

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
NRCS / FSA MEETING ROOM-DAVENPORT WA
Wednesday, April 15, 2020**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 8:32 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting remotely by Zoom connection over the Internet were as follows: Josh Sherwood, Braidy Haden and Chris Laney - LCCD Supervisors; Mike Baden, Conservation Commission; Tom Salzer and Ryan Baye, WACD; Elsa Bowen, Val Vissia, Kristen Balko, Delaini Disher, and Dean White - LCCD staff. Copies of the meeting packets were previously emailed to board members and staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

Dean noted that on page 3 of the March 11 board meeting minutes, Elsa should be noted as the Minute Taker and that there were only 7 motions for the meeting.

- *1. Chris moved to approve the March 11, 2020 minutes as amended. Josh seconded. Motion passed.*

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- *2. Braidy moved to pay and approve vouchers #11102 to #11133, along with 16 EFT's, totaling \$75,457.36. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.*
- *3. Josh moved to submit voucher #9 for the VSP 3 grant in the amount of \$8,908.12 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *4. Josh moved to submit voucher #9 for the 20-39-IM grant in the amount of \$1,153.55 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*
- *5. Josh moved to submit voucher #8 for the 20-39-NR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *6. Chris moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Cenex credit card statement with a closing date of March 10, 2020. The total amount owed was \$214.64. Josh seconded. Motion passed.*

- **7. Josh moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for February 25, 2020 – March 24, 2020 be approved. The total amount owed was \$3,106.80. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.**

The available bank statements for the checking and money market accounts were reviewed briefly on the video screen. Elsa noted that Delaini will be mailing the original bank statements along with the Treasurer's Report signature page out to each board member to sign one at a time and then forward on to the other board members and return back to the office.

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

Elsa reported that the District had received the 2020 bill for \$13,119.75 from Lincoln County for collecting the special assessment for the year.

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

C. AGENDA

Families First Coronavirus Response Act

Congress recently passed the HR6201 – Families First Coronavirus Response Act which allows for 80 hours/2 weeks paid sick leave at the normal rate of pay for employees who are quarantined and unable to work because of COVID-19, 80 hours of sick leave at 2/3rds normal pay for employees taking care of someone else because of COVID-19, and up to an additional 10 weeks of expanded paid family medical leave to take care of a child at home with COVID-19.

Tom noted that employers are responsible to pay for costs of HR6201, but right now public employers will not be reimbursed for these costs. WACD will be writing a letter seeking financial relief for public employers from costs incurred with HR6201 and will forward the letter to conservation districts. Elsa asked if the Board wanted to make a motion to adopt HR6201 and establish a reserve fund to pay for any costs incurred.

9. Chris moved to adopt HR6201 - Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Josh seconded. Motion passed.

10. Chris moved to establish a reserve fund of \$20,000 to pay for costs incurred by HR6201. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. It was noted that the funding for the reserve fund would be taken out of general District funds. Motion passed.

Surplus Equipment

Elsa noted that one surplus Lenovo Laptop IdeaPad and Logitech wireless mouse had been left for disposal, and that advertisements had run from March 23 to April 3, with a minimum bid of \$200. Only one bid was received from Brendan Balko for \$226.

11. Josh moved to accept the bid from Brendan Balko for \$226 for the remaining laptop and wireless mouse. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.

Technical Assistance Contract with Adams CD

An earlier project with Adams CD to provide technical assistance to install a windbreak has been postponed for a year. A new project to install a livestock watering facility for Hans Henning has arisen to replace the postponed project. Lincoln County CD would receive \$937.50 for providing technical assistance.

12. Josh moved to approve the Hans Henning livestock watering facility project as part of the Technical Assistance Contract with Adams CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.

Tree Sale and Tree Planting Updates

Elsa reported that District staff were able to successfully pack and distribute tree sale orders last week. Curb side pick up was used with staff bringing out tree sale orders and placing them in the customer's vehicle. All tree sale stems were sold.

The Cobb Ranch/Hedreen WRP planting along Crab Creek was able to be finished before tree sale with about 5,000 potted stock planted. Connor is out today assisting with the Johnbold Farms/Hart Rd fire replanting project north of Davenport. This 15,000 stem planting project should be finished by the end of next Monday.

End of Year Funding

The Conservation Commission has requested applications for unused Commission funding that must be spent by June 30. Elsa and Delaini compiled and submitted an application for \$5,000 to buy a new laptop with docking station and other accessories that would be much more capable for ArcGIS work away from the office as needed, along with purchasing more LCCD logo ware (shirts, hats, jackets).

CRP 54 Task Order Update

Elsa has been working with Rich Edlund, acting West Palouse Team District Conservationist, on Task Order #1 for the CRP 54 signup. Most applications for the CRP 54 signup have been approved and so there will be a significant workload.

WACD Update

Tom noted that WACD has been struggling to adapt to the COVID-19 crisis like everybody else. He and Ryan have been teleworking from their homes. WACD is still looking for alternative office space in the Olympia area.

One continuing challenge has been continuing operations at the PMC and seeking to find a balance between protecting employees while still conducting essential operations to maintain the tree and shrub plantings at the nursery. The 3,000 conifer plugs that needed to be planted have been planted, and all employees are still well. Weeding and watering efforts need to be continued throughout the year.

The PMC suffered some losses from early winter damage to the alder and blue elderberry plantings. Some CD's cancelled their tree sale orders. Significant WACD

investments with Edward Jones have taken about a 10% reduction in value with the stock market drop, but the reductions have been minimized with the conservative investment funds.

Staff and COVID-19 Update

District staff have been working at home when possible but have also been working at the office and in the field. Val and Kristen have been working mostly at home. Elsa, Delaini, Connor and Dean have been working in the office and in the field as needed. Dick Erickson has been the only NRCS staff member working in the office the past several weeks while Jeff, Christina, and Kristi have been working from home. Two FSA employees have been working in the office and have been rotating with other staff.

Conservation Commission Meeting

The Conservation Commission met remotely by Go to Meeting yesterday. Tom noted that due to the current COVID-19 crisis, the financial outlook for state funding is not good with sales tax receipts way down. Funding next year will be tight. A significant number of legislators will be retiring. Conservation Districts need to get know new legislators in the future and invite legislators out to see projects on the ground whenever possible. The Conservation Commission and WACD are now fully staffed and have been working well during the current COVID-19 crisis.

Tom encourages conservation districts to be supporting food systems, especially with regard to food access, food security, and linking customers to producers. Although more formal state budget forecasts will not be available until late April and then in June/July, conservation districts need to expect that the state funding for the next fiscal year will not be good and to start planning now to submit only the most essential funding requests to the Conservation Commission to submit to the state legislature. Three criteria have been proposed to rank budget requests for the next fiscal year: 1) How urgent, needs to be done now? 2) How important? 3) Data available to support budget packet requests. Tom noted that the Conservation Commission is most likely only to submit 2 budget packet requests to the state legislature for the next fiscal year.

Conservation Commission Update

The mid May Conservation Commission tour in Lincoln County has been cancelled and replaced with a WebEx remote attendance meeting. Mike Baden thanked the District for submitting updated Annual and Long Range plans to the Commission before the COVID-19 crisis. The Conservation Commission will be sending out a survey soon to conservation districts asking for budget request priorities so that the Commission can get an early start on the budget request packages to send to the state legislature.

Mike reminded the District to keep the Governor's list of essential activities in mind when planning work activities. The Governor's exemption to public participation in public meetings will expire next Thursday, and if it is not extended, this requirement will have to be met again for the next board meeting in May. The Conservation Commission is looking into to how to assist Local Working Groups for EQIP funding, perhaps by assisting with virtual meetings and other assistance. Stu Trefry has been working on Supervisor development modules, and will be working on next on finance modules.

Livestock Pond Assistance

Elsa noted that some livestock producers have already been calling the office and reporting that some of their ponds are already starting to dry up. These producers are looking for sources of emergency funding, but there have been no emergency declarations from FSA yet. EQIP is the only funding from NRCS, but all of the contracts have already been obligated for the year. District cost share funding has also already been obligated

NRCS Report

The NRCS report emailed from Rich Edlund, acting District Conservationist for the West Palouse Team, was shown on the video screen and emailed to Board and staff members. Most staff with the WPT are working at home for the time being. The CRP 54' general signup had over 90% of applications approved. Renewals of CSP programs are very complex this year. The EQIP signup for 2020 just closed for the year, with applicants required to have an existing conservation plan along with other typical USDA eligibility criteria.

County Commissioner Report

The County Commissioner report emailed from Commissioner Stedman was shown on the video screen. Office closures seem to be working. State sales tax and gas tax projections are down for 2020 and the 2021 budget. Public works has been grading and applying a lot of gravel to county gravel roads.

FSA Report

Elsa noted that all CRP 54 signup acceptance letters have been mailed out. Only 2 FSA staff at a time are working in the office and are rotating between staff members.

Miscellaneous Items

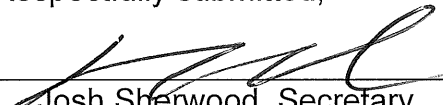
Elsa announced that she has been speaking with Ecology about extending the well level grant for one more year. Ecology has requested that the District input well level data into EIM from 50 other wells in eastern Washington that will be measured twice a year as part of the grant that WSU has received from BOR to conduct more well level measuring across the east side of the state. Elsa noted that this task should be doable and feasible for the District. She also noted the Columbia Basin Water Coalition did NOT receive the grant from BOR to fund the establishment of the coalition.

Public Comment

There was no Public Comment.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Jeff Schibel at 9:34 AM. The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13 starting at 8:30 AM. At this time it is unknown yet if the meeting will be held remotely again or will be able to return to the conference room in the USDA Service Center in Davenport.

Respectfully submitted,


Josh Sherwood, Secretary


Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 12 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the March 11, 2020 minutes as amended.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #11102 to #11113, along with 16 EFT's, totaling \$75,457.36.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #9 for the VSP 3 grant in the amount of \$8,908.12 to the Conservation Commission.
- 4. M/S/P to submit voucher #9 for the 20-39-IM grant in the amount of \$1,153.55 to the Conservation Commission.
- 5. M/S/P to submit voucher #8 for the 20-39-NR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission.
- 6. M/S/P to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Cenex credit card statement with a closing date of March 10, 2020. The total amount owed was \$214.64.
- 7. M/S/P that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for February 25, 2020 – March 24, 2020 be approved. The total amount owed was \$3,106.80.
- 8. M/S/P to approve the Treasurer's report and the Grant's report as presented.
- 9. M/S/P to adopt HR6201 - Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and to send support letters to WACD and the Conservation Commission for efforts to seek cost reimbursement for conservation districts.
- 10. M/S/P to establish a reserve fund to pay for costs incurred by HR6201.
- 11. M/S/P to accept the bid from Brendan Balko for \$226 for the remaining laptop and wireless mouse.
- 12. M/S/P to approve the Hans Henning livestock watering facility project as part of the Technical Assistance Contract with Adams CD.