

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
NRCS / FSA MEETING ROOM-DAVENPORT WA
Wednesday, May 13, 2020**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 8:55 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Due to problems with the remote Zoom Internet connection providing usable audio, meeting participants had to call in on a WACD teleconference line in order to participate by voice in the meeting. Those attending the meeting remotely by Zoom and by the WACD teleconference line connection were as follows: Jim Baye, Josh Sherwood, Braidy Haden and Chris Laney - LCCD Supervisors; Mike Baden, Conservation Commission; Ryan Baye, WACD; Mark Stedman, Lincoln County Commissioner; Elsa Bowen, Val Vissia, Kristen Balko, Connor Nikkola, Delaini Disher, and Dean White - LCCD staff. Elsa displayed the meeting packet files on screen with Zoom.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

Chris noted that towards the bottom of page 2 in the draft April 15 board meeting in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act paragraph, there was a typo and that "...stabling a reserve fund..." should be replaced with "..establish a reserve fund..."

- *1. Chris moved to approve the April 15, 2020 minutes as amended. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.*

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- *2. Jim moved to pay and approve vouchers #11132 to #11158, along with 13 EFT's, totaling \$58,600.94. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.*
- *3. Jim moved to submit voucher #10 for the VSP 3 grant in the amount of \$8,399.92 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *4. Jim moved to submit voucher #11 for the 20-39-IM grant in the amount of \$4,348.85 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.*
- *5. Jim moved to submit voucher #10 for the 20-39-NR grant in the amount of \$130.63 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.*
- *6. Jim moved to submit voucher #2 for the 20-27-NR grant in the amount of \$158.50 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.*

- **7. Jim moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Cenex credit card statement with a closing date of April 10, 2020. The total amount owed was \$402.22. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **8. Jim moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for March 25, 2020 – April 23, 2020 be approved. The total amount owed was \$360.46. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Spending was reduced in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Motion passed.**

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.

Updates on the special assessment and the grant funds reports were discussed. Remaining grant funds expiring by June 30 are scheduled to be used with an amendment to extend the well level measuring grant one more year to June 30, 2021 in the process of being negotiated. One part of the amendment being negotiated includes District staff time to enter 2 well level measurements each from other eastern Washington counties into the Ecology EIM database as part of the recently approved grant from the Bureau of Reclamation to the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition.

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

C. AGENDA

COVID-19 District Operations Policy Letter

A draft letter describing how Lincoln County CD operations would be conducted to continue essential business and still meet the Stay Home – Stay Safe Proclamation 20-25 from the Governor was displayed on the Zoom shared screen. Most of the language was copied from a letter developed by Okanogan CD and describes what procedures District staff and board members would take to protect themselves and cooperators from COVID-19.

- **10. Chris moved to approve the COVID-19 District Operations Policy Letter as presented. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Elsa noted that she recently ordered masks for all staff to use. Motion passed.**

Tree & Shrub Planting Completion

Elsa announced that the Cobb Ranch WRP planting and the Johnbold Farms fire replanting projects had been completed by the end of April with the help of the DNR planting crews. Connor took some drone videos of both plantings which have been uploaded to the District website and have been included in the online newsletter just released. Jeff thanked District staff and the DNR planting crews for getting the plantings done in spite of all the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conservation Innovation Grant

Palouse CD is developing a Conservation Innovation Grant application to NRCS that will be available to Lincoln County CD and other eastern Washington CD's to tap if it is approved. The deadline for grant to be submitted to NRCS is Friday, May 29. The project title is FLOURISH (Farmers Leading our United Revolution in Soil Health) and is targeting improved soil health management systems (SHMS) through the utilization of on farm trials to encourage the adoption of cover crops, intercropping, and livestock integration by local producers. The application is requesting \$3 million over 5 years and would require no match from producers but would require a 25% match from CD's that utilize the grant. Palouse CD is seeking letters of support from other CD's. Elsa asked if the Board would be willing to approve a letter of support from the District to send to Palouse CD.

11. Chris moved to approve the sending a letter of support to Palouse CD to support their CIG grant application. Braidy seconded. Discussion was held. Josh asked if there would be any restrictions for producers to sign up for both EQIP and CIG grants from NRCS, and the answer was no. Braidy noted that 50 letters of support would also be needed from area producers. Kristen noted that she could resend the template for letters of support to board members and other interested producers in the county. The deadline for letters to be submitted back to the organizers for the FLOURISH grant application is Friday, May 22. Motion passed.

Cost Share Approval

The Cost Share Action spreadsheet was displayed on the Zoom share screen. There was one application and two payment requests for the DOE Direct Seed grant from Lincoln and Whitman counties.

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

CRP 54 Task Order Update

Elsa reported that District staff are working on the Phase 1 CRP 54 task order by assembling file folders, including 240 folders already completed for Adams County and most of the folders for Lincoln County also completed. The task order for Phase 1 was for \$25,000.

The Phase 2 task order is tentatively scheduled to be approved and start around July 1. District staff will assist NRCS with assembling CRP plans and job sheets. Arnold with NRCS IT staff recently brought 2 laptops to the office and installed them in currently unused NRCS cubicles for District staff to login into the NRCS network and

do Phase 2 task order work. Completing the CRP 54 task order may lead to potential future task orders for EQIP and CSP program work.

Eddie Johnson Memorial

An aerial photo with a planned windbreak around the shed and headquarters at the WSU Wilke Research Farm on the east side of Davenport was displayed on the Zoom shared screen. District staff were finally able to meet with Aaron Esser, Adams-Lincoln County Extension agent about installing the windbreak around the buildings at the Wilke Farm as a memorial to former board member Eddie Johnson, who also served on the Wilke Farm advisory board. A two row windbreak with caragana and Austrian pine has been designed. The windbreak will be located on the south side of the buildings and the septic tank drainage field and should be far enough away to prevent snow drifts from accumulating in the parking lot and on Hwy 2.

WACD Update

Jeff noted that WACD has sent out a survey requesting opinions from CD board members and staff on whether they would be willing to attend a virtual WACD annual convention as opposed to an in-person convention in late fall. So far only about 50 of the possible 250 CD board members across the state have responded to the survey. At stake for WACD is paying hotel cancellation fees, which will run about \$25,000 if not done until the end of June. The recently acquired B&O insurance for the WACD Board of Directors might pay for the hotel cancellation fee, but the insurance might also be dropped as a result. Elsa encourage all board members to respond to the survey.

The PMC has harvested all the stems and planted all the conifers as needed for spring, and so there is not a lot of current activity with nursery stock. There were issues with some CD's cancelling their orders from the PMC due to cancellation of their tree and shrub sales.

The annual WADE training at the Sleeping Lady in Leavenworth has been cancelled and apparently without any cancellation fees. Some CD's have all of their staff working at home, and some CD's aren't holding regular board meetings during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Conservation Commission Report

Mike reported that the Conservation Commission is sending out COVID-19 information as soon as it comes to the Commission. Laura Johnson will be discussing public records and social media issues at the next Conservation Community Call this Friday. No information is available yet from state financial officials on how much the available funding will be reduced for implementation grant funding. A lot of email scams are going around now during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pierce and Whidbey Island CD's have been spammed and so other CD's need to be alert and ready to delete suspicious emails from these Districts or call them first to see if they sent the emails. The state Conservation Commission office in Lacey will probably not be reopened until Phase 3 of reopening as approved by the Governor, and the Commission staff will have to follow the guidelines of the state Ecology building in which they work. There will probably be limited, widely spaced staffing at the beginning. Travel will also be limited for the foreseeable future.

The Conservation Commission will be meeting next week to approve the supervisor elections this spring. Mike will investigate to see if a Conservation Commission field tour can be rescheduled for Lincoln County next year to replace the tour that was cancelled for this May. NRCS state office staff will be hosting a webinar next week on NRCS programs for local producers who may be interested in signing up for these programs, including some possible future signups with RCPP - EQIP that generated questions and concerns from irrigated producers in the Odessa Subaquifer area at a previous NRCS programs meeting who are searching for water to replace declining deep irrigation well levels. The West Palouse Team Local Working Group is seeking responses to a recent survey sent by NRCS asking local producers what kind of resource concerns and EQIP funding they would like to see available for the LWG.

Elsa noted that the annual plan, 5 year plan, and annual financial report have already been submitted to the Conservation Commission. Work has also begun on the 2015 – 2017 accountability audit, with Jeff speaking with a state auditor this morning.

Drought Concerns and Livestock Watering Facility Applications

At this time 15 applications for livestock wells or spring developments have been received by District staff. Drier conditions than usual have already decreased or dried up some livestock ponds. Elsa has obtained permission to use \$15,000 in available engineering design money to develop for these livestock watering facilities, and Connor has scheduled field visits with Area Engineer Gary Ausman starting next week to visit these sites so that these projects can be shovel ready and ready to implemented on short notice if and when funding becomes available.

Dean downloaded several drought status maps for the state of Washington from the droughtmonitor.unl.edu website and emailed them to Val. As of May 5, the majority of Lincoln County was considered to be in stage D0 Abnormally Dry, while the far west and southwest corner of the county was considered to be stage D1 Moderate Drought. It usually takes 2 months of stage D2 Severe Drought before a drought emergency can be declared for an affected part of the state. Val will add updated drought maps to the next newsletter and links to the maps to the District website and Facebook page.

NRCS Report

The NRCS report emailed by Rich Edlund, acting WPT District Conservationist, was displayed on the Zoom shared screen.

FSA Report

There are still only 2 FSA employees working at a time in the office on a rotating basis. FSA staff are working on how to meet with producers remotely by Zoom or by phone and are also requesting an early reopening of the office.

Miscellaneous Items

Dean reported that he had measured all 77 wells in the field again along with several new wells in the last half of April for the well level grant. He also downloaded the transducers again in the 4 wells along the northern edge of the county with transducers. All of the well level results have been entered into Excel spreadsheet, and the next task will be reviewing the entered results, sending the results to

GeoEngineers for review, and entering the 1.5 years of results collected so far into the Ecology EIM database.

Elsa mentioned that the Lincoln County Fair for this year has been cancelled and so there will be no fair booth preparations. Jeff noted that the Odessa meat packing plant, which had been shut down before the COVID-19 pandemic, looks like it may be reopened in the near future to process livestock purchased by the federal government. Jeff also thanked the staff and board members for working through difficulties with the Zoom connection for the meeting this morning.

Public Comment

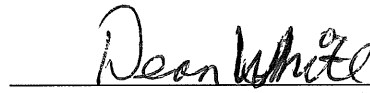
There was no Public Comment.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Jeff Schibel at 10 AM. The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10 starting at 8:30 AM. At this time it is unknown yet if the meeting will be held remotely again or meeting participants will be able to return in person to the conference room in the USDA Service Center in Davenport by following approved CDC guidelines.

Respectfully submitted,



Josh Sherwood, Secretary



Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 12 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the April 15, 2020 minutes as amended.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #11132 to #11158, along with 13 EFT's, totaling \$58,600.94.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #10 for the VSP 3 grant in the amount of \$8,399.92 to the Conservation Commission.
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- 5. M/S/P to submit voucher #10 for the 20-39-NR grant in the amount of \$130.63 to the Conservation Commission.

- 6. M/S/P to submit voucher #2 for the 20-27-NR grant in the amount of \$158.50 to the Conservation Commission.
- 7. M/S/P to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Cenex credit card statement with a closing date of April 10, 2020. The total amount owed was \$402.22.
- 8. M/S/P that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for March 25, 2020 – April 23, 2020 be approved. The total amount owed was \$360.46.
- 9. M/S/P to approve the Treasurer's report and the Grant's report as presented.
- 10. M/S/P to approve the COVID-19 District Operations Policy Letter as presented.
- 11. M/S/P to approve District staff drafting and sending a letter of support to Palouse CD to support their CIG grant application.
- 12. M/S/P to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet at presented.

