

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA
Wednesday, July 10, 2024**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 9:05 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by phone were as follows: Jim Baye, Chris Laney, Josh Sherwood, and Braidy Haden - LCCD Supervisors; Brandon Davis and Marika Kearsley - NRCS; Jo Gilchrist, Lincoln County Commissioner; Ryan Baye, WACD; Adam Walser – Guest; Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher, Elayne Hovde-Knudson, Brean Nieman, Matthew Rosman, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

It was noted that in the Elections paragraph on page 3 of the June 12 minutes for the votes received back by Lincoln County CD, the sentence needed to be changed to read: "... 880 and then 1,200 votes received back from the approximate 8,000 registered county voters for the last 2 Board Supervisor elections...". It was also noted that in the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Tour paragraph on page 5, the irrigation piping sentence needed to be changed to read "... includes 2 to 8 foot diameter irrigation piping with walls 2" or more thick."

- *1. Jim moved to approve the June 12, 2024 minutes as amended. Josh seconded. There was no further public comment. Motion passed.*

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- *2. Jim moved to pay and approve vouchers #12462 to #12485, along with 19 EFT's, totaling \$71,835.80. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa reported that \$8,750 refund from Plants of the Wild was for a deposit for purchasing potted trees and shrubs for the riparian planting at the Cobb Ranch WRP project that will no longer be needed due to the final planting in spring 2023. There was no further public comment. Motion passed.*
- *3. Jim moved to submit voucher #6 for the 24-39-FH grant in the amount of \$3,700 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *4. Jim moved to submit voucher #9 for the Adams CD TA grant in the amount of \$511.58 to Adams Conservation District. Josh seconded. Motion passed.*
- *5. Jim moved to submit voucher #4 for the 24-39-IE grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that the District was required to submit monthly vouchers for all grants from the Conservation Commission, even if no grant money was spent. Motion passed.*

- **6. Jim moved to submit voucher #12 for the 24-39-NR grant in the amount of \$24,167.98 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **7. Jim moved to submit voucher #18 for the Cluster Engineering grant in the amount of \$5,612.66 to Stevens CD. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **8. Jim moved to submit voucher #10 for the 24-39-IM grant in the amount of \$1,581.35 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **9. Jim moved to submit voucher #11 for the 24-39-IM grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **10. Jim moved to submit voucher #12 for the 24-39-IM grant in the amount of \$20,166.00 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **11. Jim moved to submit voucher #12 for the VSP - 5 grant in the amount of \$9,483.05 to the Conservation Commission. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Jim moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District VISA statement for May 24, 2024 through June 25, 2024 be approved. The total amount owed was \$14,951.41. Braidy seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that most of the VISA bill spending for June would be reimbursed by FY year end funding from the 24-39-IM grant. Some of the equipment purchased with the FY year end funding included a new laptop, multiple 32" Dell monitors for District staff, battery powered tools and a tool cabinet to store them, a small portable air compressor, new name and job title tags for all employee cubicles, a laminator primarily purchased to produce informational documents for Firewise meetings, and the LCCD logo applied to District work clothes purchased for District staff. There was no further public comment. Motion passed.**
- **13. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of June 15, 2024. The total amount owed was \$132.64. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **14. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Co-Energy / Pacific Pride gas card statement with a closing date of June 30, 2024. The total amount owed was \$35.10. Josh 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 reported that all of the 24-39-IM grant and DNR Mini-grant money had been spent. The new 25-39-IM grant with \$204,491.00 in grant funding will soon be received by the

District. A new drought planning grant for \$156,000 has recently been received by the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition and will primarily be used for municipalities in the Adams, Franklin, Grant, and Lincoln county area. A 1-year extension up through December 2025 is being pursued with Ecology for the NE Lincoln County Well Level grant. The Employee Liability Reserve fund has been increased to \$120,000.

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

C. AGENDA

Presentation from Adam Walser

Chairman Jeff Schibel invited Adam Walser to give a brief presentation at the Board meeting today. Adam is the current Lincoln County Prosecuting Attorney and is running for Lincoln County Superior Court Judge this fall. Brean Nieman and Matthew Rosman were introduced as new employees for the District.

Cost Share Action Approval

Hard copies of the July 10 Cost Share Action spreadsheet were distributed. There were two applications for Fuels Reduction projects with funding from the 24-39-FH grant and one application for a Livestock Watering Facility project with funding from the VSP-5 grant, for a revised total of \$26,562.50.

16. Josh moved to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet as amended. Braidy seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that if drought conditions reach the D3 level (Extreme Drought) in parts or all of Lincoln County, more grant funding could become available for drilling new livestock wells in the county. There was no further public comment. Motion passed.

VSP Update

Delaini reported that the new Livestock Watering Facility project just approved for VSP-5 grant funding will take the place of a previously approved VSP-5 project that has been asked to be dropped by the cooperator. Water monitoring at multiple VSP water monitoring sites across the county is ongoing.

Training Update

Elayne and Delaini attended a recent virtual monitoring training hosted by WSU on remote residue monitoring using available satellite imagery and local imagery taken by drones. Ground truthing is still required to verify the interpretation and accuracy of the remote imagery. Delaini will be pursuing available applications for using remote residue imagery and seeking contacts with other more experienced researchers in the remote residue imagery field.

Elsa announced that Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Advanced Facilitation Training will be hosted by the Washington CRM Task Group on July 23-24 at the Kittitas County Fairgrounds Heritage Center in Ellensburg. Registration is free but only 30 participants maximum are preferred in order to maximize participation and

engagement. Delaini, Elayne, Brean, and Matthew have registered to attend the training.

Another training session in the near future is titled “How to Recognize and Respond to First Amendment Audits.” The reason for this training is that some local governments across Washington have been experiencing “First Amendment audits” where private individuals unexpectedly arrive at an agency office building and begin video recording their interactions with officials and staff in order to test how the agency responds to the asserted First Amendment rights of these individual “auditors.” Such encounters can be challenging for agency officials and staff to deal with appropriately when they unexpectedly happen.

Ryan noted that this kind of audit recently occurred in an office in Walla Walla and that the individual was wearing a mask so that staff were not able to see the person’s face. One possible way to deal with unexpected audits as described is to keep the main entrance doors into the NRCS and FSA side of the remodeled office locked and to notify these “auditors” that is policy that only people with scheduled appointments for regular office business will be allowed past the main front doors. Jo noted that the County Courthouse has similar locked office doors and policies that prevent courthouse visitors from getting past the front counter in order to help protect county staff.

The First Amendment Audit training is scheduled online for July 16 from 10 – 11:30 AM on the Enduris website for District staff to participate and is being hosted by MRSC (Municipal Research and Services Center) which assists government agencies in Washington.

Matthew will be attending SIMS Table (fire table training) in the near future.

WACD Update

Hard copies of the WACD letter from Tom Salzer, Executive Director, to Washington conservation districts along with the annual dues invoice for Lincoln County for 2025 were distributed. Ryan noted that the Washington Association of Conservation Districts sends out a similar letter every year this time of year to list the numerous benefits that WACD provides to all CD’s across the state and to request that CD’s pay the WACD dues listed on their invoice. For 2025, the requested dues from Lincoln County CD to WACD total \$3,888.89.

Ryan noted that WACD has expanded new services to CD’s across the state as requested by CD’s, including Human Resources (HR) and Information Technology (IT) **17. Josh moved to approve the payment of the annual WACD dues of \$3,888.89 for 2025. Braidy seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa asked what kind of IT services might be available. Ryan noted that a hired contractor provides the IT assistance. Elsa asked Jo if Barry Tee, an IT employee with the county, might be available to assist the District from time to time for an agreed upon fee. Jo noted that she would look into the possibility but also noted that Lincoln County now has 4 IT staff members and that they are pretty busy most of the time. There was no further public comment. Motion passed.**

Ryan noted that WACD is working on a CD Supervisor’s Elections study with results due back to WACD in 2025. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy will be conducting the study and will be contacting CD’s across the state in the near future. Ryan announced that the Annual WACD meeting will be held on December 2 – 4 at the Northern Quest Casino in Airway Heights this year. As Renewable Energy Committee Chairman, Jim will be giving a committee report at the meeting. Ryan will be giving a

report at the meeting as Chairman of the Interest Free Ag Equipment Loans Committee. Ryan also noted that 100 people have already signed up for the free PMC nursery tour on August 13 at Bow, Washington from 9:30 to noon. Tour is free and lunch is provided, but participants must register by July 31.

Elsa passed around a hard copy of the annual CD reports from the Conservation Commission. Elsa also noted that Dean Hellie with Stevens CD has agreed to update the CNMP (Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan) for the Schoonover Hutterite Dairy and that Elayne continues to provide assistance to the Zeigler Dairy just west of Harrington.

Jeff reported on the recent WACD Board meeting. For the recent WADE (Washington Association of District Employees) training this June at the Sleeping Lady in Leavenworth, 297 participants attended in person and 100 more participated online. For the PMC, about 70% of tree and shrub sales have been made to private citizens and outside agencies, while only about 30% of sales have been made to CD's across the state. The PMC is updating one of its wells and is having a VFD (variable frequency drive) panel installed to save water and energy. Jeff also noted that he attended the recent Odessa Groundwater Replacement meeting where it was noted that 87,000 deep well irrigated acres have been approved for the program but that an additional 33,000 acres have not been approved and have currently been left in limbo.

Ryan reported that WACD conducts a financial audit every 5 years and has hired an outside contractor to conduct an audit this year for \$25,000. One of the reasons for the audit is that the PMC nursery generates \$1.5 million in sales every year. The PMC uses all wild collected seed for growing native trees and shrubs.

Jeff announced that he is running for Vice President of WACD and that Amy McKay from Whitman CD is running for WACD President.

Conservation Commission Report

Mike Baden was on a field trip and so Ryan provided the Conservation Commission report. Ryan reminded the District that fiscal year end reports for all grants from the Conservation Commission were due at the Commission by July 10. Elsa noted that all of the fiscal year end reports had already been submitted to the Commission. Larry Cochran has been serving a number of years as the Eastern Washington representative on the Conservation Commission Board but may be retiring from the Board sometime in the near future.

Ryan asked if any LCCD board member or other local farmer or citizen might be interested in serving as the Eastern Washington representative after Larry retires from the Board. This position is an at large position and does not require that this Board member be a conservation district Board Supervisor. The Conservation Commission Board is composed of 10 members who meet every other month and they are reimbursed for travel to meetings. The next Conservation Commission Board meeting will be hosted by Okanogan CD.

Washington State Conservation Society Request

Elsa announced that the District has received the annual request for investment in the Washington State Conservation Society. The District has invested \$150 in past years and has signed the annual MOU that describes the services that the Conservation Society provides in exchange for the investment.

18. Braidy moved to approve the annual \$150 investment in the Washington State Conservation Society and to sign the MOU. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. There was no further public comment. Motion passed.

NRCS Report

Brandon and Marika gave the NRCS report for the West Palouse Team. NRCS staff are in the middle of CSP signup #2 which will end at the end of July. About 25 applicants have applied with most applicants farming in Lincoln County. NRCS is continuing to look for more forestland and more rangeland application funding. New EQIP applications will be taken this fall. 2025 will be the last big year for available IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) funding. Marika noted that NRCS is watching and waiting for a new 5-year Farm Bill to be approved and signed. If a new Farm Bill is signed, new programs and rules will apply along with new Farm Bill payment limitations. If no new Farm Bill is approved for next year, the current Farm Bill will most likely be extended, and if producers have already met the payment limitations, they will not be able to sign up for additional contracts until the new Farm Bill is approved.

FSA Report

Ashley reported that producers need to submit all farm operation changes to FSA for 2025 program benefits. The Davenport FSA office is now fully staffed but there is additional funding to hire a temporary employee. Ashley demonstrated that the replacement large conference room TV is working and ready to be used for future meetings and training sessions. Elsa added that the remodeled office building continues to be updated with fire alarms and with required ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) modifications to the bathrooms and the front door.

County Commissioner Report

Jo reported that construction has started on a 4-mile section of Miles - Creston Road from SR-2 to Copenhaver Road. Copenhaver Construction received the \$4.1 million bid to implement the construction project. The next big road and bridge update project will be done on Duck Lake Road starting no later than next year.

The county has hired a contractor to conduct a county wide, 6 month long review of all EMS services provided in the county, including hospitals, clinics, and volunteer ambulances and fire departments. One item that will be reviewed is a possible transition from all volunteer ambulance and fire department crews to all paid or a hybrid mixture of volunteer and paid crew members. The county is looking into a possible county assessment to help pay for ambulance and fire crew member time.

The county now has all kind of interest from residents wishing to be involved with the Planning Commission due to the proposed wind farm construction, but the county is still looking for volunteers to serve on the following 2 county boards: The Water Conservancy Board and the Board of Equalization.

The county has recently received \$299,000 in PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) funding from federal and state agencies owning 90,000 acres of land in the county and includes BLM, DNR and WDFW. BLM owns the most acres with 72,000 acres. The 2024 PILT payment is \$30,000 greater than last year.

Request for Public Comment

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

19. Braidy moved to adjourn the Board Meeting. Chris seconded. There was no public comment. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 AM

There will be no meeting in August or September due to harvest and fall seeding. The next regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesday, October 9 starting at 9:00 AM. The NE Area Meeting will be held in Spokane and hosted by Spokane CD on Tuesday, October 15.

Respectfully submitted,

Josh Sherwood, Secretary

Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 18 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the June 12, 2024 minutes as amended.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #12462 to #12485, along with 19 EFT's, totaling \$71,835.80.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #6 for the 24-39-FH grant in the amount of \$3,700 to the Conservation Commission.
- 4. M/S/P to submit voucher #9 for the Adams CD TA grant in the amount of \$511.58 to Adams Conservation District.
- 5. M/S/P to submit voucher #4 for the 24-39-IE grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission.
- 6. M/S/P to submit voucher #12 for the 24-39-NR grant in the amount of \$24,167.98 to the Conservation Commission.
- 7. M/S/P to submit voucher #18 for the Cluster Engineering grant in the amount of \$5,612.66 to Stevens CD.
- 8. M/S/P to submit voucher #10 for the 24-39-IM grant in the amount of \$1,581.35 to the Conservation Commission.
- 9. M/S/P to submit voucher #11 for the 24-39-IM grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission.

- 10. M/S/P to submit voucher #12 for the 24-39-IM grant in the amount of \$20,166.00 to the Conservation Commission.
- 11. M/S/P to submit voucher #12 for the VSP - 5 grant in the amount of \$9,483.05 to the Conservation Commission.
- 12. M/S/P that the Lincoln County Conservation District VISA statement for May 24, 2024 through June 25, 2024 be approved. The total amount owed was \$14,951.41.
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- 15. M/S/P to approve the Treasurer's report and Grant's report as presented.
- 16. M/S/P to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet as amended.
- 17. M/S/P to approve the payment of the annual WACD dues of \$3,888.89 for 2025 to WACD.
- 18. M/S/P to approve the annual \$150 investment in the Washington State Conservation Society and to sign the MOU.