



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: July 6, 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	Dylan Streeter, Wildfire Resiliency & Recovery Planner
Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair	Chevelle Yeckel, Water Quality & Riparian Planner
Steve Colvin, Auditor	Aaron Wold, Range Planner
Edd Townsend, Member	Eli Loftis, Wildfire Resiliency & Air Quality Lead
Craig Nelson, Executive Director	Emmy Engle, Communication & Outreach Specialist
Becky Drenner, Finance Director	Mike Baden, WSCC
Kim Kogler, Grants & Contracts Director	Celeste Accord, NRCS
Cassandra Lange-Predoehl, Admin. Assistant	Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor
Jordana Ellis, Irrigation Planner	Phillip Dart, Public
Justin Stanley, VSP Coordinator	

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 June 1, 2023, board meeting minutes as presented. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #842, which covers the checking account activity from June 2, 2023 to July 6, 2023, inclusive was presented for the Board's approval. The following checks/payroll/direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

Checks – number 12185 – 12221 totaling \$333,327.19.

Three payroll direct withdrawals – numbers ACH4520 – ACH4543 totaling \$65,379.02.

Electronic payments – numbers EFT3236 – EFT3255 totaling \$42,421.78.

Deposits totaling \$321,266.61 were made, including a transfer of \$200,000.00 from Savings to Checking to cover cost share payments.

Becky commented that June was the last month of the fiscal year and there were over \$300,000.00 of cost share payments as projects were complete. Becky noted that \$82,000.00 of cost share payment checks will be held until the district is reimbursed by the Conservation Commission to ensure that there will be no negative Checking bank balance and the checks will be sent out as soon as the reimbursements are received.

Steve Colvin moved to approve Treasurer's Report #842 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Rates and Charges Study Presentation – FCS:

John Ghilarducci and Brooke Tacia of the FCS Group were present and shared a rates and charges study presentation. John noted that the district last completed a study in 2016. Brooke discussed the overview of the study and noted that there is an annual maximum charge of \$5.00 per parcel and \$0.10 per acre based on Washington State statute. Craig noted that even if the commissioners voted in favor of the increase, the district still might need a rolling line of credit, or something similar. This would cover future cost share payments and operating expenses and the reimbursement wait for grant expenses and other unpredictable expenses that could come up.

Supervisor Reports:

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry reported that he attended the Wolf Advisory Group meeting. He discovered there would be more funding involved in the year that could be used on new and existing contracts. Jerry added that they discussed the lack of coverage in north Okanogan County as there is more wolf activity occurring now. Jerry went on to say one of his neighbors' irrigation well had already gone dry, and there is an abundance of grasshoppers this year. Jerry noted that it has been a great year for grass that is good for the animals, but also creates fuel load for fires.

Steve Colvin – Steve reported that he was sorry that he missed last month's board meeting. Steve attended a meeting in Canada and learned that some vineyard farms had total losses as the past winter was tough on grapes. Steve went on to say that with the loss of some of his crops he had a quick and easy harvest, but it was not bountiful. Steve added that WSU AgWeatherNet will install the new weather station on his place in two weeks.

Lorah Super – Lorah reported that she thought it was interesting that it is July and we are still noticing impacts from the harsh winter. Lorah's concord grapes did fine, but she lost most of the other grape varieties and granny smith apples. Lorah added that she will be attending an Indigenous Engagement training in Canada later in the year.

Edd Townsend – Edd reported that he attended the preseason incident command meeting in Nespelem and there was a great national weather service presentation that showed that El Nina conditions are present, and the effect is coming on quicker than anticipated. Edd went on to say that the Department of Natural Resources has expanded their footprint county wide and will work close with Mount Tolman. Edd added that the fires that occur now are so much more intense than they were fifteen years ago.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

Randy Kelley – Randy reported that he has been inventorying for NRCS. Randy added that he will be heading out on a vacation to Alaska soon.

Staff Reports:

Craig reported that he had a brief conversation with Sam Isreal to discuss prescribed burns as Sam would like to get a prescribed burn association started in the county. Crag was invited to be the keynote speaker at the After the Flames Conference that is hosted by Coalitions and Collaboratives, Inc. Craig noted that the conference is where state and federal employees meet and discuss how to deal with post fire recovery. Craig went on to say that the Washington State Conservation Commission was looking for volunteers to help make program rules for the riparian grant program and he volunteered to help. Craig added that staff are working diligently on completing grant addendums with the new fiscal year and biennium.

Craig gave an update on the status of the office space move. He got a response from the building manager about the remodel and the proposed deal for the wall changes, new carpet, and paint was \$97,000.00 that the building manager would want amortized over three years. This would cause the office rent to double. The district will still go forward with the move but will not have a remodel done.

Becky reported that staff have been working hard on closing out grants.

Emmy reported that 877 people participated in eighteen community chipping events held from January 22, 2023 until June 30, 2023. Emmy added that she put together a Before the Movie advertisement that is now playing before every movie, every day at the Omak Theaters.

NRCS Report

Celeste Accord was present and reported that there is over forty thousand acres of land to be reviewed for classic CRP, with most of it being in Douglas County.

Partner Reports

Mike Baden reported that the summer newsletter looked amazing. Mike added that sadly Ron Shultz passed away over the weekend. Mike went on to say that with the new biennium budgets, the one area that fell short on funding was the conservation technical assistance so implementation grants were not increased as much as expected. Mike stated that there will be a supplemental request submitted in September for more funding. Mike also addressed the election process and discussed that in the future the election might be put on the general election ballot, which increases the cost of the election significantly but here could be a possibility that the Conservation Commission would help with that cost.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans

Professional Engineering Services Interdistrict Agreement – Craig reported that the district has participated in a cluster agreement with Kittitas County, Cascadia, South Douglas, and Foster Creek CDs for over twenty years. With the agreement the district is allotted a specific amount of time from a licensed professional engineer or funding to hire a licensed professional engineer for project design and implementation. Steve Colvin moved to authorize Lorah Super to sign the interlocal agreement, appoint Craig Nelson as the primary representative to the NCW

Cluster Engineer Board, and allow Craig to designate an alternate as needed. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Okanogan Fairgrounds Facility Use Contract – Emmy reported that the proposed date and place for the next Conservation Celebration is May 15, 2024, at the Okanogan County Fairgrounds. The total for the facility use contract is \$375.00, which includes the use of the Agriplex, annex, kitchen, tablecloths, and a refundable \$250.00 cleaning deposit. Emmy added that the Agriplex is booking up fast and that is why she wants to get the facility use contract signed. Emmy went on to say that more details regarding the event will be discussed later. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the date and place for the 2024 Conservation Celebration and authorize Craig Nelson to sign the facility use contract. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

NFWF Drone Contractor – Drone Survey – 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 being “flow-limited.” The program goal is to highlight how current technology can assist landowners and land managers in identifying inefficiencies in irrigation systems and application methods through the utilization of drones. Jordana sent a request for proposal “RFP” to six drone contractors. Proposals were due June 30. Jordana planned to score the proposals and present the most qualified contractor to the board for approval; however, only one proposal was returned, which was from Kelsey Mach at Aspect Consulting. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the draft Aspect Consulting contract and authorized Craig Nelson to sign the contract once finalized. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Edd Townsend abstained from the vote.

Conservation Commission Master Contract – Craig reported that the Washington State Conservation Commission requires a new master contract each biennium. The master contract establishes the rules and requirements for most elements of grant funding with the Conservation Commission. The master contract allows the Conservation Commission to submit individual grant addendums for specific fund sources without having to repeat many grant rules and policies. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Conservation Commission Master Contract and authorize the Chair and Vice-Chair to sign the contract. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Voluntary Stewardship Program ILA – Justin reported that the County Commissioners still have to approve their contract from the Conservation Commission for \$240,000.00. Staff are working with county staff on minor date and budget changes to the Interlocal Agreement that the district previously used for this program. Once the Commissioners sign their agreement, district staff hope to sign the interlocal agreement immediately so staff can begin work on the program. Steve Colvin moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the Voluntary Stewardship Program interlocal agreement when it is available. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program Cost Share -Todd Quinn – Jordana reported that the district would like to utilize the Washington State Conservation Commission’s Irrigation

Efficiencies Grant Program (IEGP) to provide a cost share contract for Todd Quinn, the owner of Quiet Valley Ranch. The current gravity fed irrigation system pulls water from Spray Springs and an irrigation well to irrigate 41 acres of alfalfa hay. The fires in 2014 and 2015 impacted the property and the ability to irrigate. The ranch is irrigated by an aging handline system and if converted from handline to pivot there would be an estimated 20% or greater savings in water over the project area. This would greatly improve the efficiency of irrigation application. The cost of the project is \$154,336.14. The IEGP will provide funding for \$123,000.00 under the current guidelines and policy. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Quinn cost share contract and authorize Craig Nelson to sign the contract after the Washington State Conservation Commission approves an exemption from waiting for new policy to be instated. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program Cost Share - Mike Devany – Jordana reported that the district would like to utilize the Washington State Conservation Commission’s Irrigation Efficiency Grant Program (IEGP) to provide a cost share contract for Mike Devany, the owner of Lightning River Ranch. The ranches’ current system of k-pod sprinklers is ineffective and difficult to manage, often resulting in inefficient application and coverage of irrigation water. The k-pods need to be moved to ensure proper application and due to the inability of the landowner to be present at the needed times, there is an inadequate and uneven application of irrigation water. The high population of voles, moles, field mice, and marmots in the area have had a detrimental impact on the equipment causing leaks and malfunctions. The proposed system to be installed is a solid set system that will not require sprinklers to be moved, ensuring even and adequate coverage of the irrigated acreage. The addition of timers will ensure the efficient application of water. The cost of the project will be \$78,029.49. The IEGP will provide funding for \$55,700.00 under the current guidelines and policy. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Devany cost share contract and authorize Craig Nelson to sign the contract after the Washington State Conservation Commission approves an exemption from waiting for new policy to be instated. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Water Bank Update – Jordana reported that the Barkley application comment period closed with one comment. The application was sent off to be scored earlier in the day. Aspect Consulting and West Water Research contracts have been signed. Aspect Consulting is being used for the formation and administration of the water bank grant while West Water Research is being used for the appraisal of the water right. Chris Branch is the new commissioner representative for the water bank. Jordana handed out a draft Interlocal Agreement for the board supervisors to review and provide feedback. Jordana added that there will be a meeting with Chris Branch on the coming Monday to create a more “solid” draft. Craig added that the agreement on page 2, parts 1-4, are the most important sections as they set the foundation on how the water bank will operate. Craig added that from his understanding, the district will run the water bank daily, and if the county needs the water bank for commercial or industrial use, they will call the district to purchase water if applicable.

CCC Pipeline Project Update – Jordana met with engineers to get quotes for surveying and title reports to insure and define easements and borders that are applicable to the project area. Jordana added that they need a title report for all easements. Jordana received quotes from

different title companies and found that a survey for both the engineering and boundaries was around \$45,000.00.

Rates and Charges Update – Craig reminded the board about the Rates and Charges Public Hearing scheduled for July 18. Craig added that the board needs to set a special board meeting between 2:00 PM on July 18 and July 31. Steve Colvin moved to set a special board meeting for 2:00 PM following the public hearing on July 18. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

COLA Wage Changes – Craig reported that the Washington State Office of Financial Management released a draft Cost of Living wage adjustment proposed to go into effect on July 1. This is the wage structure the district uses for staff wages. Craig added that to keep wages in-line with inflation without having a major jump at one time in the future he felt this is a reasonable increase. Steve Colvin moved to approve the cost-of-living increase as represented in the Washington State General Services salary schedule for non-represented employees dated and effective July 1, 2023. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

2023 Washington Conservation Society MOU and Membership Application - Craig reported that the Washington Conservation Society (WCS) provides a vital link for conservation districts and conservation education. The WCS is a 501c(3) that can be a fiscal manager for grants if the district needed one with very little overhead. They are responsible for offering greater communication between conservation districts through a hosted discussion board as well as providing remembrance of passed Washington conservation district family members through their “Leaving a Legacy” program. Steve Colvin moved to authorize Lorah Super to sign the OCD/WCS MOU and approve the WCS application for 2023-2024. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Vacant Supervisor Position and Resolution 2023-02 – Craig reported that Albert Roberts held an elected position with the Okanogan Conservation District until his untimely passing on April 9, 2023. Per Washington State statute, Washington State Conservation Commission WAC, and district policy, the remaining board members have the authority to fill his position following a few specific requirements. First, the board must declare the position vacant by resolution and advertise the resolution. Secondly, the board must designate an advertising period that must be a minimum of four (4) weeks to accept applications for the position. The advertising period cannot begin for a minimum of seven (7) calendar days following advertisement of the approved resolution. Following the required advertising period, the board may appoint any person of their choosing that meets state statutory restrictions. Craig added that he had previously misunderstood the advertising requirements for Albert’s position which is why the board must approve a new advertising period. Jerry Asmussen moved to rescind 2023-01 due to the wrong dates and approve Vacant Supervisor Position and Resolution 2023-02 with the correct dates. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Cost Share and Cooperator Labor Rates for WSCC Projects Resolution 2023-03 – Craig reported that the Conservation Commission requires each district to approve a resolution that

defines the districts cost-share limits and the labor rate match is counted from cooperators once per biennium. This resolution essentially matches previous resolutions with the only change being an increase in the cooperator match rate increasing to \$25.00 per hour, which is the maximum allowed by the Conservation Commission. It was previously \$22.00 per hour. Steve Colvin moved to approve resolution 2023-03 and authorize Lorah Super to sign the resolution. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

WACD Annual Dues – Craig reported that the Washington Association of Conservation Districts annual dues are due. Fully paid dues support the association that works for all 45 Washington conservation districts through collaboration with partners, communicating district priorities, and advocating for public policies important to voluntary conservation. Along with fully paid dues, district board members will be allowed to vote during upcoming WACD Area and Annual meetings. Jerry Asmussen moved to authorize staff to pay the WACD annual dues in full. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah Super adjourned the meeting at 8:54 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 June 1, 2023, board meeting minutes as presented. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve Treasurer's Report #842 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to authorize Lorah Super to sign the interlocal agreement, appoint Craig Nelson as the primary representative to the NCW Cluster Engineer Board, and allow Craig to designate an alternate as needed. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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Jerry Asmussen moved to authorize staff to pay the WACD annual dues in full. Edd Townsend seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.



Lorah Super
Chair

2/3/23
Date



Becky Drenner
Finance Director

2/3/23
Date