

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING**

Lincoln County Public Works Meeting Room

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Meeting called to order at 8:47 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by telephone were as follows: Josh Sherwood (phone) and Braidy Haden - LCCD Supervisors; Mark Stedman, Lincoln County Commissioner, Mike Baden, Conservation Commission; Elsa Bowen, Connor Nikkola, Delaini Disher, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:

- **1. Braidy moved to approve the October 13, 2021 minutes as presented. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:

- **2. Braidy moved to pay and approve vouchers #11573 to #11601, along with 14 EFT's, totaling \$54,701.92. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **3. Braidy moved to submit voucher #4 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$6,762.88 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **4. Braidy moved to submit voucher #7 for the 20-27-NR grant in the amount of \$195.42 to Adams CD. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **5. Braidy moved to submit voucher #4 for the 22-39-NR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **6. Braidy moved to submit voucher #4 for the 22-39-IM grant in the amount of \$12,716.05 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **7. Braidy moved to submit voucher #4 for the 22-39-HZ grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **8. Braidy moved to submit voucher #1 for the 22-39-TP1 grant in the amount of \$52,370.20 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **9. Braidy moved to submit voucher #4 for the 22-39-FR grant in the amount of \$977.38 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

- **10. Braidy moved to submit voucher #1 for the 22-39-DR grant in the amount of \$360.00 to the Conservation Commission. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **11. Braidy moved to submit voucher #13 for the Mielke Project grant in the amount of \$122.66 to DOE. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **12. Braidy moved to submit voucher #12 for the Direct Seed 2 grant in the amount of \$10,411.03 to DOE. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**
- **13. Braidy moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for September 24, 2021 through October 25, 2021 be approved. The total amount owed was \$1,881.47. Josh seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.**
- **14. Braidy moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Cenex credit card statement with a closing date of October 10, 2021. The total amount owed was \$468.74. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

Delaini passed around bank statements for the board members to initial.

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

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

C. AGENDA

Columbia Basin Development League Update

Elsa noted that the Columbia Basin Development League membership fees were up for renewal. The District approved paying \$175 for CBDL membership fees last year. Mark reported that funding for the CBDL was down about \$20,000 to \$30,000 compared to last year. A new \$25,000 grant for education purposes only was recently received by the CBDL.

- **16. Braidy moved to approve \$175.00 for 2022 CBDL membership fees. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

2021 Amended Budget and 2022 Budget Approval

Delaini compiled and distributed hardcopies of the 11 X 17" Budget spreadsheet for review. Amendments to the 2021 budget that occurred over the year needed to be approved along with the proposed budget for 2022. Discussion was held. It was noted that VSP funding has now been approved through 2023 and that the details for the approved Direct Seed 3 grant were in the process of being finalized.

Connor reported that the District had also just received funding from the FLOURISH (Farmers Leading Our United Revolution in Soil Health) grant for research on growing and grazing cover crops in eastern Washington. Lincoln County CD has been working in partnership with Palouse CD to submit grant applications for studying the growing and grazing cover crops to the USDA Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) On-Farm Innovation Trials program for the last several years and which was finally approved this time on the third grant application. LCCD will be primarily helping with grant administration. It is not known yet how many cover crop projects will be available for Lincoln County producers, but most of the projects will be targeted for Palouse CD area producers.

Elsa reminded the Board that the District budget can be updated anytime throughout the year as needed by the Board.

17. Josh moved to approve the amended 2021 Budget as presented. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.

18. Braidy moved to approve the proposed 2022 Budget as presented. Josh seconded. Motion passed.

2022 Direct Seed Conference

The 2022 Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association Conference will be held in Kennewick on January 11 & 12. Braidy asked if it was possible for the District to sponsor and manage a booth at the Direct Seed Conference and to have a continuous running presentation running on a laptop in the booth. Elsa noted that the District could sponsor an 8 X 10' booth at the conference for \$495 and that Delaini and Connor had already agreed to work on a booth.

Elsa noted that the District could use the 22-39-IM grant to pay for registration, travel and hotel costs for Board members and staff. Josh and Braidy noted that they were planning to attend the Direct Seed Conference. Elsa will contact Chris and Jim and ask if they were planning on attending.

19. Josh moved to approve registration, travel and hotel costs for Board members and staff to attend the 2022 Direct Seed Conference in Kennewick on January 11 & 12. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.

Cost Share Approval

There was no Cost Share Approval spreadsheet for the meeting. Elsa mentioned that Brandon Larmer had submitted request a request for cost share payment with the completion of his livestock watering facility project. Elsa worked with Braidy to research the costs of buying a plastic water storage tank and hauling water versus drilling a well to provide livestock water. With 7,000 gallon water tanks costing about \$10,000, drilling a well to provide water doesn't cost much more than purchasing a water storage tank and hauling water.

Changes for Livestock Water Rights

Elsa participated in a remote meeting on Tuesday that addressed the draft revisions to the Ecology Water Resources Policy 1025 – Policy for Conveying Stockwater Away from Streams to Protect Water Quality with other NE Area District Managers and with some livestock producers online. The primary proposed change from Ecology involves the inserting the following text into Policy 1025: "Surface Water diversions: A water right is required whether the stockwater is through a diversion or is directly consumed

from a surface water body...“ A water right change has not been and will not be required to divert water from a stream to a water trough as long as float valve system is used, or if not, overflow water from the trough is returned to the stream close to the point of diversion. The diverted water must not serve more livestock than what have historically drank directly out of the stream.

Elsa noted that once a permit has been obtained from Ecology for drilling a well to provide stockwater, a water right is not required. However, it appears now that to divert surface water to a water trough, a water right is intended to be required for new diversions and that this can and will be grandfathered to existing surface water diversions for livestock. Due to number of existing surface diversions to water troughs for livestock, Ecology would probably not have the staff to review these diversions and may just review a limited number of diversions that are brought to its attention.

Jeff asked if the District should submit a comment letter on the proposed change to Ecology Policy 1025. By general consensus, the Board agreed that the District should develop a comment letter on the proposed changes, in coordination and participation with the adjacent NE Area CD's, other concerned CD's across the state, and with WACD if possible, by the comment due date of December 5th.

Hawk Creek Ranch Well Monitoring

Elsa reported that she had consulted with Enduris about liability protection for requested continued well level monitoring on selected domestic wells in the Hawk Creek Ranch Estates development area. Enduris can develop a hold harmless policy on its insurance for the District that will protect the District from any liability issues with the continuing well level monitoring.

WaterSMART Grant

Elsa noted she is working with Claire Miller, Department of Commerce, and the Bureau of Reclamation to develop a task list and budget so that a contract can be prepared for the grant by January 2022. Elsa has also reached out to the Columbia Basin Development League to work together on shared goals for sustainable water supplies. There will be \$35,000 available for District staff time on facilitation over the 2-year grant.

WDFW Proviso Grant

Funding from the WDFW Proviso grant can be used for invisible/virtual livestock fencing, but grant projects need 500 head of livestock to qualify. The Proviso grant addresses fire recovery efforts in the Whitney Fire area of Lincoln County and Pearl Hill Fire area in Douglas County.

WACD Update

Jeff announced that the next WACD Board meeting will be held remotely next Monday evening. The WACD Annual Meeting has already started with remote presentations over Zoom spread out over multiple days and several weeks. Participation in the remote presentations held so far has been relatively low. The Zoom presentations have been recorded for CD's to watch later. Elsa participated in the DEI and the elections reform presentations. The DEI presentation brought up potential issues with CD websites being more accessible to all people, including those with sight and hearing disabilities. Mike noted that the Conservation Commission will be hosting the presentation next Tuesday with MSRC addressing COVID-19 issues.

The in-person portion of the WACD Annual meeting will take place on Monday and Tuesday, November 29 & 30 in downtown Tacoma. The WACD business meeting will follow the next day on Wednesday, with the Conservation Commission meeting on Thursday. Jeff will be attending the in person meeting and encouraged as many board members as possible to attend, as WACD has already guaranteed \$20,000 for the hotel to reserve rooms and provide meals. Board members should plan on making hotel reservations for Monday and Tuesday night. Jeff noted that Mike Mumford is the ballot for WACD President.

Next Steps for Well Level Monitoring

Elsa has worked with Kevin Lindsey with GeoEngineers to develop a plan for the next steps of well level monitoring in the county. Commissioner Stedman has reviewed and approved the plan. The plan has been forwarded on to Scott Tarbutton, a local grant administrator in the Ecology East Regional Office for review.

2020 – 2021 Precip Maps and Spreadsheets

Dean distributed hardcopies of the precip maps and spreadsheets for the 2020 – 2021 crop year. In summary, the 2020 – 2021 crop year was one of the driest and one of the worst drought years in recent and historical records. In comparison with the 2019 – 2020 crop year, the cooperated precip stations across the county recorded 2.5” to almost 7” less precip for the 2020 – 2021 crop year. In addition, most precip stations received 70 to 85+ percent of the crop year precip from September 2020 through January 2021, with the small remaining portion received for the main growing season from February through August 2021. Dean also distributed hardcopies of the US Drought Monitor map for November 2. The recent fall rains have greatly helped Lincoln County, but northern portions of the county are still in severe drought and southern portions are still in extreme drought status.

Delaini has posted the 2020 – 2021 precip maps and spreadsheets on the LCCD website and Dean will email the electronic files to all of the Board members as requested.

Conservation Commission Report

Mike Baden noted that with the retirement of Carol Smith, Kirk Robinson has been appointed as the Interim Executive Director for the Conservation Commission. A new Executive Director should be selected by the December Commission meeting. The Conservation Commission is planning on making meet and greet sessions available for CD’s to review the final candidates for the position.

The 4 elections reforms recommendations from the Elections Committee in September have been forwarded to the legislature for review. For 2022, the elections process will be the same as previous years. CD’s are reminded that they need to have their first elections ad published within 7 days of the elections resolution being approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Mike encourages CD’s to keep submitting fire recovery projects to the Conservation Commission. The Commission will keep stacking the fire recovery proposals and will most likely start funding them starting July 1, 2022. The last round of Hazard Training will take place in 2022. The Conservation Commission is down on staff members so there may be some delays with grant amendment requests.

County Commissioners Report

Mark reported that Public Works is now back to five 8 hour days with the switch back to standard time. The county is now able to work much more effectively with the Teamsters Union and is close to having a new 3 year contract available to replace the lack of a contract for the last 6 years. The county is hiring employees who had previously retired from their former jobs on the west of the state. The county budget currently has a \$1.2 million dollar deficit, which is typical in recent years and may be supplemented by the reserve budget again. The county is working with Lincoln and Adams CD's, Ecology, WDFW, and local citizens on continued flooding concerns that the City of Sprague has with Sprague Lake just downstream.

The state mandate for all state employees and contractors to be vaccinated for COVID-19 has caused some serious problems for the county, which does not have and does not enforce a vaccine or mask mandate. One problem area is the WSU Extension office which shares space with the Lincoln County Economic Development Council. The county helps to fund WSU Cooperative Extension in the county, but this funding may be ended due to the state vaccine mandate, which also requires that local 4-H volunteers be vaccinated. The county is considering moving 4-H teaching from WSU Extension to some other non-state organization such as a local Grange, if available and possible. If this is done, then current 4-H kids showing livestock at the Lincoln County Fair will no longer have 4-H sponsorship.

Mark gave 4 copies of newspaper articles on the above issue for board members to review.

NRCS Report

There was no report from NRCS.

FSA Report

There was no report from FSA.

Miscellaneous

Jeff noted that Bill Schillinger will soon be retiring from his position as Director for the Lind Dryland Experiment Station. There will then be 4 open research positions in WSU Extension across the state, with the most important position to fill as the Director for the Lind Dryland Experiment Station, which is located in and does research for the driest cropping precip area in the nation.

Elsa noted that the office will be closed tomorrow for Veterans Day. Delaini created 3 different designs for the Eddie Johnson memorial sign and passed it around to board members and Commissioner Stedman to rank and select their favorite design.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Chairman Jeff Schibel adjourned the meeting at 10:12 AM. The next board meeting is scheduled as an in-person meeting on Wednesday, December 8, 2021 starting at 8:30 AM at Memorial Hall in Davenport. A telephone call in number will be available for those people wishing to participate by phone. Employee reviews are scheduled for the December board meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Josh Sherwood, Secretary



Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 19 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the October 13, 2021 minutes as presented.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #11573 to #11601, along with 14 EFT's, totaling \$54,701.92.
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