



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: April 6, 2021 Board of Supervisors Meeting
LOCATION: Teleconference – (509) 422-0855, ext. 7
FROM: Jess McDaniel, Administrative Assistant

PRESENT:

Ivan Oberg, District Chair – Present	Becky Drenner, Finance Director – Present
Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair – Phone	Amy Martin, Conservation Director – Phone
Albert Roberts, District Auditor – Present	Jess McDaniel, Administrative Assistant – Phone
Lorah Super, Member – Phone	Mindy Untalan, Conservation Planner – Phone
Steve Colvin, Member – Phone	Sarah Troutman, NRCS – Phone
Bob Clark, Associate Supervisor – Phone	Mike Baden, WSCC – Phone
Craig Nelson, Executive Director – Present	Rachel McClure, Congressman Newhouse’s Office – 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: Lorah Super moved to approve the agenda as amended. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Treasurer’s Report #815, which covers the checking account activity from March 3, 2021 to April 6, 2021 inclusive was presented for the Board’s approval. The following checks/payroll direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

Checks – numbers 11731 - 11744 totaling \$42,425.60.

Two Payroll direct withdrawals - numbers ACH3967 – ACH3986 totaling \$28,878.30.

Electronic payments - numbers EFT2840 – EFT2851 totaling \$30,217.75.

Deposits totaling \$65,285.37 were made.

Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer’s Report #815. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry reported he is still calving and that the grass is coming in. He expressed his appreciation to Craig for forwarding the snowpack report.

Lorah Super – Lorah reported that Spring has been a blur with all the snow melting and she almost feels like she might need to turn her irrigation on. Otherwise, she has gotten all her

pruning done and has started in on Firewise activities around her property. Lorah went on to say that last month she was pretty much consumed by various efforts to stop the Crown water bank from becoming a reality and was happy to report that those efforts were successful. Because so many towns, districts, and individuals spoke up the Department of Ecology responded with a letter stating they would suspend review of the Crown application and would reevaluate water banking issues in areas like ours.

Lorah concluded her report by saying that the North Central Forest Health Collaborative work has been on the backburner but that she is planning to attend a steering committee meeting that will be held tomorrow.

Albert Roberts – Albert stated that things move fast; last month was mud and now it is dust and things are burning. He informed that there was a fire along US 155 today. He went on to say that the grass is dry and has not started growing yet. Otherwise, he got his hay fields fertilized and continues to work on equipment.

Albert added that the County Planning Commission passed the comp plan but there is still some discontent, so another planning committee meeting is scheduled for tomorrow because the plan needs to go to the Commissioner.

Ivan Oberg – Ivan reported that the snow is all gone from the south slopes and there is just a little bit left on the north slopes. He was happy to add that their roads are starting to be passable but that it is going to get dry if it does not rain soon.

Steve Colvin – Steve reported that irrigation water has been turned on and that Esther Bricques Winery will be open to the public for the first time in over a year with a concert to celebrate May Day. He was happy to report that it looks like they will be up and running again and that things are moving ahead.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

Bob Clark – Bob reported it is still cold and that their house is in a low spot in Omak so he has not turned on water for irrigating yet. Craig acknowledged Bob's contributions and thanked him for assisting with the District's upcoming Post Wildfire Recovery training next week.

Staff Report:

Craig reported the Okanogan Watershed Planning Unit meeting that was scheduled for last week was canceled at the request of the Initiating Governments so they could meet and discuss steps going forward before conducting Planning Unit meetings. Another meeting for the Planning Unit will be scheduled in the future for further discussion.

Craig added that budget and policy negotiations continue in the Washington Legislature. He continues to track developments as best he can, but they are entering a phase where discussions and decisions are being made at incredible speed and often during caucus or closed committee meetings. He has taken part in lots of phone calls and meetings. During a conversation with Representative Mike Steele in early March about getting money for an agriculture water bank, Craig threw out a comment about the significant fire recovery needs facing the area. Therefore,

Representative Steele added a \$3 million line item for fire recovery. Funds for the water bank were originally in the House Capital budget but Rep. Steele inquired about moving some of the funds to the Operating budget to cover costs associated with staff time. So, the latest updates to the House and Capital budgets are looking positive.

Staff are on track to host the Post Wildfire Recovery training next week. Craig reported the class is full, with 31 registrants and a small number of folks who may drop into the training from time to time to hear what is going on. Most of the participants are conservation district employees but there are also a few folks from DNR and FEMA as well as HOA members. The District is very excited to offer this training and pass on much of what has been learned since 2014. The training will be jamming about two years of knowledge gained into 12 hours of presentation.

Craig briefly commented on the possibility of holding in person meetings again sometime soon but will keep track of recommendations from the state.

Becky reported that March 23rd the District held its election and Albert Roberts was reelected. Becky stated the election was set up as a drive-up election and it went quite smoothly with the help of Tim White and Terri Williams as polling officers. There were nine votes cast, but two were disqualified because the ballot envelopes did not have the voter's address. Becky went on to say that the annual financial report is now the focus. She said it is Spring outside and buzzing inside too and there is a lot of money coming in from various sources with more funding for Loup Loup Creek restoration, Watershed Planning, and VSP. Albert added that Becky also completed the schedule 22.

Amy reported that she and Hannah worked on a Conservation Partners grant for improved irrigation planning and technical assistance with the use of drones and mapping technology as an incentive for people to plan projects as well as potential equipment improvements.

Mindy wanted to highlight that the Wildfire Ready Campaign that staff have been working with DNR and C+C launches on the 19th. She has been training Ricardo on conducting risk assessments. The FEMA grant that she submitted a month and a half ago was received and they have requested clarification of a few points so Mindy will be resubmitting that application with the requested information.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans

EPA Spring Chipping Contract and Interlocal Agreement – Mindy informed that the EPA grant deadline has been extended through July 31, 2021 to allow the District to spend out the remaining \$5,000.00 in the contract budget to chip backyard debris. She went on to say that Shawn Davison, Public Works Director, is interested in doing another chipping event this spring for the City of Okanogan. In the past the District has paid \$100/hour for two staff, the truck, and the chipper. In addition to the City of Okanogan, Mindy has been in touch with the Wilson Ranch Association property manager as well as the Liberty Woodlands HOA president, both Firewise recognized communities. Both communities are already planning a spring Firewise work party and are interested in having a chipper come to chip the debris. Mindy informed the goal is to hire C2C to chip at both communities. Mindy added that she may contact a nearby community in the Mazama area, such as Lost River Airport, if the contractor's price comes in

low enough that additional interested parties might be served. Lorah Super moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the contract between C2C for chipping in the Mazama area communities. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Secondly, Albert Roberts moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the contract with City of Okanogan for a chipping event in the Spring. Lorah Super seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Lassila Property Loup Loup Creek Restoration-BIA Funds – Amy reminded the board that the development of restoration designs for the Lassila property on Loup Loup Creek are currently funded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Bonneville Power Administration, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. She went on to say that the District is partnering with Colville Confederated Tribes on this project and that the Bureau of Indian Affairs awarded the tribes a grant for projects that benefit steelhead habitat in Loup Loup Creek. The funds from this grant, approximately \$13,000.00 will be transferred to the district to be applied to the development of the restoration designs on the Lassila property. Amy explained that the District already has a contract with CCT for funds for this project, however those funds originated from Bonneville Power Administration and the current funds are sourced from the BIA grant. The tribes preferred to develop a new contract for the current funds, which is being reviewed by the tribal attorney currently. Lorah Super moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the MOA with Colville Confederated Tribes Fish & Wildlife to assist with completion of the restoration designs for the Lassila property on Loup Loup Creek. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VSP Project Schkrohowsky Riparian Plan – Amy informed that Cascade Fisheries has developed a riparian/wetland planting plan with Joshua Schkrohowsky to install 300 riparian plants and mulch on one acre. The site is part of a salmon recovery project on Hancock Springs. Match funds will come from a USFWS grant coordinated by Cascade Fisheries. Cultural resource review has been completed as part of a previous project. Joshua irrigates the property for hay and is working with the District on a separate irrigation efficiency project. Amy went on to explain that project funds are available in the VSP cost-share budget. The total project cost is budgeted at approximately \$9,600.00 with a reimbursement of approximately \$6,754.50. The goal is to have the work completed before June 15, 2021. Albert Roberts moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the landowner agreement for the VSP Schkrohowsky Riparian Plan after it is signed by the landowner. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Okanogan County VSP Contract Amendment – Amy explained that the original VSP grant from the Commission was distributed between the Okanogan CD and the County. The County has unspent funds that can be reallocated to the District. The amendment before the Board increases the Okanogan CD VSP contract with the County by \$17,500.00, increasing the total for the District from \$216,000.00 to \$233,500.00. The funds will be used to finish a grant for irrigation projects, participate in state and local VSP meetings, and plan additional projects. The funds will expire June 30, 2021. Jerry Asmussen moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the VSP contract amendment to increase the total VSP grant funds. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

WSDA Soil Health Initiative Addendum – Amy informed that WSDA requested conservation district assistance in collecting native and cropland soil samples for a soil health initiative project they are working on. Staff will identify sampling sites, sample with a WSDA staff member, and submit the samples to a soil testing lab. The budget will be added as an addendum to our Implementation grant. The addendum funds will be approximately \$9,000.00 and work will be completed by June 30, 2021. Albert Roberts moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the Implementation grant addendum for the soil sampling project. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Okanogan Watershed Plan Facilitation ILA – Craig reported that the interlocal agreement amendment between the District and Okanogan Board of County Commissioners approved by the Board last month was reviewed by the County attorneys and risk management and contained language that they were not comfortable with. A new contract amendment was drafted and is brought to the board for approval. Albert Roberts moved to rescind the previously signed interlocal agreement amendment for the Watershed Plan Facilitation in favor of the current amendment and authorized Ivan Oberg to sign the updated agreement. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

NRCS Report

Sarah Troutman reported that NRCS has been focused on EQIP. She reported NRCS ended up with over \$50 million in applications across the state, which is 4 times more than they usually see. She went on to say that the Okanogan team ranked 89 applications but in the last week only 13 of those have been preapproved. Sarah reiterated her team is experiencing a pretty big shortfall and they are hopeful for more funds.

Sarah added that NRCS is looking at CRP and ECP work again and hoping that the District can help them out with task orders, which she would like to see ready to go by July 1. Okanogan County has approximately 370 miles of fence to be certified. She went on to say that there is a Joint Chiefs meeting next week with WDFW and DNR, adding that it looks promising that the North Central Washington area, including Chelan County, will get a Joint Chiefs award this year.

Sarah stated that, based on the current COVID status, staff will be allowed back into the building with a 50% staffing levels. There may also be some limited allowances for customers to enter by appointment only again. Sarah went on to explain personnel changes continue with Amanda Phillips being hired as the Soil Conservationist in the Waterville office and, while the Okanogan office is down several staff members, a Forester position has been offered and tentatively accepted. However, the name of the new hire has not been released yet because it is being held up with some background checks. Finally, the Range Management Specialist position previously held by Kathy will be filled via the direct hire process.

Partner Reports

Mike Baden touched on a few things regarding the budget. As Craig mentioned the budget is heading into the process where the House and the Senate will have to reconcile budget proposals. Staff at the Commission are really watching the \$5 million proposed by the senate for technical assistance. However, budget categories in the Capital budget have some wide discrepancies between house and senate and even some of those are very off from what the Governor

proposed. CREP is a big concern, more so in other parts of the state. Commission staff are also watching NRI because both the House and the Senate are close to a \$4 million status quo, which is a \$3 million discrepancy from what the Governor proposed of \$7 million. RCP and irrigation efficiencies have discrepancies as well. But the conferences are where changes will happen with that.

Mike went on to say that the annual financial report continues through Becky and he is not worried about the District's Annual Plan of Work because the Okanogan CD has always excelled in the production of that document.

Mike thanked Amy for participating in the NRI committee and for speaking at the meeting last month, adding that there is an overview webinar about proposed NRI changes tomorrow.

Mike stated that the Commission continues to update the webpage with COVID guidance and there may be a possibility for in-person meetings beginning next month.

Mike concluded his report by thanking the District for putting together the post-wildfire training that is coming up next week. Mike added that it should be a great opportunity to bring a different type of training to the table.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Old Business:

There was no old business.

New Business:

Annual Plan of Work – Craig stated that there will be more to come, but the Annual Plan of Work is basically an accumulation of what the District has on contract or plan to have on contract.

Ivan Oberg adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Summary of Motions

Lorah Super moved to approve the agenda as amended. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah Super moved to approve the March 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 #815. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah Super moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the contract between C2C for chipping in the Mazama area communities. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the contract with City of Okanogan for a chipping event in the Spring. Lorah Super seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Lorah Super moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the MOA with Colville Confederated Tribes Fish & Wildlife to assist with completion of the restoration designs for the Lassila property on Loup Loup Creek. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the landowner agreement for the VSP Schkrohowsky Riparian Plan after it is signed by the landowner. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the VSP contract amendment to increase the total VSP grant funds. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the Implementation grant addendum for the soil sampling project. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to rescind the previously signed interlocal agreement amendment for the Watershed Plan Facilitation in favor of the current amendment and authorized Ivan Oberg to sign the updated agreement. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ivan Oberg
Chair

Date

Becky Drenner
Finance Director

Date