



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: August 3, 2023; Board of Supervisors Meeting
LOCATION: Okanogan Conservation District Office, Okanogan, WA and
Remotely via Microsoft Teams and Teleconference
FROM: Cassandra Lange-Predoehl, Administrative Assistant

PRESENT:

Lorah Super, Chair	Cassandra Lange-Predoehl, Administrative Assistant
Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair	Emmy Engle, Communication & Outreach Specialist
Steve Colvin, Auditor	Dylan Streeter, Wildfire Resiliency & Recovery Planner
Edd Townsend, Supervisor	Eli Loftis, Wildfire & Community Resilience Lead
Dale Swedberg, Associate Supervisor	Chevelle Yeckel, Water Quality & Riparian Planner
Craig Nelson, Executive Director	Aaron Wold, Range Planner
Becky Drenner, Finance Director	Phillip Dart, Public
Kim Kogler, Grants & Contracts Director	

Meeting Call to Order: Lorah Super called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Lorah completed a roll call of Supervisors, Associate Supervisors, staff, partners, and the public.

Agenda Approval: Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the agenda as amended. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes: Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the July 6, 2023, board meeting minutes as presented. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the July 18, 2023, special board meeting minutes as presented. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #843, which covers the checking account activity from July 7, 2023, to August 3, 2023, inclusive was presented for the Board's approval. The following checks/payroll/direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:
Checks – number 12222 – 12243 totaling \$54,396.90.
Two payroll direct withdrawals – numbers ACH4555 – ACH4576 totaling \$41,368.23.
Electronic payments – numbers EFT3256 – EFT3270 totaling \$36,878.54.
Deposits totaling \$594,520.81 were made, including transfers of \$200,000.00 from Checking to Savings as cost share payments had been reimbursed from the Commission, \$42,562.51 from Checking to Savings for additional rates and charges funds received from 2013-2021, and a

\$18,378.71 transfer from Checking to Savings for additional rates and charges funds received from 2022.

Steve Colvin moved to approve Treasurer's Report #843 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry reported that he has a lot of black dirt and fences that will have to be repaired due to the fire.

Steve Colvin – Steve reported that they didn't get much smoke from the recent fire.

Lorah Super – Lorah reported that a crew took out her half dead Chinese elm and other trees. Lorah went on to say she was looking for hay. Lorah added that she has been getting a lot of questions about the draught declaration, and she heard there was an exemption from relinquishment for water rights and wanted to make sure the district was spreading the word to the public.

Edd Townsend – Edd reported that wheat harvest started and yields are below average to average for many people due to the harsh winter and weed damage. Edd added that during this time of year it is very hard to kill weeds. Edd noted that the ground water in his area is still holding on and is above average for this time of the year. Edd added that the abundance of grasshoppers will be a concern for fall planting.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

No associate supervisors were present.

Staff Reports:

Craig reported that he received a phone call from Mike Baden who asked if the district would be interested in hosting next year's Washington State Conservation Commission meeting to which Craig agreed. The meeting will take place on the third Thursday of September in 2024. Craig added that the Commission will host their meeting in the Okanogan/Omak area. On the Wednesday before the meeting there will be a tour for the Commission members, staff, and other organization partners that attend where staff can showcase projects and resource concerns. After the tour there is typically a dinner to follow where the Commission invites neighboring districts. Craig noted that the last time the Commission meeting was in the area was the day the Carlton Complex fire started, and they were up in the Chiliwist evaluating fire sites.

Craig went on to say that he and Jordana provided feedback to the Conservation Commission for the revised program rules for the Irrigation Efficiencies program. Craig added that the new program rules limit the maximum cost share to \$100,000.00. Craig and Chevelle met with Colville Tribe representatives to talk about Omak Creek. The Tribe is trying to restore the area and create a bench to assist with flood flows and shade. They are searching for funding to do the design work and implementation. Craig will discuss the project with Commission staff as they have funding for riparian and salmon recovery work.

Becky reported that the district did just shy of \$280,000.00 in cost share payments in June and the Commission reimbursed grants quickly. Becky is hopeful that the rates and charges increase will happen to help offset the cost share reimbursement wait time.

Eli reported that he attended the Lightning Creek meeting and it was very successful with numerous entities in attendance. Eli added that there will be follow-up tours with other field experts in the next couple of months.

Chevelle reported that she attended the Riparian Planning Considerations training in Pullman, and she was able to meet with numerous peers. Chevelle learned that staff at other districts do not have the same engagement with their board members and she was grateful that she has the support from the board.

Dylan reported that he had been busy doing home risk assessments. Phil asked Dylan if they had taken before and after from any homes that were affected by the Carlton Complex fire in which Eli responded yes. Phil added that the pictures might be a good learning tool to show people how beneficial a home risk assessment could be.

Emmy reported that the district will share a fair booth with NRCS and DNR this year. Emmy went on to say the booth will have many different activities and a monitor will be set up to play videos. Emmy added that she is working on the biennial report with Craig and Kim.

NRCS Report

Sarah Troutman was present and reported they were busy with CRP in Douglas County. NRCS is working on getting more participation in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Sarah noted that previously NRCS posted jobs across the country, but they will now be posting jobs regionally instead.

Partner Reports

No partners were present.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans

Tonasket School District Interlocal Agreement – Kim reported that the Okanogan Conservation District has funding authorized by the National Association of Conservation Districts to provide small student garden internships to increase access to local healthy food and provide valuable job experience. Internships would be project based and considered payable upon completion of a predetermined project. The Tonasket School District will be responsible for supervising the interns, determining completion of the internships, providing necessary documentation for payment, and paying the students. The Okanogan Conservation District will be responsible for timely payments to the Tonasket School District upon completion of the internship and receiving the invoice. The Conservation District will allocate \$300.00 per internship for up to ten internships. Kim added that there are currently three students ready to start their internship under the guidance of the Tonasket outreach teacher. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Tonasket School District interlocal agreement. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Fairburn Fire Recovery Fencing NRI Project – Eli reported that two sections of the Fairburn’s property were partially burned in the 2021 Walker Creek fire. The district worked with the cooperators to rebuild fire damaged fencing utilizing fire recovery funding from the Washington State Conservation Commission. Staff would like to continue the next phase of refencing to complete sections of the original project that were unworkable in the spring due to excessively waterlogged soil. Eli added that there is an estimated 10,785 feet of fencing that will be rebuilt with a total BMP cost of \$51,336.60. Staff will request \$25,668.30 of the Conservation Commission’s Natural Resource Investment grant funds to take part in a 50/50 cost share agreement. Steve Colvin moved to approve the Fairburn Natural Resource Investment project and authorized Craig Nelson to sign the cost share contract when the funds are awarded by the Washington State Conservation Commission. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Jerry Asmussen abstained from the vote.

Wells Pump House NRI Project – Eli reported that the Wells’ pumping infrastructure was damaged in the 2020 Cold Spring fire. The project would cover the restoration of the pumping plant which would facilitate improved livestock management and distribution of grazing on the Wells’ property. The project was previously funded with fire recovery funds but was cancelled due to poor conditions on the ground and a financial hardship. Eli added that the total project cost was estimated at \$4,829.47 in which the staff would request \$2,414.73 of the Conservation Commission’s natural resource investment grant funds to take part in a 50/50 cost share agreement between the district and landowner. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Wells pump house Natural Resource Investment project and authorized Craig Nelson to sign the cost share agreement when funds are awarded by the Washington State Conservation Commission. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Office Lease Amendment #2 – Craig reported that the building owner requested that a lease amendment be signed to reflect the new office space the district will occupy once office spaces are exchanged with NRCS in the fall. The amendment reflects the change in suites and square footage but does not include the costs of a remodel as the district declined to have the projects done. Steve Colvin moved to approve the office lease amendment and authorized Craig Nelson to sign the second lease amendment for the office space. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

AVR Watering Facility Personal Services Contract – Aaron reported that the watering facility project will be funded with WQC-2023-OkanCD-00044 and Mule Deer Foundation grant funds. The personal services contract with McNall Construction LLC includes the dirt work and installation of the pump, solar panel, and pipeline. Edd asked if having a personal services contract instead of a cost share contract where the landowner is reimbursed from the district after they incur the costs is common. Craig stated that more and more districts are doing direct implementation projects that are done with personal services contracts. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the personal services contract and authorized Lorah Super to sign the personal services contract to construct the Antoine Valley Ranch watering facility. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Water Bank Update – Jordana reported that at the last meeting she brought an interlocal agreement for comments and she received a suggestion to add mediation language for conflict resolution. Jordana will bring a final draft to the next meeting. Jordana went on to say they received a draft change application from Aspect Consulting which had been forwarded to the seller. The Barkley Irrigation Company application was graded, and the district was told they will find out the final decision in the coming weeks. Craig added that the district might want to consider talking to legislators to seek a lift of the two-million-dollar cap because under the current rules the Commission would not fund the project. Craig will work with Jordana to create a list of legislators to talk with and find out more information to bring to the board at the next meeting.

CCC Pipeline Project Update – Jordana reported that she had been on vacation for the past two weeks, so she did not have many updates on the project. Jordana got estimates on personal services contracts for land surveys and title transfers, and when she presented them to Jon Culp, he responded that she would need to work up a budget for the project. Jordana added that she asked Mike Baden about the request for proposals and is waiting to hear back. Jordana went on to say that the proposed irrigation efficiencies programmatic guidelines would put a cap of \$100,000.00 per project and landowner with a total of four projects allowed in a biennium. Jordana added that she currently has thirteen cooperators who want to do irrigation efficiencies projects and it would be a major hit if the guidelines were approved.

Rates and Charges Update – Craig reported that he submitted the paperwork to Laney. While submitting the paperwork he spoke with Laney about the advertising rules from the RCW. Craig told Laney that the district would help with the advertising rules and deadlines.

New Business:

Prescribed Burn Association – Craig reported that prescribed fire has been a tool used to change the ecological landscape longer than written history. Washington State recently updated statutes that authorize the development of prescribed burn associations. Craig noted that while the associations are in their infancy in Washington, other states have had them for many years. Craig added that typically associations were comprised of neighboring landowners who wish to work together to bring prescribed burns back to their landscape who then work with fire professionals to find available resource designs and permits to have a specific area treated. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources has a request for proposals to help fund the development of prescribed burn associations which gives an opportunity to fund the development of an association in Okanogan County. Craig went on to say that currently staff are not able to devote time to developing the program, and to move the program forward it will need individuals to volunteer until funding is acquired. Dale Swedberg commented that while he had not dug into the details that DNR released about the planning and implementation of prescribed burn associations, he thought it was a great program. Dale thinks each district should step up and embrace the idea of prescribed burn associations. Dale wished he had more time to spend with the district to help develop the prescribed burn association but did say he would help when he could. Craig stated that he would like to see the district have an association, but at this time all district staff are running and full capacity. Dylan and Eli's workload has them at maximum capacity, especially with the Community Wildfire Resiliency grant application they are writing. Craig added that he realized that if the district didn't apply for the funding from DNR now, they

might miss out, in which Dale replied he thinks there will be more opportunities in the future. Steve asked if the district should consider hiring someone to work on developing the prescribed burn association, in which Eli replied that his degree and expertise is actually in prescribed fire so he would like to take that position and have the district hire someone to take his current job. Jerry asked if anyone had an idea of what the vision would be for the prescribed fire association, would it be one association county wide or would it be divided by each community creating small clusters. Craig responded that he has heard of communities doing it both ways, but the small community clusters would probably do better. Craig added that the small community areas could create their own borders. Lorah commented that there is a need to explore the timeline associated with the request for the proposal, define the opportunity at hand, and find the capacity to hire a new staff member. In total, the district recognizes the importance of the prescribed burn association and will support and encourage the development of the association and assist in the available capacity they can. This topic will be revisited at the next board meeting.

NFWF Cooperator Agreement Drone Flights – Jordana reported that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Conservation Partners Program to Restore Instream Flows grant aims to improve irrigation efficiencies in six of the impacted tributaries in Okanogan County that support salmon habitat and have been identified as “flow-limited”. The program aims to highlight how current technology can assist landowners and land managers in identifying inefficiencies in irrigation systems and application methods using drones. The drone survey will project a high resolution geo-referenced orthomosaic of a field under active irrigation, a calibrated thermal image that highlights irrigation efficiencies, and a NDVI that quantifies the health of the crop. Jordana added that a cooperator agreement has been developed to enroll landowners in the project. The agreement explains the services that will be provided and grants staff and the contractor access to the sites and gives permission to inspect irrigation equipment and power records. Jordana went on to say that this service is free to the cooperator. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the agreement and authorize Craig Nelson to sign the agreements. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Edd abstained from the vote.

Lorah Super adjourned the meeting at 7:58 PM.

Summary of Motions

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the agenda as amended. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the July 6, 2023, board meeting minutes as presented. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the July 18, 2023, special board meeting minutes as presented. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve Treasurer's Report #843 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Tonasket School District interlocal agreement. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

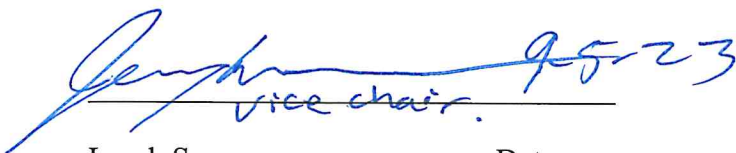
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Steve Colvin moved to approve the office lease amendment and authorized Craig Nelson to sign the second lease amendment for the office space. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

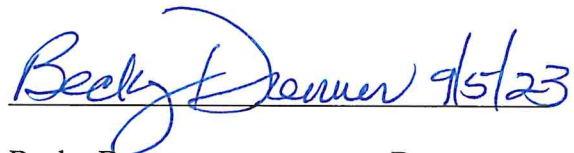
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Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the agreement and authorize Craig Nelson to sign the agreements. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Edd abstained from the vote.


vice chair. 9-5-23

Lorah Super
Chair

Date


9/5/23

Becky Drenner
Finance Director

Date