



# Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

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**TO:** The Record  
**SUBJECT:** March 1, 2022; 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, Vice Chair – Phone  
Albert Roberts, District Auditor – Phone  
Lorah Super, Member – Phone  
Steve Colvin, Member – Present  
Gerri Oberg, Member – Present  
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor – Present  
Craig Nelson, Executive Director – Present  
Becky Drenner, Finance Director – Present

Amy Martin, Conservation Director – Present  
Jess McDaniel, Administrative Assistant – Phone  
Aaron Wold, Range Planner Lead – Phone  
Kim Kogler, Education Specialist – Phone  
Chevelle Yeckel, Conservation Planner – Present  
Ricardo Angel, Natural Resource Technician – Phone  
Mike Baden, WSCC – Phone  
Rachel McClure, N. Dist. Rep. to Congressman Newhouse – Phone

**Meeting Call to Order:** Ivan Oberg called the meeting to order at 6:02 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. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** Lorah Super moved to approve the February 1, 2022, board meeting minutes as presented. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report #826,** which covers the checking account activity from February 2, 2022, to March 1, 2022, inclusive was presented for the Board's approval, the following checks/payroll direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

Checks – numbers 11885– 11894 totaling \$15,050.76.

Two payroll direct withdrawals, including Mindy Untalan's leave payout – numbers ACH4173 – ACH4191 totaling \$29,498.40.

Electronic payments – numbers EFT2990 – EFT3001 totaling \$22,312.00.

Deposits totaling \$77,550.47 were made.

Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer's Report #826. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Supervisor Reports:**

**Albert Roberts** – Albert reported his vacation was good and that he has been busy with trying to get everything fixed and keep the animals fed at the farm. He added it has been wetter in the last few days but other than what is on the road the moisture seems to be going into the ground.

**Ivan Oberg** – Ivan had nothing to report.

**Jerry Asmussen** – Jerry joined the meeting late so missed the opportunity to give a report.

**Lorah Super** – Lorah reported the NCWFHC steering committee is having a retreat at end of month in Wenatchee, and she will be attending. The purpose of the retreat is to acknowledge and discuss the disruptions in the collaborative's goals and to try to build leadership and cohesiveness into the group. The biochar pilot project, C6, has requested a meeting to encourage collaboration as they are planning on scaling up their project. They have met with a business planner and are likely to get a lot of funding. Andy Hover released the draft plan for the water bank and Lorah reported trying to help the Methow Watershed Council redirect to meet county-wide goals.

**Steve Colvin** – Steve reported attending a personnel meeting in the middle of February, which will be continued. Otherwise, he reported that the top two inches of ground has thawed, but everything else is still frozen. He is also looking forward to the election on March 8.

### **Associate Supervisor Reports:**

Randy reported working with staff on the WSDA grant's pollinator project. He has also been working diligently planning the Conservation Celebration.

### **Staff Report:**

Craig started his report by engaging the board regarding guidance on a confidentiality agreement being sought by the attorney who is representing the first individual interested in putting their water rights into the bank. Craig added that draft documents are not subject to public disclosure laws so until the sale is finalized it would not be open to disclosure. Lorah commented that this is likely to be a common issue with others interested in the project, adding that individual's discussions with their attorney are privileged and therefore non-disclosable. Because Mike Baden was present via teleconference, Craig asked him for his thoughts on the matter and he agreed with Craig regarding draft documents not being subject to public disclosure laws. Lorah added that she thought it should be fine to go ahead with the agreement and Craig said he would look at the document again and include Lorah in the discussion with the attorney.

Otherwise, Craig informed that RFPs were sent out and the submission period closes at noon on Friday. Craig will be in contact with Lorah for direction on criteria for who is selected as the final consulting agency for the first sale and agreement of water rights to the water bank. The goal for the RFP is to get the purchase and sale agreement complete and then apply for the funding with DOE to acquire the water right and move it into the state water trust.

Craig reminded that the local NRCS workgroup is meeting remotely March 19<sup>th</sup>, but he is willing to set up the conference room for participants interested in joining.

Craig informed there were 141 responses from the survey that Rena sent out requesting input for the district's 5-year plan. Staff are working on goals and milestones after having had a group meeting. The goal is to have a draft for public comment in April and final approval at the May meeting because it needs to be turned in to the Commission by the end of May. Finally, Craig added that the personnel meeting between he, Steve, and Lorah led to a discussion about possible restructure and evaluation of positions that may no longer be applicable to the district's goals. Last thing that ties in with 5-year plan.

Becky reported the internal audit, with review of schedule 22, needs to be scheduled with Mike Baden; Albert, Craig, Becky, and Mike all agreed that the 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1 pm would work well for all. Becky also mentioned the election and asked Lorah to be sure to submit her paperwork and let Becky know when it has been completed. The election is being held as a drive-up election again and there are already two polling officers lined up to assist with the event on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

Amy reported that, with spring coming on in a hurry she has been very busy working through the details of projects and getting a lot of contracts ironed out.

Chevelle introduced herself and informed the board that she is really excited to be a part of the district and is looking forward to working in her home valley.

Ricardo wanted to thank Randy for all his help with the pollinator project, having helped at the Horticulture meeting as well as having created kits for a local girl scout troop to build bee hotels. Ricardo and Randy purchased supplies for a total of 20 bee hotel kits and the building event with the girl scouts will be held at Randy's house on March 12<sup>th</sup> with roughly 10 girl scouts participating. Finally, Ricardo informed that he wanted to thank the district and the board for the opportunity to work for the agency, though his last day will be March 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans**

**Wilson Cattle Company Virtual Fence Project** – Aaron reported that the Wilson Cattle Company plans to install virtual fencing to implement prescribed grazing in the Tunk Valley on 15,000 acres with 250 head of cattle. Albert Roberts moved to approve the use of \$9,281.00 of NRI funding in a cost-share agreement with the Wilson Cattle Company to install a virtual fence and authorize Craig Nelson or Ivan Oberg to sign the cost share contract when it becomes available. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Gardinier Irrigation Pumping Station** – Ricardo informed that the Gardinier irrigation pumping station labor cost increased significantly since the project was initially planned. The estimated total project cost was \$31,282.92 with an approved 75% cost share of \$23,462.19. The updated labor estimate from the contractor who will be installing the station and laying the pipeline increased to \$27,100.00, increasing the total project cost from \$31,282.92 to \$53,203.87. This change adds an additional \$16,440.71 of cost share the cooperator should be eligible to receive. Jerry asked if the quote was still good because Midway took on new ownership today. Ricardo was not aware of the recent ownership change and will follow up with them, though

Albert commented that the quote says it is good for 30 days. Craig confirmed we may not be able to come up with the funding for this project but want the option to make use of it if the funding comes in for it. Albert asked if another contractor could be used, and Ricardo commented that before the estimate there was no word from other contractors. Mike asked if there was potential VSP nexus with this, which Craig confirmed would not apply. Jerry Asmussen moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign an amended cost share agreement reflecting these additional costs provided staff can secure the additional funding necessary. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Washington Shrub Steppe Restoration Initiative Funding** – Aaron informed that funds have been allocated for fire recovery projects within the Cold Springs fire footprint. The funding includes monies for wildlife friendly fencing, virtual fencing, deferred grazing/hay reimbursement, and restoration plantings. In addition to the projects funding there is \$13,000 being provided to the district for technical assistance for fencing and restoration projects as well as \$5,000 for technical assistance for deferred grazing/hay reimbursement projects. Albert asked if there was any landowner interest currently and Aaron confirmed there are 3 interested at this time. Aaron clarified that this funding is only for staff TA to get the word out and help landowners through the process of deferred grazing and hay reimbursement. Lorah Super moved to authorize the use of \$18,000 of WSRI funding for technical assistance to implement fire recovery projects within the Cold Springs fire footprint. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Additional NRI Funding** – Aaron informed the WSCC is offering \$21,000 in additional NRI funding for use in the current biennium (ending 6/2023). The district would like to use the additional funds for technical assistance to implement approved projects and for the Wilson's Cattle company cost-share project. This will increase the original TA amount from \$5,604.79 to \$17,323.79 (17% of awarded funds). The TA would be used to implement \$82,342.21 worth of NRI projects in this biennium. Jerry Asmussen moved to authorize the use of the additional \$21,000 in funding for technical assistance with NRI projects as well as increase the Wilson Cattle Company project cost-share, authorizing Craig Nelson to sign the agreements when they are available. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Resilient Methow Chipping Subcontract** – Amy informed this subcontract is for Resilient Methow staff to plan and implement a chipping event in Twisp and yard waste cleanup events at the Methow transfer station. FAMV was originally going to coordinate these events but district staff are now partnering with Resilient Methow, who has been in touch with FAMV to learn about these events went in the past. District staff will assist with events and participant sign-up and contract with Okanogan County Public Works Solid Waste Division to reimburse for yard waste from the transfer station. Methow Valley Citizens Council is the fiscal sponsor for the events and because Lorah Super is an employee of the MVCC she reiterated that this project is not under her purview. Albert Roberts moved to approve the subcontract with Resilient Methow and authorize Craig Nelson to sign in when it is available. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously with Lorah Super abstaining.

**Ecology Agreement WQC-2022-OkanCD-00064 (Palmer Lake)** – Amy informed the district received funding from the Department of Ecology for a 2021 grant application titled After the

Burn: Protecting Surface Water from Post-Fire. The funding includes TA for water quality concerns near burned areas as well as cost-share monies to develop riparian and surface water protection projects. This is a 3-year project and match will come from partners as well as staff wages when used on other applicable projects. Jerry asked if this project was just for Palmer Lake or if it would extend to Wannacut Lake. Amy said the language allows for projects anywhere that have burned or have the potential to burn near both Wannacut and Palmer Lakes and likely Bonaparte Creek. Steve Colvin moved to approve the Palmer Lake Ecology agreement WQC-2022-OkanCD-00064. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Washington Shrub-Steppe Restoration Initiative Projects** – Aaron informed that project applications for the WSRI solicitation will be evaluated by a committee for the benefit of species of greatest conservation need and other wildlife in the context of important spatial data sets including breeding habitats, habitat concentration areas, along with other metrics. Projects within the Pearl Hill, Whitney, and Cold Springs fire footprints will be reviewed for resources and services, but special consideration will be given to those within species of greatest conservation concern areas. Staff are seeking approval to proceed with all accepted applications. Craig added he would like authorization to sign cost share contracts as they come in to get them in the hopper, so staff do not miss the opportunity to get beneficial projects funded. because the blanket approval will allow staff to get its projects in in the timeliest manner. Lorah Super moved to give blanket approval for Craig Nelson to sign contracts for approved WSRI projects. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

### **NRCS Report**

Sarah Troutman sent her report via email, which was forwarded.

### **Partner Reports**

Mike reported the legislature is nearing the end of its session so the supplemental budget from house and senate have been released. There is a fair number of items between those budgets that would come to the commission and then to districts, with sizeable amounts for funding. Some of these projects include sustainable farms and fields, with some money for engineering as well, along with a bill that is being considered for a salmon regulatory approach towards riparian management, which didn't make it out of committee, however because of that there is quite a bit of funding for voluntary restoration work. Mike added that the capital budget is a bit smaller, but there is funding for farmland protection and some additional money in the senate proposal for VSP funding. Mike went on to inform that neither of the bills that were introduced regarding conservation elections moved out of session. However, this is going to be something important for districts to keep an eye on because it is anticipated to come back around in the future.

Mike concluded his report by informing that conservation accountability evaluations, looking at where districts stand legally will be reporting beginning in May with final reports in July, as usual. Also, Chris Petit started today. He will be in state by March 15<sup>th</sup> and hopefully be out to meet with districts in person.

Rachel reported that House Representatives unanimously passed Resolution 641, introduced by Congressman Newhouse to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NACD.

**Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**Old Business:**

**Conservation Celebration 2022** – Randy reported the Conservation Celebration’s proposed date is Wednesday evening, May 11, 2022, from 5:00 PM to approximately 8:00 PM. The proposed location is the Okanogan County Fairgrounds, Berg Pavilion. The proposed caterer is Red Rooster. Tickets are priced at \$25/person. Hillary Franz has agreed to be the keynote speaker for the event. He will iron out menu to make sure what is provided. Staff will be setting up an informational/outreach booth to allow people to browse through district programs and projects. Craig added that if anyone has any names to add to the invite list to please email them to Jess. Lorah Super thanked Randy for all his time and effort with the leg work of this year’s Conservation Celebration. Lorah Super moved to approve the preliminary agenda, location, caterer, ticket price, and guest speaker as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**New Business:**

**Conservation Planner – VSP Coordinator** – Craig informed that with Amy’s departure the Voluntary Stewardship Program will need a dedicated employee to coordinate and maintain the program requirements, ensuring the district continues to have positive results. To keep the benchmarks and project implementation will be the responsibility of that new position. Albert Roberts moved to approve the creation of the VSP Coordinator Conservation Planner position and authorize Craig Nelson to hire a new employee to fill it. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**New Resource Technician/Planner Position** – Craig informed the district has a tremendous workload and pending grants are creating a backlog of projects. This, combined with several new staff, makes it necessary to create another position to assist with workload. Amy and Craig have been discussing the need for a planner and/or a technician to help with risk assessment projects, chipping events, and several other projects. Steve Colvin moved to authorize Craig and Amy to create a new technical position, in either the technician or planner series and immediately begin recruitment. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Aaron Wold Wage Adjustment** – Craig informed Aaron’s wage should be adjusted to reflect the responsibilities he has taken on and for his excellence performance. Craig commented that increasing his wage by one step will put his wage slightly above that of a new hire, which is appropriate. Lorah Super moved to approve an increase in Aaron Wold’s wage to salary range 49, step E, or \$24.63 per hour. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Open Public Meetings Act Training** – Craig informed OPMA training is required by law for all voting supervisors and key staff who are responsible for board and public related meetings. Training will consist of a meeting where a video, developed by the Washington State Attorney General’s Office will be watched. Anyone not able to attend the training meeting will be

required to watch the video on their own and self-certify that they have done so by the end of March 2022. Jerry completed the training a month ago and will make sure he turns in his training certification.

**Public Records Training** – Craig informed PRA training is required by law for all voting supervisors and key staff that are responsible for public records management. Training will consist of a meeting where a video, developed by the Washington State Attorney General’s Office will be watched. Anyone not able to attend the training meeting will be required to watch the video on their own and self-certify that they have done so by the end of March 2022.

Ivan Oberg adjourned the meeting at 8:46 PM.

### Summary of Motions

Lorah Super moved to approve the agenda as amended. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah Super moved to approve the February 1, 2022, board meeting minutes as presented. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer’s Report #826. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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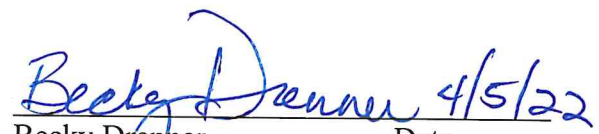
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Ivan Oberg  
Chair

Date

  
Becky Drenner  
Finance Director

Date