



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: October 5, 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	Jordana Ellis, Irrigation Planner
Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair	Emmy Engle, Communication & Outreach Specialist
Edd Townsend, Supervisor	Dylan Streeter, Wildfire Resiliency & Recovery Planner
Phillip Dart, Supervisor	Eli Loftis, Wildfire & Community Resilience Lead
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor	Taylor George, VSP Coordinator
Craig Nelson, Executive Director	Brant Rosenthal Smith, Science Data & Mon. Coordinator
Becky Drenner, Finance Director	Celeste Accord, NRCS
Cassandra Lange-Predoehl, Admin. Assistant	

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. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes: Phillip Dart moved to approve the September 5, 2023 board meeting minutes as amended. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #845, which covers the checking account activity from September 6, 2023, to October 5, 2023, inclusive was presented for the Board's approval. The following checks/payroll/direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

Checks – number 12257 – 12285 totaling \$65,166.94.

One leave payout for former employee Justin Stanley – ACH4601 totaling \$2,125.39.

Two payroll direct withdrawals – numbers ACH4602 – ACH4625 totaling \$43,719.63.

Electronic payments – numbers EFT3282 – EFT3299 totaling \$49,163.68.

Deposits totaling \$160,743.04 were made.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve Treasurer's Report #845 as presented. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry reported that there had been lots of rain in the last three weeks that caused pastures to green up. Jerry complimented Emmy on her hard work on the fair booth and noted that he received lots of great feedback on the booth and the activities it had.

Steve Colvin – Steve was not present.

Lorah Super – Lorah reported that the Methow Valley did not get the rain the Okanogan Valley had in the past week. Lorah added that she had been to many different conferences and meetings, including the Water Law Seminar in Ellensburg that Jordana had presented at. Lorah sat in on a meeting by the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control where water levels and Okanogan and Similkameen basin water management were discussed. Lorah went on to say that the Forest Health Collaborative will be hiring a new coordinator.

Edd Townsend – Edd reported that he would have reseeding to do due to the rain. Edd added that he had starred in a feature length documentary about virtual fence. The film crew was from Oregon, and they were there for about three hours. Edd added that Conservation Northwest paid for the documentary, and they are working with other growers and producers who want to start using virtual fence. Edd ended by saying the cold weather is moving in quick and he expects snow soon.

Phillip Dart – Phillip reported that he had nothing to report.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

Randy Kelley – Randy reported that he has resumed working on the Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Bank.

Staff Reports:

Craig reported that he recently had a phone call with Chris Fisher regarding a landowner on Salmon Creek whose house is fed well water by a pipe that goes under the creek to his house. Over the last few years, the creek has been degrading causing the pipe to become exposed which will freeze in the coming winter now due to the exposure. Craig continued by saying that the riparian grant from the Conservation Commission might be able to help the landowner get the project done.

Craig went on to say that Mike Baden contacted him and asked if the district would be interested in helping eight cannabis growers in Okanogan County who had high levels of DDT in their soil. Craig learned that the Department of Ecology had approached the Conservation Commission and asked if the district would be interested in helping the landowners. Craig told Mike that he would have to do research on the remediation techniques and discuss the issue with the board. The Department of Ecology had budgeted five million dollars to address the soil issue. Remediation techniques were discussed at length and no decision was made.

Craig continued his report by discussing the WACD Area meeting that Becky, Lorah, Chevelle, Steve and himself were going to attend. Following that meeting there is a WACD Annual Conference and Business Meeting that takes place in Wenatchee in the later part of November.

Craig added that at the next board meeting he would need approval to register board members and staff who wish to go.

Becky reported that she began to work on the 2024 budget. Becky will present the draft budget at the next board meeting and bring the final budget to the December board meeting.

Brant introduced himself to the board.

Cassandra thanked Dylan for all his hard work with the office move. Cassandra added that she is working on the resolution for board meeting dates and times and asked if anyone would like to change the date and time of the board meeting, in which everyone responded that the first Thursday of every month at 6:00 PM is working great and they would like to stick with that.

Eli reported that the Conservation Commission had awarded the district with \$1.6 million dollars for the Forest Health grant.

Emmy reported that the fall newsletter would be sent out soon and that it will be the last newsletter until March. Emmy added that she is starting to work on the 2024 calendar and will be making a post on social media asking for pictures for the calendar.

Jordana reported that the Irrigation Efficiencies programmatic guidelines were approved and the \$100,000.00 cap on projects was not approved and there is no longer a cap on the funding of projects. There is a cap on the number of cost-share contracts though, two per fiscal year for a total of four each biennium. Due to this cap, Jordana would like to develop a tool to rank projects to ensure that projects are treated fair and public funds are used in the most respectful and helpful way possible. Jordana asked the board members to help her create the project ranking tool. Craig added that you can apply for more than two cost-share contracts and if there is extra money in the program there is a possibility the project can be funded. Edd and Lorah volunteered to help create the ranking tool.

Jordana went on to say that the Department of Ecology came out with a grant for drought preparedness. The application will open in January. Jordana asked if the board wanted the district to be involved in drought preparedness and if they thought the district should apply for the grant. Jerry asked about the current staff workload, in which Jordana responded she had a couple grants closing and she would be willing to jump into this grant if the board would like her to. Lorah added that there is a strong public interest in being more prepared for drought in various ways. No decision was made.

NRCS Report

Sarah Troutman sent out a report, which was included in board packets. Celese Accord was present and reported that they are still working on getting set up after the move. Celeste thanked the district for their help during the move and added that the fair booth at the Okanogan County Fair was excellent. Celeste went on to say that there were a few interesting funding opportunities available, including a new practice to Washington State called the Combustion System Improvement.

Partner Reports

No partners were present.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans:

OCWB Change Application – Jordana reported that the Okanogan County Water Bank needs to file a change application of the water right #CS4-ADJ74VOL14-BP2@1 for the change of withdrawal and place of use. The cost of the change application was estimated to be \$1,300.00 and it would be paid for by the Water Banking Pilot Program grant. The Conservation District would act on behalf of the Okanogan County Water Bank to file the change application that would be filed with the Okanogan County Water Conservancy Board. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the filing of the change application with the Okanogan Water Conservancy Board. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

WSRRI Project Approvals – Dylan reported that the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) has \$1.5 million available for the 2023-2025 biennium for wildlife friendly fencing. Wildlife friendly fencing includes fence removal and virtual fencing projects within the shrubsteppe habitat. Dylan added that there is no cap to project funding and that projects are allowed to exceed the Conservation Commission’s policy of \$100,000.00 per landowner each fiscal year and public land lessees are eligible for 100% cost share. Edd asked how many projects had been submitted and Dylan responded with four. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve all projects that are submitted and selected for funding through the WSRRI committee and gave approval for Craig Nelson to sign cost share contracts as they come in. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Brothers Forestry Inc. Purchased Service Contract – Eli reported that the district would like to hire Brothers Forestry Inc. to chip woody debris at the Kumm Road Firewise USA community and the Newby Creek community this fall. Eli added that each community will receive up to a full eight-hour day of chipping. The expected cost is \$6,500.00 that will be paid for with the district’s Title III funds. The scheduled date for the Newby Creek community event is October 30 and the Kumm Road event is scheduled for November 3. Phillip Dart moved to approve the Brothers Forestry Inc. purchased services contract and authorize Craig Nelson to sign the agreement. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Water Bank Update – Craig reported that the appraisal was back for the first water right. The Barkley Irrigation Company water right application was approved by the Department of Ecology and the next step is to negotiate the grant contract. Craig spoke with Melisa from the Department of Ecology about Barkley’s water right regarding the process of taking the water out of the trust it is in to begin purchasing the water right. Jordana will be setting up a table at the Water Economics Seminar. Craig added that he had a conversation with the Chelan County Natural Resources Department Director, Mike Kaputa, who runs their water bank and would like to go to the legislature to get the two-million-dollar lifetime cap removed from any entity to acquire more water rights for the water bank.

CCC Pipeline Project Update – Jordana reported that Chewuch Canal Company project was approved by the Washington State Conservation Commission with a technical assistance budget of \$262,000.00. Jordana commented that the CCC budget was twice the amount of the current Irrigation Efficiency grant budget. Jordana went on to say that she is talking with local title companies to get title searches going and meeting with engineers in the coming week to discuss the next steps.

Rates and Charges Update – Craig reported that the hearing was successful, and the increase was approved. Becky thanked everyone for their hard work.

Prescribed Burn Association – Craig reported that he did not have an update. Eli reported that he talked with Washington Department of Natural Resources staff during a field tour and found that the original funding pool that closed on August 18 may become available again in the coming spring.

WACD Resolutions – Craig drafted three WACD resolutions that he presented to the board. The first resolution was to support asking NRCS leadership to support field office staff and have them attend area meetings if it fits in their schedules to improve communication and collaborations. The second resolution Craig brought forth was to ask WACD to support supplemental budget requests for Conservation Technical Assistance in the amount of \$10 million increase. Along with that, the resolution asks for an additional appropriation of Voluntary Stewardship Program implementation funds as the first \$3 million dollars were appropriated in the first round in less than three months. The final resolution Craig brought forth was one that asked the Conservation Commission to do a top-down review and overhaul of the Voluntary Stewardship Program grant rules and implement new management and training processes going forward. Edd Townsend moved to approve the WACD resolutions as written and send them on to the WACD Area meeting. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

Wildlife Training Travel Authorization – Craig reported that there is a Community Wildfire Protection Planning training and a Wildland Fire Management Strategy workshop in Sante Fe, New Mexico from November 4-10, 2023. Craig selected Eli and Emmy to attend the training and workshop. Craig added that the training workshop will be an excellent primer for staff to attend before they start working on the development of a new Okanogan County Community Wildfire Protection Planning process. Phillip Dart moved to authorize registration, airfare, ground transportation, lodging, per diem, and other eligible incidental expenses for two employees to attend the training and workshop in Sante Fe, New Mexico. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session – Lorah Super declared the board would go into executive session at 8:11 PM for 15 minutes to discuss the first water right appraisal. At 8:26 PM the board returned to public session. No motion was made.

Lorah Super adjourned the meeting at 8:28 PM.

Summary of Motions

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the agenda as amended. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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Jerry Asmussen moved to approve Treasurer's Report #845 as presented. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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Phillip Dart moved to approve the Brothers Forestry Inc. purchased services contract and authorize Craig Nelson to sign the agreement. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Edd Townsend moved to approve the WACD resolutions as written and send them on to the WACD Area meeting. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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 11/2/23

Lorah Super
Chair

Date

 11/2/23

Becky Drenner
Finance Director

Date