



# Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

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**TO:** The Record  
**SUBJECT:** May 4, 2021 Board of Supervisors Meeting  
**LOCATION:** Teleconference – (509) 422-0855, ext. 7  
**FROM:** Jess McDaniel, Administrative Assistant

**PRESENT:**

Ivan Oberg, District Chair – Present	Craig Nelson, Executive Director – Present
Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair – Phone	Becky Drenner, Finance Director – Present
Albert Roberts, District Auditor – Present	Jess McDaniel, Administrative Assistant – Phone
Steve Colvin, Member – Phone	Ricardo Angel, Natural Resource Technician – Phone
Gerri Oberg, Member – Present	Ben Carroll, Range Planner – Phone
Bob Clark, Associate Supervisor – Phone	Rachel McClure, Congressman Newhouse’s Office – Phone
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor – 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:** Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the agenda as amended. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** Steve Colvin moved to approve the April 6, 2021 board meeting minutes as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer’s Report #816,** which covers the checking account activity from April 7, 2021 to May 4, 2021 inclusive was presented for the Board’s approval. The following checks/payroll direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

Checks – numbers 11745 - 11760 totaling \$52,229.02.

Two payroll direct withdrawals – numbers ACH3987 – ACH4006 totaling \$27,811.87.

Electronic payments – numbers EFT2852 – EFT2865 totaling \$21,792.58.

Deposits totaling \$157,551.01 were made.

Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer’s Report #816. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Supervisor Reports:**

**Jerry Asmussen** – Jerry reported finally that it is Spring, and the cows have been turned out. He added that he may be done calving, but there is still one cow to look at. Grass is looking good and water in the low-level springs is marginal.

**Albert Roberts** – Albert stated he began watering two out of five fields and he has the pump and new dock in place, which is nice because everything lays on top of dock, he will not fall in, and everything stays dry; it still needs to be put in the river though. He added that he got his cows branded this morning and that improvements to the corrals made working with the cows a lot easier. Otherwise, they received a little over half an inch of rain last week, so things are greening up and water is going into the ground.

**Ivan Oberg** – Ivan reported that there are always strange things happening up in Havillah. He reported that they had an otter go through the backyard. Ivan said he did not know where the otter came from or where it was going but it was sure moving. He reported an inch and a quarter of rain out at his place in Havillah.

**Steve Colvin** – Steve reported receiving about a half inch of rain and things are nice and green, though an additional half to one inch of rain would be nice. Irrigation is going and grapes are all pruned, budded, leafing out, and growing like mad. Things are looking good.

**Associate Supervisor Reports:**

**Bob Clark** – Bob did not have anything to report.

**Randy Kelley** – Randy reported that a couple weeks ago in northern Douglas county, just off the river, he saw about 17 elk going up the breaks. Randy added that passing through the burn area near Foster Creek, things are greening up despite the wind erosion, with a predominance of lupine. Randy ended his report by stating that he has resigned his position with NRCS and retired again.

**Staff Report:**

Craig reported the Legislature finished on time this year. The Conservation Commission's budget faired far better than we feared last fall. The Conservation Commission received a bump of \$2 million for Conservation Technical Assistance. Craig reported anticipating this increase in funding will mean about a \$20,000 per year increase in the District's Implementation Grant, which will be very helpful. The Commission was awarded \$8.45 million for the Voluntary Stewardship Program, which should mean the District will get about the same amount as the current biennium. The Commission was awarded \$1.5 million each of the next two fiscal years for wildfire recovery. Craig will be engaged with the Conservation Commission trying to get those funds for helping landowners affected by the Palmer Mountain and Cold Springs fires. Finally, the Commission was awarded \$85,000 next fiscal year and \$40,000 the second fiscal year to set up the Okanogan Water Bank.

Craig reported having spoken with Ron Shultz at the Conservation Commission about the Okanogan Water Bank and they are both in agreement not to get too far ahead of themselves and wait and see whether this item gets line item vetoed by the Governor. They both have slight concerns that may happen for political reasons. The Okanogan County Commissioners would like to work collaboratively with the District on this as they want to see a single water bank to reduce confusion amongst water right holders. They even approved a motion stating the fact that they support the District-run water bank efforts and want to continue working with the District to make it happen. They also would like to see the District apply for the \$2 million dedicated to the

Methow Watershed for developing a water bank and purchasing water rights. Those funds in Ecology's budget and of course have some strings attached but Craig stated he believes it would be wise to try and secure those funds and see what projects could be implemented with them.

Craig added briefly that the VCC intern, Lars Henson is scheduled to start next Monday, and everyone is excited to meet him and bring him up to speed.

Becky reported that the District received a notice that we got \$10,000 for soil health projects, a grant that will run from March 1 – June 30. Otherwise, she reported gearing up to close out 15-20 grants, including monies we just got like TP7 and the soil health funds. Becky went on to say the annual financial report is coming along and should be submitted in the next couple of weeks. She attended a Conservation Community call about negotiated federal indirect rates, which she will be pursuing, despite finding out that it is a bit more complicated than she initially thought. Adding that once approved for the federal indirect rate, the District cannot go back to the 10% de minimis rate, so we will have to apply for the federal indirect rate every year. Becky will have more to discuss regarding this as it develops. Becky ended her report by stating that she will be taking a bit of sick leave coming up.

Ben reported that this will be his last board meeting, but he wanted to thank everyone for bringing him on a year and a half ago. He added that he learned a lot and appreciated working with everyone in the office.

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

There were no contracts or conservation plans to review, approve, or sign.

### **NRCS Report**

Sarah Troutman was unable to attend the meeting. However, Craig reported on her behalf that she is planning to have the Local Work Group meet virtually on June 8<sup>th</sup>. It will be an evening meeting so please stay tuned for details on that. She also extended her thanks to Amy Martin for her help with getting the Joint Chief's application brought together at the last minute. Sarah has indicated that NRCS staff will be focused on getting CSP rankings done in May as they are due in early June. For EQIP, NRCS Washington State is awaiting preapprovals and additional funds from National. Finally, Jeffrey Paulson will be joining the NRCS Okanogan staff on June 10<sup>th</sup> as the new Forester (filling Stan Janowicz's position). Jeffrey is coming to NRCS from the Clark Conservation District.

### **Partner Reports**

Rachel McClure reported things are good in her part of the county. Congressman Newhouse's office does not have much going on with regards to conservation. However, Rachel did add that she will be keeping track of the water bank business. She concluded by stating that if there were anything the District would like to pass along to the Congressman, feel free to reach out her.

### **Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**Old Business:**

**Annual Plan of Work** – Craig stated that the Annual Plan of Work is an accumulation of what the District has on contract or plans to have on contract. It is ready for approval. The Plan needs to be submitted, with board approval, before the end of May. The plan reflects current grants and captures the fire recovery and the ag water bank projects that are potentially in the future. Albert Roberts moved to approve the Annual Plan of Work. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**New Business:**

**Northeast Washington Wolf-Livestock Grant Board Appointment** – Craig reported that Derek Sandison, Washington State Department of Agriculture Director, is seeking a nomination from our District for a Board Supervisor to sit on their Wolf-Livestock Grant Board. This is the board that was created in 2017 through HB 2126. The board reviews applications from livestock producers for cost-share to reduce wolf-livestock predation. The appointment is for two years. Our board has appointed Jerry Asmussen to their board 2 years ago and then 4 years ago, as well. Albert Roberts moved to appoint Jerry Asmussen to the Northeast Washington Wolf-Livestock Grant Board. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Conservation Partners Program Grant Application** - The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation had an open solicitation in April for projects under their Conservation Partnership Program. Staff submitted a pre-proposal for a grant to conduct on-farm irrigation water management, in part using drone technology, to evaluate irrigation efficiency. It can pinpoint fields that are either under or over irrigated based on pinpoint measurements. The project is centered upon specific sub-watersheds in the Okanogan and Methow River watersheds. Our pre-proposal was selected to submit a full proposal this month. Ben has helped locate a consultant to fly the drone and analyze the data. District staff would use the technology to better inform the irrigators. The goal of the program will be to help 60 producers, fly 30 fields, approximating 800 acres for improved irrigation, writing 30 irrigation water management plans. Jerry asked if there was someone in the county who had a drone business. Craig responded by stating that staff had talked to a few contractors that could be contacted quickly so we could get some rough numbers. However, if the program does get funded, there will be an open contract and finding someone within the county would be a priority. Albert inquired about whether the information received from the drones could be overlaid with the precision satellite information. Staff agreed to investigate. Jerry reiterated that he did not want to see the District reinvent the wheel and was curious about the difference between the information that can be obtained by the use of the drones and what is available via precision satellite. In addition to investigating the differences between drone-obtained information and precision satellite data, staff will need to find out how quickly the data can be obtained from the drones. Albert asked if CPS flies drones because, as Jerry stated, they are the largest crop input company in the world. Furthermore, Monty Archer may be a good person to reach out to because he is a drone flyer. The discussion concluded with the need for data from the upper valley and multiple crop types. Albert Roberts moved to authorize submission of the application for the Conservation Partners Program Grant. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**June Board Meeting Date** – Staff is requesting that we move the June Board meeting from June 1 to June 8. This is due to the likelihood that Becky Drenner will be on sick leave at that time

and staff will be unable to get all the board meeting material ready in addition to completing payroll on June 1, especially considering May 31 is a holiday. This will make the June 8 meeting a special meeting, which restricts changes to the agenda and requires a little extra advertising for us. The agenda will be set by 5:00 pm the day before. Steve Colvin moved to approve the move. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ivan Oberg adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.

### Summary of Motions

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

Steve Colvin moved to approve the April 6, 2021 board meeting minutes as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer's Report #816. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.


Albert Roberts moved to approve the Annual Plan of Work. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to appoint Jerry Asmussen to the Northeast Washington Wolf-Livestock Grant Board. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to authorize submission of the application for the Conservation Partners Program Grant. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve the move. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

  
Ivan Oberg  
Chair

  
Becky Drenner  
Finance Director

Date

Date