



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: October 5, 2021; Board of Supervisors Meeting
LOCATION: Okanogan Conservation District Office, Okanogan, WA and
Remotely via Microsoft Teams
FROM: Jess McDaniel, Administrative Assistant

PRESENT:

Ivan Oberg, District Chair – Present
Jerry Asmussen – Phone
Albert Roberts, District Auditor – Present
Gerri Oberg, Member – Present
Bob Clark, Associate supervisor – Phone
Craig Nelson, Executive Director – Present
Becky Drenner, Finance Director – Present

Amy Martin, Conservation Director – Phone
Jess McDaniel, Administrative Assistant – Phone
Mindy Untalan, Conservation Planner – Phone
Kim Kogler, Education Specialist – Phone
Ricardo Angel, Natural Resource Technician – Phone
Sarah Troutman, NRCS – Phone

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

Agenda Approval: Albert Roberts moved to approve the agenda as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Albert Roberts moved to approve the September 2, 2021, board meeting minutes as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #821, which covers the checking account activity from September 3, 2021, to October 5, 2021, inclusive was presented for the Board's approval, the following checks/payroll direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:
Checks – numbers 11822 – 11830 totaling 53,088.17. Check number 11806 was voided.
Two payroll direct withdrawals – numbers ACH4089 – ACH4108 totaling \$27,984.25.
Electronic payments – numbers EFT2921 – EFT2933 totaling \$24,048.19.
Deposits totaling \$75,673.81 were made, including a transfer from vehicle savings into checking in the amount of \$31,756.00 for purchase of the Subaru Forester.

Becky added that Treasurer's Report #820 was amended and presented for approval at the present board meeting. Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer's Report #820 as amended and #821 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Albert Roberts – Albert reported he is done haying, adding that the cows are hanging out by the fence line wanting back in but there is still forage available, so they are fine. He concluded by reporting that one spring has come back to life on his property, so he is happy about that.

Ivan Oberg – Ivan did not give a report.

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry reported it is looking good out, having had a few raindrops. He apologized for missing last month's meeting but informed that he has been out on the ground looking at fire and drought damage, which is common for everyone. Otherwise, he added that his fences are all repaired from the fires and now he just needs to feed the cows until spring.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

No Associate Supervisor Reports.

Staff Report:

Craig informed that the District is going to temporarily amend office hours to Monday through Thursday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. He reported there have not been as many staff members in the office due to field work, COVID-19 cautions and concerns, and staff who work four, 10-hour days. He added that there will be staff members working Fridays, but the office will not have advertised hours.

Craig went on to say that he has been working on an interlocal agreement to reimburse Ferry County Conservation District for one of their staff members to assist with the Gardinier's NRI project implementing an irrigation line. The Gardinier's property was impacted by the flood in 2017, when they lost a bridge and the main line to their irrigation system. The District is assisting by helping replace the main irrigation line.

Craig also wanted to say kudos to Amy, who has been diligently reminding him to pursue obtaining funds from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources to help offset the cost of CRMs. She started the conversation by talking with Fish and Wildlife and staff will hopefully see a contract from them for \$10,000 for CRMs. The hope is that DNR can match or exceed that because there are more DNR lands than Fish and Wildlife. Between that and Commission funding the District should be able to fund the CRMs program better than ever before.

Mindy reported that she has been working on an Air Quality Ecology grant to fund chipping and yard waste disposal at the Okanogan County landfill and the Methow transfer station. She added that Rena has been helping with that grant application.

Becky reported that she has begun providing documentation for the accountability audit and Steven Gadd, the auditor, is ready to hold an entrance interview soon. She added that there can be up to two supervisors at the interview and that Steven will send out a remote meeting invite. Albert informed that he would be available for the meeting. Ivan added that he might be available as well but will have to see when the meeting gets scheduled.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans

Professional Engineering Services Interdistrict Agreement – Craig informed that the District has participated in a cluster agreement with Kittitas County, Cascadia, South Douglas, and Foster Creek CDs for nearly 20 years. The agreement provides the District an allotted amount of time from a licensed professional engineer for project design and implementation. Jerry Asmussen moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the Interdistrict Agreement for Professional Engineering Services. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

UCSRB Contract: Storm Drains and Outreach – Kim informed that this project would allow District staff to coordinate four storm drain marking events where at least 20 community members will participate. District staff will also create articles for each event and submit them to local newspapers for publishing and include a final summarizing article in the Okanogan CD's quarterly newsletter. Staff will also attend five community events and provide information about water stewardship, salmon health, and storm drains. The Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board will provide \$12,201.00 to accomplish these projects. Project period is from September 15, 2021, through June 30, 2022. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the UCSRB contract for Storm Drains and Outreach and authorize Ivan Oberg to sign it. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Kirby Almont-Fire Recovery Cost Share – Mindy informed that the Almont project was submitted to the WSCC requesting cost share funds to replace fencing damaged by wildfires that occurred during the summer of 2021 in Okanogan County. The 3,091 feet of agriculture inclusion fence is intended to control and contain livestock to reduce wildlife and human conflicts. This is a 75:25 cost share request with the max cost share amount of \$8,685.71. Jerry asked about whether the District can assist with perimeter fences when losses are due to fire. Craig answered that, while the District generally does not assist with perimeter fencing, if it is fire or disaster caused, then it is allowable. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Almont Fire Recovery Cost Share contract and authorize Ivan Oberg or Craig Nelson to sign it when the contract is available. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Janet Abel-Fire Recovery Cost Share – Mindy informed that the Almont project was submitted to the WSCC requesting cost share funds to replace fencing damaged by wildfires that occurred during the summer of 2021 in Okanogan County. The 11,287 feet of agriculture inclusion fence is intended to control and contain livestock to reduce wildlife and human conflicts. This is a 75:25 cost share request with the maximum cost share amount of \$31,716.47. Albert Roberts moved to approve the Abel Fire Recovery Cost Share contract and authorize Ivan Oberg or Craig Nelson to sign it when the contract is available. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Cindy Lamb-Fire Recovery Cost Share – Mindy informed that the Almont project was submitted to the WSCC requesting cost share funds to replace fencing damaged by wildfires that occurred during the summer of 2021 in Okanogan County. The 8,591 feet of agriculture inclusion fence is intended to control and contain livestock to reduce wildlife and human conflicts. This is a 75:25 cost share request with the maximum cost share amount of \$29,799.55. Jerry asked what would be done with fencing that crosses roads and Mindy confirmed that either the fence does not cross the road or there are cattle guards already in place. Albert Roberts

moved to approve the Lamb Fire Recovery Cost Share contract and authorize Ivan Oberg or Craig Nelson to sign it when the contract is available. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Foster Creek Soil Health TA Subcontract –Amy informed that the Foster Creek CD staff have the availability and expertise to assist Okanogan CD staff in responding to soil health technical assistance requests related to direct seeding and no-till equipment availability. Becca Hebron of Foster Creek CD is a technician who specializes in direct seed TA. Amy informed that \$7,000.00 of VSP monies will be made available to fund the work and District staff will forward those TA requests to Foster Creek CD staff and track results in Smartsheet. Jerry added that he has had various requests for no till drill rentals, so there are more and more people in the area looking for that type of equipment. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Foster Creek Soil Health TA Subcontract and authorize Ivan Oberg to sign it. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

NRCS Report

Sarah sent a report, which was forwarded on to everyone. She was present and reported that NRCS has just wrapped up their fiscal year, adding that the Okanogan team overall had another amazing year, though it seems to get busier and busier every year. Otherwise, she informed that they are now gearing up for 2022 and EQIP, which has a deadline of Thursday, October 7, reporting that the state office made the decision to bump up the deadline so that staff can get out and do planning on those applications this fall before snow flies. Additionally, NRCS staff will be working on CSP renewals, which must have contracts written by the end of the calendar year, adding that all the applications are in Douglas County. The other big planning event on the horizon is CRPs, which are again, primarily in Douglas County. NRCS staff are expecting a very large signup this year. Sarah went on to say that Amy has kept her busy with a Joint Chiefs initiative for forestry projects in the Methow and the water smart program for Whitestone Irrigation District. While she is feeling optimistic about funding for those programs, she has not heard on either of them yet, though the announcements should be released soon.

Sarah also informed that the NRCS office is still closed due to the skyrocketing cases of COVID-19 in Okanogan County. She also reported that she is working through new federal mandates requiring staff be fully vaccinated by November 22. She added that she is not sure what that means for partners housed in the same space and that there are a lot of answers that still need be provided regarding that. There are three new employees on the team, and it is difficult to onboard with folks not in the office. The newest employee is Ryan Hoff, Range Management Specialist, who started on September 14. She added that she sent an email to Lorah and Albert when the new forester was onboarded to discuss their resource concerns and operations and it would be nice if any willing supervisors would meet with the new rangeland management specialist in the same capacity. Jerry, Albert, and Ivan all indicated they would be happy to meet with Ryan.

Partner Reports

There were no partners present.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Old Business:

Water Bank Update – Craig reported that the original language for the water bank contract stated that the Commission shall enter into agreement with Ecology to create the water bank. Craig stated that, while having some agency-to-agency weight thrown around, the way it is currently being presented just puts the Commission in the way of what the local community is trying to accomplish. Furthermore, the initiative is currently limited to only agricultural water banking, which is insufficient because there is a lot of pressure to make water available for domestic use in the county as well. Okanogan County wants the District to be the lead on the water bank and they would like to see one water bank for the entire county. Craig was petitioned to present this information to the county commissioners last Monday. The commissioners would like to have a meeting with the board supervisors to begin the discussion between the county and District to operate one water bank. Craig informed that he needs to schedule that meeting but would prefer to keep it to less than a quorum to work through the verbiage and negotiations and hammer out the shape of the agreement. Craig will be reaching out to Lorah and Albert in the next week or so to schedule a time to meet with one or more of the commissioners, though they would host the public meeting if a quorum existed.

Craig added that the second major issue is the Commission's involvement in the process. Back in July he could not get the Commission to the table to discuss the water banking project. Then, in August, he met with Ron Shulz and Jon Culp, who continued to present a scenario in which the Commission would hold the water bank and districts would do the TA and acquisition of water rights. This is not what the District or county commissioners want to see happen in Okanogan County; the goal is to manage the counties water bank locally.

Craig went on to say that he requested \$85,000.00 this fiscal year and \$40,000.00 next fiscal year; \$70,000.00 this fiscal year would be to pay for staff time, primarily Craig, and a consultant to work a water right acquisition through the process from beginning of the purchase to the deposition of the right into a locally held water bank. Craig has been in touch with a consultant who estimated that it would cost approximately \$30,000 from start to finish to ensure there were not major surprises in the process. Craig made a request to the Commission about 10 days ago for the money and has not heard anything yet. He will call them tomorrow regarding the request for funding because after the end of the week the current executive director is retiring and then there will be an interim director. Craig added that if the Commission continues to be uncooperative staff and board supervisors might need to have the discussion with the legislators and county representatives. If the Commission says no, Lorah and Craig will call Representatives Goehner and Steele to discuss the situation because they both worked very diligently to get the funds for the water bank. Albert agreed that legislators should know what is happening.

WACD Resolutions – Craig informed that he drafted three resolutions as discussed at the September board meeting. These resolutions cover ECP rule changes, NRCS cost-share for biochar, and fire preparedness funding. Craig went on to say that he also included a resolution that he received from Thurston Conservation District regarding a request to WACD to establish a

standing committee to develop sustainable funding for conservation districts. Thurston CD requested that all WACD areas consider the resolution. Craig stated that if the Board wishes, it can be brought to the floor at the NC Area meeting, approved and presented as an identical resolution from Okanogan CD and taken to the area meeting, or it can be dropped altogether. Albert Roberts moved to approve the WACD Resolutions as written. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

Rates & Charges Increase Request – Craig informed that staff is asking the Board to consider making a request to the Okanogan County Commissioners next year to increase our rates and charges funding beginning January 2, 2023. The need is based upon cost increases such as an anticipated rent hike (our lease expires in 2023), increased wages, an increase in the number of hours being charged to apply for grants, and the District's need to purchase replacement office equipment such as desks, chairs, and computers. Staff would like to explore increasing the District's rates and charges to the full amount authorized by law, which is \$5.00 per parcel and \$0.10 per acre per year for most properties. This would effectively double the District's funding from rates & charges. Craig added that if the board agrees, staff will have to organize a public hearing by the end of June 2022, after which time an official request for funding would need to be made by August 1. After the official request for funding the county commissioners would have to schedule a meeting and then take action. The county accessor would like all of that to happen by about this time next year. Craig added that a final motion to pursue this would be best approved by all five board members. Jerry Asmussen agreed that Craig and staff should start the discussion though it was tabled for now with no motion made.

Set Date for 2022 District Elections – Becky informed that it is time to begin the 2022 election process by setting a date. The proposed date is Tuesday, March 8, 2022. Due to the number of COVID-19 cases in the county, the District is planning for a drive-up election process similar to last year. It is preferred to set a date in March in the hopes that the weather will be more accommodating than January or February conditions. Steve Colvin is up for re-election and Lorah Super is up for renewal of the appointed position. Albert Roberts moved to set the date of March 8, 2022, for the 2022 District Elections. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.

Ivan Oberg adjourned the meeting at 7:08 PM.

Summary of Motions

Albert Roberts moved to approve the agenda as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to approve the September 2, 2021, board meeting minutes as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer's Report #820 as amended and #821 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the Interdistrict Agreement for Professional Engineering Services. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the UCSRB contract for Storm Drains and Outreach and authorize Ivan Oberg to sign it. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Almont Fire Recovery Cost Share contract and authorize Ivan Oberg or Craig Nelson to sign it when the contract is available. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to approve the Abel Fire Recovery Cost Share contract and authorize Ivan Oberg or Craig Nelson to sign it when the contract is available. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.


Albert Roberts moved to approve the Lamb Fire Recovery Cost Share contract and authorize Ivan Oberg or Craig Nelson to sign it when the contract is available. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Foster Creek Soil Health TA Subcontract and authorize Ivan Oberg to sign it. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to approve the WACD Resolutions as written. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to set the date of March 8, 2022, for the 2022 District Elections. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.


Ivan Oberg _____ Date
Chair


Becky Drenner _____ Date
Finance Director