

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA
Wednesday, April 16, 2025**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 9:02 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by phone were as follows: Jim Baye, Chris Laney and Braidy Haden (phone) - LCCD Supervisors; Jo Gilchrist, Lincoln County Commissioners; Ashley Smith, FSA; Jason Echelbarger, guest; Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher, Brean Nieman, Elayne Hovde Knudson, Matthew Rosman, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

- 1. Jim moved to approve the March 12, 2025 minutes as presented. Chris seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.*

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- 2. Jim moved to pay and approve vouchers #12683 to #12720, along with 44 EFT's, totaling \$90,299.25. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.*
- 3. Jim moved to submit voucher #15 for the 24-39-FH grant in the amount of \$3,697.03 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- 4. Jim moved to submit voucher #18 for the Adams CD TA grant in the amount of \$27.39 to Adams CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- 5. Jim moved to submit voucher #13 for the 24-39-IE grant in the amount of \$11,624.17 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- 6. Jim moved to submit voucher #7 for the CBCD ILA grant in the amount of \$0.00 to Columbia Basin CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- 7. Jim moved to submit voucher #21 for the 24-39-NR grant in the amount of \$372.86 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- 8. Jim moved to submit voucher #43 for the Cluster Engineering grant in the amount of \$2,507.18 to Stevens CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- 9. Jim moved to submit voucher #7 for the 25-39-SFF grant in the amount of \$10,011.40 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*

10. Jim moved to submit voucher #9 for the 25-39-IM grant in the amount of \$7,878.71. Chris seconded. Motion passed.

- **11. Jim moved to submit voucher #6 for the 25-39-PFR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Jim moved to submit voucher #6 for the 23-DG-11062752-163 CWPP grant in the amount of \$7,207.81 to DNR. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **13. Jim moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District VISA statement for February 25, 2025 through March 25, 2025 be approved. The total amount owed was \$2,106.10. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that more of the blue road address signs had been ordered due to the significant increase in road address sign requests following the road sign announcements on the back of the 2025 elections ballots. Motion passed.**
- **14. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of March 15, 2025. The total amount owed was \$31.69. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **15. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of March 31, 2025. The total amount owed was \$199.19. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**

After reviewing the statements, the Board members initialed each page of the bank statements for the checking and money market accounts.

The Board reviewed the report of the current annual leave/sick leave balances for District employees. Elsa noted that the Conservation Commission now requires all Board members to initial the bank statements.

- **16. Jim moved to approve the Treasurer's report and Grant's report as presented. Chris seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed.**

C. AGENDA

State Financial Report

Elsa announced that Brean had finished the draft State Financial Report for review. Copies of the financial report were included in the board member packets. The State Financial Report needs to be submitted to the Conservation Commission by the end of May. Brean noted that the report was generated by the Springbrook software.

- **17. Jim moved to approve the 2024 State Financial Report as presented. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**

Certificate of Deposit Renewal

Brean reported that the current LCCD 7-month certificate of deposit for \$161,811.94 and 4.65% annual percentage rate at WA Federal Bank expires today and needs to be rolled over because there are no other local banks close to that rate. The new 7-month interest rate will be 3.95% APR.

18. Jim moved to approve the rollover of the Lincoln County CD certificate of deposit for \$161,811.94 at WA Federal Bank for another 7-month period at the new 3.95% APR rate. Chris seconded. Motion passed.

FY 2026 Annual Work Plan Update

Copies of the draft FY2026 Annual Work Plan were distributed. Delaini noted that not much has changed from the FY2025 annual work plan except for the dates and several new grants recently received. Conservation Commission grants already received were assumed to rollover and several new grant applications were included. Elsa reminded the Board that any planned activities and grants expected for fiscal year 2026 need to be included in the FY2026 annual work plan and the 5 year long range plan.

19. Jim moved to approve the FY2026 Annual Work Plan as presented. Chris seconded. There was no further discussion. Motion passed.

Elections Update

Delaini reported that 815 votes had been received for the elected Supervisor position, which was about 9% of the registered voters in the county compared to the 11% of registered voters returning ballots in 2024. Braidy won the election and there were very few write-in votes for other candidates. There were also only about 10 ballots that could not be counted for specific reasons such as no signature or nor valid address. The application for Jason to serve as a new appointed Supervisor for Lincoln County CD has been sent to the Conservation Commission.

Elsa proposed that some pre-elections advertising should be done next year to increase voter participation by explaining to county voters the how and why of mailing separate Conservation District Supervisor elections ballots to all registered voters in the county saves the District a lot of money compared to having the Supervisor Elections included on the county general ballot in November. Delaini noted that using Walt's Mailing service out of Spokane to stuff the envelopes and mail the ballots is a very much more efficient use of money and also frees up a lot of time for District staff to work on other spring tasks such as the annual tree sale.

2025 Tree Sale Update

Handouts of the draft financial summary for the spring 2025 tree sale were distributed. Brean noted that this year's tree sale had 144 orders that also included 5 special orders for CSP and EQIP plantings. The District was able to sell all of the remaining surplus tree and shrub stems after the tree sale pickup days had ended in early April. The initial profit/loss spreadsheet showed a strong profit for the tree sale, but Elsa reminded the Board that the cost for staff time is not included, and that if it was, the overall balance would probably show a loss for every year's tree sale. The tree sale for Lincoln County CD has always been considered more of a service to county residents than a money-making project for the District.

Delaini noted that the individual pots of Spirea were the best sellers for the tree sale. Elsa proposed that the District grow and sell small individual pots of geraniums

for \$5 apiece for the 2026 tree sale. Dean noted that 2026 will be the last year that the District will be able to order the 9-12" or 12"+ plug-1 ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir stems from Spokane CD. Spokane CD has announced that it will no longer grow these relatively large conifer seedlings after 2006 because the large-scale forestry replanting crews have reported that it takes too much time and effort to plant the large plug-1 stems and are shifting to the smaller and much easier and faster to plant 8 cubic inch conifer plugs.

Washington Grown Producer Search

Washington Grown is a Washington magazine and TV show that features the food, farmers and innovations found on farms across the state and educates the public on the latest technology, crops and recipes from the field to the plate. Elsa announced that Washington Grown is looking to interview Lincoln County producers who grow hops and barley in May. It was noted that there were very few producers who grow hops in Lincoln County and that growing barley rarely makes any money for local producers. There is a local producer of brewing barley in the county who will be referred to Washington Grown.

Cost Share Action

Hard copies of the Cost Share Action spreadsheet were distributed for review and approval. There was one cost share application for funding from the Direct Seed 3 grant and one cost share payment request from the 24-39-IE Irrigation Efficiencies grant for a total of \$66,000. It was noted that \$59,000 from a livestock watering facility project that could not be implemented had recently been freed up and was now available to help fund the new Irrigations Efficiencies funding request. Delaini reported that she will be applying for a new Direct Seed grant from Ecology for the 2027 fiscal year. The District needs a solid list of county producers who are interested in applying for direct seed grant funding and have never direct seeded before in order to have a good chance of obtaining new Direct Seed grant funding from Ecology

20. Jim moved to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet for April 16, 2025 as presented. Chris seconded. Motion passed.

CRP Field Check Task Order Update

Elsa reported that Kaleb has been working on conducting 140 CRP field stand checks in Lincoln County and Sheila Grace has been hired to conduct CRP checks in Adams County. The District is also working with FSA on another 20 complicated CRP field stand reviews with issues that need to be addressed.

WACD Update

Jeff announced that the next WACD Board meeting will be held online next Monday evening. The PMC now has all of its bare root stock dug for the year after being delayed for 3 weeks earlier this spring due to frozen ground. The NE Area needs to elect 1 more board member from the 5 conservation districts in the NE Area as the second NE Area Director to serve on the WACD Board. The Board Chairman from all 5 of the conservation districts will select the next NE Area Director for the WACD Board.

WADE training (Washington Association of District Employees) will be held again in June at the Sleeping Lady in Leavenworth. A new WADE president needs to be

elected at the training session. Brean and Matthew have received scholarships to attend WADE.

Tree Plantings Update

Elsa announced that the EQIP planting of 5,400 ponderosa pine plugs in the Medical Lake area that was assisted by the District had been finished in only 2 days. The DIP project (District Implementation Project) north of Reardan was also finished. The windbreak planting and drip irrigation project at the site was implemented with funding from the 24-39-NR grant.

Well Level Charts

Dean handed out 2 well level charts showing recent measurements with well level increases that occurred during or soon after the late February large runoff event. The Davenport Well #1 well level had risen to 118.90 ft. below the land surface by April 11, which is the highest level measured in this well since measurements were restarted in this retired well back in June 2018. In comparison, the previous measurement on December 19, 2024 was 130.66 ft.

The well level in well BIU506 also spiked during the very large runoff event at Crab Creek at Rocky Ford Rd on Monday, February 24 that was roughly estimated at about 2,000 cubic feet per second and was about as high as the creek is ever seen here. The well level rose up to 5.53 ft. below the land surface, which is the highest level measured in BIU506 since the well was drilled in July 2015. The weight of the water in the large runoff event may have contributed to the temporary spike in the well level, or the water pressure of the runoff event somewhere upstream to the northeast in the Crab Creek watershed might have transmitted pressure into the aquifer supplying the water in the well to briefly raise the well water level. By April 5th, the well level had dropped back down to 7.22 ft. below the land surface to a more stable, high well water level for spring.

County Commissioners Report

Commissioner Gilchrist reported that following the county state of emergency issued in late February due to the large runoff event in the county, the county is now dealing with a plumbing emergency in the basement of the public safety office that houses the Sheriff's Office along with the prison and the Weed Board in the basement. A disgruntled inmate shredded up a blanket and flushed it down the toilet, causing the sewage pipes to clog and raw sewage to overflow on the basement floor and be absorbed several feet up on the nearby basement walls.

The County Commissioners recently gave a report on increasing costs and declining revenues to all elected and appointed county officials. Risk insurance for the county is now \$1.7 million dollars, while the top three sources of income for the county have leveled off or have been decreasing. State motor vehicle fuel taxes have decreased primarily due to more fuel-efficient vehicles being driven, and property tax increases have been limited to 1% per year for a long time. The remaining Covid-19 funding was used to balance the 2024 budget and now there are no extra reserves to help balance the 2025 budget. The Legislature has just passed a bill to increase yearly property tax increases to 3% a year, but the county will only receive a small increase in tax income due to the small number of property owners in the county. Even the large amount of new construction in the county for 2024 only generated

another \$86,000 in taxes to help fund the 2025 budget. The County Commissioners may be forced to implement 1 day a month with no pay for county staff or may have to start laying off some county staff. The County Commissioners are also reminding county residents that increases in property taxes are primarily coming from increases in taxes for special use districts such as schools and fire districts.

County broadband connections are being made to local businesses and homes in Davenport with 4 service providers available to choose from for residents. Reardan, Odessa and Sprague are the next towns scheduled to have broadband service installed. Lincoln County needs 50% of the residents and businesses in the 8 incorporated towns in order to break even on the cost of installing and providing broadband service to the county. The county receives the first \$20 out of the monthly \$50 bill for broadband service.

The Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) is asking the State Legislature to change the current property taxes on new wind turbine farms to excise taxes so that the taxes collected do not depreciate over the lifetime of the wind farms.

Jeff noted that the recent 2025 Desert 100 motorbike race weekend continued to have adverse effects from thousands of participants parking a long way out on Kagele, Batum and Fink roads waiting for the race parking lot to open. On Sunday of the Desert 100 there were over 2,000 riders participating in the races. The weekend provides a lot of income for Odessa businesses but also requires significant support from the Sheriffs Department and the Odessa Ambulance and Odessa Hospital. Commissioner Gilchrist commented that the county is requesting input on the Desert 100 Board for future races.

FSA Report

Ashley reported that the ECAP (Emergency Commodity Assistance Program) program is currently open for applications until the deadline in summer. Payments for \$26/acre are available and 800 plus applications have already been received. Producers are asked to call the office and make an appointment due to the spring acreage reports also being reported at this time. The ARC/PLC signup ended yesterday. There is no information yet on when a new CRP signup may be available.

Conservation Commission Report

There was no Conservation Commission Report. The final state budget has still not yet been approved and made available to the Commission.

NRCS Report

There was no NRCS Report. There is no new information yet on the future availability of IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) funding for EQIP and CSP projects from NRCS.

Miscellaneous

Delaini reported that District staff will be in the field collecting soil health samples again later this spring with limited funding from the Implementation grant. Jim and Chris have expressed interest in having their fields sampled. Matthew is working on the Forest Health grant with county residents signing up for risk assessments. Matthew is also working on the CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) update.

Jason recently attended a meeting with Conservation Commission staff to review his application to serve as an appointed Board member for the District. The final

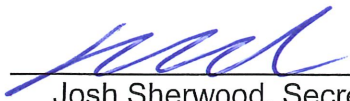
approval for Jason as an appointed Board member and Braidy as a re-elected Board member will be made by the Conservation Commission during the third week in May.

Request for Public Comment

Jeff asked if there was any more public comment for the meeting. There was no public comment.

Chairman Jeff Schibel adjourned the meeting at 11:02 AM. The next scheduled Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 14.

Respectfully submitted,


Josh Sherwood, Secretary


Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 20 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the March 12, 2025 minutes as presented.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #12683 to #12720, along with 44 EFT's, totaling \$90,299.25.
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