **2. Chris moved to pay and approve vouchers #11412 to #11447, along with 32 EFT's, totaling \$85,387.04. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Most of the transactions in March were generated by the tree sale.**
- **3. Chris moved to submit voucher #21 for the VSP 3 grant in the amount of \$836.12 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **4. Chris moved to submit voucher #10 for the 21-39-IM grant in the amount of \$10,576.98 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **5. Chris moved to submit voucher #3 for the 21-39-HZ grant in the amount of \$2,780.60 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **6. Chris moved to submit voucher #6 for the Highway 25 grant in the amount of \$1,180.87 to DNR. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **7. Chris moved to submit voucher #3 for the 20-27-NR grant in the amount of \$252.96 to the Adams CD. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **8. Chris moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for February 24, 2021 through March 24, 2021 be approved. The total amount owed was \$240.05. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **9. Chris moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Cenex credit card statement with a closing date of March 10, 2021. The total amount owed was \$125.90. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

Bank statements were passed around for the board members present to initial. Delaini will be mailing out the bank statements for the other board members to initial.

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

Elsa noted that Connor and Delaini were at the office taking remote training on the WSU/BOR well level measuring grant.

Elsa reported that the District has applied to Ecology to have the current Direct Seed 2 grant extended one more year to 2022. With District staff assigned to conduct 50 existing CRP stand reviews for the recently approved CRP task order with NRCS, Elsa recommended that the District hold on to the white pickup at least until the end of June 30 so that it would be available for CRP stand reviews in the field. The new silver Chevrolet Silverado 4 door, 4-wheel drive pickup was parked in the parking lot next to the fence in back of the meeting room for board members to view.

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

C. AGENDA

Tree Sale and Hedreen WRP Planting

Elsa reported that the recent tree sale had been completed with the pickup days on April 1 and April 2 for the bareroot stems, superstock plugs, and potted grasses and forbs offered for the tree sale. A total of 162 orders were packed and the few remaining surplus stems were all sold. The refrigerated trailer was only rented for 3 weeks and worked well being parked in front of the fairgrounds kitchen building. For next year the District will look into option of hiring a farmer to fill up the diesel tank on the trailer.

The Hedreen WRP planting on the Cobb Ranch has also been completed with the help of the DNR planting crew to plant and mulch the 5,000 stems of potted stock and willow poles planted along Crab Creek in central Lincoln County in only about 1.5 work weeks.

The DNR planting crew was then utilized to plant a small 200 stem Ponderosa pine CRP planting north of Davenport. The crew was also used to plant the potted stock for the windbreak at the WSU Wilke farm just east of Davenport as part of the memorial for long time Board Member, Eddie Johnson, who also served on the Wilke Farm Board. The drip system for the windbreak still needs to be finished and Elsa will work with Aaron Esser, WSU Extension manager for the Wilke Farm, to design and install a sign for the Eddie Johnson memorial.

Annual Work Plan

Copies of the draft Annual Work Plan for July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 were distributed for review. Connor and Delaini worked to update the annual work plan for

fiscal year 2022. Any activity conducted by the District for the FY 2022 period needs to be included in the annual work plan and the 5 year work plan. Elsa briefly reviewed the 20 program areas along with the grants and activities included in the draft annual work plan.

11. Chris moved to approve the Annual Work Plan as presented. Josh seconded. Motion passed.

Cost Share Approval

Copies of the Cost Share Action spreadsheet were distributed for review and approval. The 5 projects included are the 5 grassed waterway projects previously discussed at the February and March board meetings

12. Chris moved to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet as presented. Josh seconded. Motion passed.

Elsa noted that a last-minute watering facility project for \$15,000 that was acquired to replace an earlier cost share project funded with 20-39-NR grant funding was also canceled by the cooperator due to insufficient time to complete the watering facility before the June 30 deadline. With the cancellation of the watering facility project, the \$15,000 in unused grant funding had to be returned to the Conservation Commission. Connor will be working to develop 2 reserve implementation projects for next year in case the first reserve project is needed but is also cancelled in 2022.

CRP Task Order Update

Cari reported that the CRP task order for 2021 and 2022 has been recently approved. Virtual training along with in the field CRP grass and forb ID training was completed by NRCS and District staff last week. There are 168 contracts to review for 2021 in Lincoln County, with 148 expired contracts and 20 new contracts that won't need field stand reviews. Jeff Kuhlman will be reviewing the contract development and field stand reviews for quality control. Adams County has about 130 contracts to review for 2021 but Glen Riehle with NRCS has already completed 63 of the field stand evaluations. All of the 2021 contract work needs to be finished by June 30 for the CRP task order. Work on the 2022 CRP contracts will not start until July 1.

WACD Report

Jeff noted that he had sent emails out to the NE Area district managers and board supervisors asking them which option they would prefer for the 2021 NE Area meeting in October: 1) all virtual, 2) hybrid virtual and in person, or 3) all in person. The responses that Jeff has received back so far favor an all in person meeting if at all possible.

The next WACD Board meeting will be held next Monday night from 6 to 8 PM. One item for the meeting is DEI (diversity, equality and inclusiveness). Three firms have been solicited to apply for the facilitation of DEI efforts in WACD. Elsa has volunteered to serve on the DEI Committee for WACD.

Conservation Commission Report

Mike reported that there has not been much information on the budget back from the State Legislature yet with the closed-door reconciliation meetings going on between the House version and Senate version of the state budget for the next biennium. The

Conservation Commission has been working hard to promote full funding for conservation programs in the state. The Senate version of the state budget has \$5 million for CTA (Conservation Technical Assistance), which if approved for the final budget would double the implementation grant funding available for all conservation districts. The Governor's proposed budget has allocated \$7 million for NRI funding, but the House and Senate budgets have only allocated \$4 million for NRI. The Conservation Commission has requested \$7 million for RCPP to match all contract obligations, but only \$4 million may be allocated. If the proposed updates to the NRI program are approved, individual conservation districts would have much more flexibility to decide which local projects would be funded within their district boundaries. A proposal from Representative Steele to provide funding for fire recovery projects has made it into the House budget, and would provide up to \$1.5 million per year for 3 years to help affected landowners repair fire damage from 2020 fires such as the Whitney Road fire in Lincoln County.

Mike thanked Val for helping to facilitate the virtual Wildfire Risk Mitigation training for public outreach employees that was held last week. Elsa noted that she along with Connor and Delaini are planning on taking the upcoming training on home fire risk assessment so the District employees can start doing some home fire risk assessments in the near future. Mike is hoping to visit Lincoln County later this month to do a review of one District funded implementation project in the county.

NRCS Report

Cari reported that 3 positions had been advertised for the West Palouse Team. Brent Lindell from Wenatchee has accepted the first Soil Conservationist position in Davenport, but due to issues with getting new fingerprints taken with the COVID 19 pandemic, it may be a while before he will start work in Davenport. Cari has also selected a Resource Conservationist for the position in Ritzville, and another Soil Conservationist position in Davenport has been opened, but candidates for these positions have not been approved yet by the state office.

The WPT received 15 applications for EQIP, with 5 applications approved in Lincoln County and 1 application approved in Adams County. The biggest issue with EQIP now is that the funding is up to \$12 million short needed to fully fund the program in the state. The Local Working Group meeting will be held virtually tomorrow by Zoom starting at 10 AM for local producers to rank their priorities for funding from NRCS for EQIP programs in Lincoln and Adams counties.

The CSP program has created the highest workload for the WPT. Out of the 200 applications received statewide for the recent classic CSP signup, 100 of those applications were received in Lincoln and Adams counties.

Wildfire Risk Mitigation Resource Essentials Training

Val reported that the Wildfire Risk Mitigation Resource Essentials Training for Public Relations Officers that she helped to facilitate and that was held remotely through Zoom last week went well, with 19 public relations employees from across the state participating in the 2-day training held for 4 hours each morning. The first day of training featured 5 speakers that addressed lessons learned in the field along with their success stories. For the second day of training, participants broke up into groups and were asked to use TELE (Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively) to decide how to address potential post fire issues in communities with little resources available to help

fund fire recovery efforts. One potential conflict was noted between retirees who live fulltime in a fire prone area and want to have their property and structures protected from fire as their main priority, versus weekend occupants who visit mainly to recreate and don't want to spend a lot of time and effort working on fire protection after working all week at their regular jobs.

Chris asked if fire recovery funding would ever be available for landowners and operators with land, structures and fences damaged by the Whitney Road fire in Lincoln County. It was noted that federal funding through FEMA was not made available because the Governor had not requested it for Lincoln County because not enough homes/other structures had been burned by the Whitney Fire to make Lincoln County eligible for this federal funding, even though the fire perimeter covered an estimated 127,000+ acres and 500 miles of livestock fencing were damaged by the fire and need repairs or replacement. Elsa noted that fire recovery funding available from FSA to repair/replace damaged fencing was an issue for many livestock producers because the producers are required to buy and install the replacement fencing for all the damaged fence areas within an entire tract before they are eligible to request reimbursement from FSA for the fencing repairs.

Well Level Measuring Grant Update

Dean noted that he has been back out in the field working on the final round of well level measurements in April for the well level grant. An airline fitting on the portable air compressor carried in the back of the heavy-duty District pickup to provide compressed air for airline measurements came loose at the end of first full field day, resulting in the air compressor not able to hold any pressure for airline measurements until fixed. Much of the following day was spent getting the loose compression fitting reset and retightened so that the compressor was up and working again and did not have to be replaced for last several field days of airline measurements.

The remaining field measurements of the 88 wells being measured along with another download of the 5 transducers are scheduled to be completed in the field before the end of the April. The March and April 2021 well level measurements will then need to be entered in Excel spreadsheet to add to the June 2018 – November 2020 measurements that were already sent to GeoEngineers in February to review and start the development of the final well level grant report. All of the well level result data needs to be entered into the Ecology EIM database as required by the grant. A good start has been made on the data transfer to the EIM submittal spreadsheets. Help from GeoEngineers will be requested to help process and review the data downloads from the transducers up through the end of April so that this data can also be included in the final report and loaded into EIM before the end of the well level grant funding on June 30.

County Commissioners Report

There was no County Commissioners report.

FSA Report

There was no report from FSA.

Miscellaneous

On behalf of the Board, Jeff thanked Val for her six years of service as the Public Outreach Coordinator for the District. Elsa noted that a lunch banquet is being planned for Val during the last week in April.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Jeff Schibel at 9:47 AM. The next board meeting has been scheduled as an in-person meeting on Wednesday, May 12, 2021 starting at 8:30 AM at the Lincoln County Public Works downstairs meeting room. 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 12 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the March 10, 2021 minutes as presented.
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- 11. M/S/P to approve the Annual Work Plan as presented.
- 12. M/S/P to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet as presented.

