



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: March 7, 2024; 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	Eli Loftis, Wildfire Community & Resiliency Lead
Steve Colvin, Auditor	Emmy Engle, Communication & Outreach Specialist
Phillip Dart, Supervisor	Emily Bustamante, Education Specialist
Craig Nelson, Executive Director	Taylor George, VSP Coordinator
Becky Drenner, Finance Director	Brant Rosenthal Smith, Science Data & Mon. Coord.
Kim Kogler, Grants & Contracts Director	Celeste Accord, NRCS
Jordana Ellis, Irrigation Planner	Collin Haffey, Department of Natural Resources
Cassandra Lange-Predoehl, Admin. Assistant	Trinity Stucker, Public
Chevelle Yeckel, Riparian Planner	

Meeting Call to Order: Lorah Super called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. She completed a roll call of Supervisors, Associate Supervisors, staff, partners, and the public.

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

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes: Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the February 1, 2024, board meeting minutes as presented. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #850, which covers the checking account activity from February 2, 2024, to March 7, 2024, inclusive, was presented for the Board's approval. The following checks/payroll/direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

Checks – number 12361 – 12385 totaling \$161,120.93.

Three payroll direct withdrawals – numbers ACH4715 – ACH4753 totaling \$75,369.37.

Electronic payments – numbers EFT3363 – EFT3377 totaling \$49,573.55.

Deposits totaling \$257,807.53 were made.

Steve Colvin moved to approve Treasurer's Report #850 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry reported that last week the Northeast Washington Wolf-Livestock Management Grant advisory board met and discussed the allocation of funds.

Steve Colvin – Steve did not have anything to report.

Lorah Super – Lorah reported that the Methow Valley did not get the rain or snow that the Okanogan Valley did.

Edd Townsend – Edd was not present.

Phillip Dart – Phillip reported that winter decided to come in March.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

No supervisors were present.

Staff Reports:

Craig reported that staff are actively working on a grant application for the Washington State Conservation Commission Riparian Grant Program. He added that the program now offers tiered incentives, meaning landowners would receive annual payments for participating in riparian restoration. However, funding is only available until June 30, 2025, with no funding available afterward. Since landowners cannot be guaranteed continual annual contract payments past June 30, 2025, staff recommends the district opt out of the tiered incentives. Craig emphasized that the board can always opt back in at any time if they choose.

Craig went on to announce that the Washington Association of District Employees (WADE) Conference will be held from June 10-12, 2024, and the district would like to take all current staff and the intern who will be starting in late May. Since the district has a larger number of staff, they will be staying offsite at an Airbnb.

Craig further announced that Rosalie Powell was hired as the Communications and Technician intern and will start in late May or early June.

Additionally, Craig mentioned that the Staff Retreat was hosted by Lorah Super and Shana Joy, during which staff discussed district core values and communication techniques.

Eli reported that the first Community Wildfire Protection Plan Meeting with the public was scheduled for March 12 from 5 PM to 7 PM. Other dates and locations will vary to ensure broad community involvement.

Chevelle reported that she is in the process of submitting a grant for the Riparian Grant Program, excluding the tiered incentive. The grant focuses on funding for Taylor and Chevelle, encompassing technical assistance, cost-share contracts, and maintenance funding for installed riparian plantings.

Jordana reported she is continuing to work on the Department of Ecology Drought Planning and Preparedness grant.

Becky reported that the election is scheduled for the upcoming Tuesday from 2 PM to 6 PM. She expressed hope that by shifting the hours to the later part of the day, more voters will turn out. Phillip Dart is the sole candidate on the ballot. Continuing, Becky informed the board that the district will be switching from QuickBooks to a different finance accounting system, Springbrook, which is widely used by many other districts.

NRCS Report

Celeste Accord was present and reported that Sarah had provided a report for the last month, and she would answer any questions if needed.

Partner Reports

Collin Haffey, the Post-Fire Recovery Program Manager for the Department of Natural Resources, introduced himself to the board. He outlined his short-term goals, which include building coordination between different state agencies and addressing gaps in state-level support for local communities affected by wildfires. The primary objectives of Collin's program are to ensure public safety, implement short and long-term recovery projects, and collaborate with various stakeholders, including tribes. Collin emphasized the resilience of nature and the program's focus on institutionalizing assessments. He also shared four goals for 2024: increasing coordination between federal and state entities, improving communication, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and better supporting local agencies, such as conservation districts, leading recovery efforts.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans:

Coordinated Weed Management Area (CWMA) Memorandum of Understanding – Taylor reported that uncontrolled weed populations in one jurisdictional area significantly impact the ability of other land managers to control noxious weeds on lands they administer. The cooperators aim to formalize their collaboration and promote an integrated weed management program throughout the Coordinated Weed Management Area. The agreement would serve as a communication forum to keep all parties informed of concerns and activities related to noxious weed control, as well as other resource protection activities associated with integrated noxious weed management. Phillip Dart moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the corrected Coordinated Weed Management Area Memorandum of Understanding and designated Taylor George as the point of contact. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Bluebird Grain Farms VSP Cost-Share Project – Taylor reported that Brook and Sam Lucy started Bluebird Grain Farms in 2004, cultivating emmer seed stock, hard wheat, and rye. The natural resource concerns include inadequate wildfire forage and cover. Taylor went on to say that the proposed project aims to enhance wildfire and pollinator habitat by providing more native forage and cover. The proposed plantings would be strategically placed along the northeast corner and eastern edge of the cultivated field. The project would be funded by the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP). Taylor added that there will be a 75:25 cost-share rate, and the estimated budget is \$30,000.00. Phillip Dart moved to approve the Bluebird Grain Farms Cost-Share Project. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Palmer Lake Water Quality Monitoring QAPP Contract with Tetra Tech – Chevelle reported that the district has an agreement with the Department of Ecology to develop a water quality monitoring program for Palmer Lake in response to landowner concerns and the presence of toxic algae blooms in 2018 and 2020. Chevelle added that the district is required to have a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) before monitoring can start to ensure consistent and accurate data collection. Kim and Chevelle received three proposals after sending out the Request for Proposals (RFPs). Tetra Tech, based in Spokane, Washington, presented a proposal that met the expected experience, budgetary goals, and logistical criteria. Steve Colvin moved to approve the Personal Services Contract with Tetra Tech and authorize Craig Nelson to sign it. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Community Engagement Plan (CEP) Grant Addendum – Emmy reported that the district applied for the Community Engagement Plan (CEP) grant from the Washington State Conservation Commission and was awarded \$18,000.00. The funding will help overcome barriers in community outreach and engagement across Okanogan County. The district will develop an internal community engagement plan to guide outreach efforts and implement the current short-term and long-term engagement goals outlined in the annual and five-year work plans. Emmy added that she needed approval to submit the grant addendum. Lorah asked if she planned to include the board in internal planning, to which Emmy replied yes. Phillip Dart moved to authorize staff to submit the Community Engagement Plan Grant Addendum and begin working on the grant. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Fonseca Forestry Purchased Services Contract – Dylan reported that the district, in collaboration with the City of Okanogan and Fonseca Forestry, will organize a chipping event for City of Okanogan residents on March 28 and 29 as part of the district's Department of Ecology Prevent Nonattainment (PNA) grant. Fonseca Forestry will handle the chipping work, with payment not exceeding \$6,504.00. The resulting wood chips will be deposited at Legion Park for public use. If there's a need to remove chips from Legion Park, the City of Okanogan will handle it under a Supplemental Statement of Work. Jerry Asmussen moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the Personal Services Contract with Fonseca Forestry and a Supplemental Statement of Work with the City of Okanogan if necessary for disposing of the chips. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

City of Okanogan Interlocal Agreement – Dylan reported that the district recently purchased a Vermeer BC1500 Chipper. The City of Okanogan has agreed to allow the district to store the chipper at the City Maintenance Shop and assist with maintenance tasks in exchange for the City of Okanogan's use of the chipper. Dylan added that a shared schedule will be established to avoid overlapping use of the chipper. Phillip Dart moved to approve the City of Okanogan Interlocal Agreement and authorize Craig Nelson to sign the final version. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Polling Officer Personal Services Contract – Becky reported that Diana Samek and Timothy White have agreed to serve as officers for this election, committing five to six hours of their time. In the past, the district has compensated polling officers \$100.00 for their service, and they would like to continue doing so. Steve Colvin moved to approve the Election Polling Officer

Personal Services Contracts and authorized Craig Nelson to sign them. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Witte-Walker Irrigation Efficiency Cost-Share Project – Jordana reported that the Witte-Walker project is situated on a 37-acre farm along the Methow River, located between the towns of Winthrop and Twisp in the Methow Valley, at river mile 43. The objective of the project is to replace old and inefficient hand and wheel lines on an 8.5-acre northeastern field with a two-tower pivot sprinkler system, irrigation pipelines capable of serving the new system, and a new pumping plant. This upgrade is anticipated to result in a 55% increase in efficiency. The total project cost is \$90,518.00, and with a 75% cost-share rate, the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) would fund a \$67,888.00 cost-share contract. Phillip Dart moved to approve the Witte-Walker Irrigation Efficiency Cost-Share Contract and authorized Craig Nelson to sign it. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Water Bank Update – Jordana reported that Aspect Consulting has created a business guidance document. The planning team is currently reviewing it and aims to have a revised version for the board's review soon. An amendment from Ecology was received to include the Barkley Irrigation Company acquisition in the existing grant. Aspect Consulting is taking the lead in reviewing and editing this amendment. Additionally, Jordana mentioned that Aspect drafted a Pine Creek letter of intent for sale and sent the draft to Ecology for review as requested. Once the county is set up in EAGL, they will open an application. Aspect Consulting is currently working on a draft of the application to be ready once it's opened. Moreover, an application for Sullivan Lake has been drafted and is ready for signature by the County Commissioners. This action will secure a place in line with the Office of Columbia River to purchase a portion of the right. A survey that was initially launched before the first outreach meeting is set to go live again after undergoing a review process. Jordana also provided a legislative update, noting that Representative Steele proposed a budget provision to increase the per-applicant cap from two million to four million. The outcome is expected to be determined next week.

DDT Remediation Project – Craig reported that the district is currently awaiting the contract between the Department of Ecology and the Conservation Commission. Taylor and Craig are actively involved in the conversations being had so they can streamline communication.

Conservation Celebration Committee – Emmy reported that she had brought award nominations that staff had selected for the board to review. Emmy added that Dale Swedberg would be the keynote speaker and he will give a presentation about prescribed burn associations. Emmy provided a sample of the invitation design, highlighting that invitations are slated to be mailed within the next two weeks. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the Conservation Celebration nominations as selected. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

OCD Water Resource Committee – Jordana reported that staff has proposed changing the designation and purpose of the current Water Bank Committee to a Water Resource Committee. The committee will not only offer guidance on water bank activities but will also provide staff

with direction on water resource projects that the district is presently engaged in or intends to apply for grants to pursue in the future. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the redesignation of the district Water Bank Committee to the Water Resource Committee. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Lorah appointed Jerry as the additional board member during the summer months, and Phillip as the additional board member in the winter months, with the summer and winter months defined as when the time changes, and appointed Craig as the appointed staff member.

Irrigation Efficiencies Cost-Share Rate Policy – Jordana reported that recently the funding guidelines for the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) Irrigation Efficiencies Grant Program (IEGP) eliminated the 85% cost-share rate. There is now a cap of \$400,000.00 per landowner per fiscal year. Due to this change, the district needs to formulate its own cost-share rate policy. Jordana went on to recommend that the Water Resource Committee be tasked with reviewing the IEGP program rules and the WSCC cost-share policy so that the district can establish its own cost-share policy for Irrigation Efficiencies projects that are not currently under contract. The Water Resource Committee will develop the policy and bring it forth to the board at the next meeting.

After the Flames Conference Travel Authorization – Eli reported that the district received a Forest Health grant from the Washington State Conservation Commission to fund small-scale forest health treatments, an update to the Okanogan County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, professional development trainings, and other related activities. A conference called 'After the Flames' is scheduled from April 15-18, 2024, in Estes Park, Colorado. The Forest Health grant would fully cover the cost for four staff members to attend the wildfire training. Eli added that Craig was asked to present at the conference as well. Steve Colvin moved to authorize registration, airfare, lodging, ground transportation, per diem, and other eligible incidental expenses for Craig, Eli, Emmy, and Dylan to attend the After the Flames Conference. Phillip Dart seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

IASNR Annual Conference Travel Authorization – Eli reported that the International Association for Society and Natural Resources (IASNR) Annual Conference is scheduled to take place in Cairns, Queensland, Australia, from June 23-27, 2024. Eli would have the opportunity to sustain professional connections in the academic realm, interact with and learn from social scientists and wildfire practitioners worldwide, and develop strategies to assist the district in addressing the human-centric dimensions of wildfire management. Steve Colvin moved to authorize all eligible travel expenses for Eli Loftis to attend the International Association of Society and Natural Resources Annual Conference in Cairns, Queensland, Australia in June 2024. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session - Discuss Personnel Evaluations – Lorah called the executive session at 8:24 PM. At 8:53 PM the board returned to public session. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve personnel evaluations as presented and to approve the following wage/status changes to take effect on March 1, 2024:

- Brant Rosenthal Smith, salary range 50, step C, non-exempt status, \$25.84 per hour, probationary to regular

- Taylor George, salary range 50, step B, non-exempt status, \$25.20 per hour, probationary to regular

Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah Super adjourned the meeting at 8:57 PM.

Summary of Motions

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

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the February 1, 2024, board meeting minutes as presented. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve Treasurer's Report #850 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the corrected Coordinated Weed Management Area Memorandum of Understanding and designated Taylor George as the point of contact. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to approve the Bluebird Grain Farms Cost-Share Project. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to approve the Personal Services Contract with Tetra Tech and authorize Craig Nelson to sign it. Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Phillip Dart moved to authorize staff to submit the Community Engagement Plan Grant Addendum and begin working on the grant. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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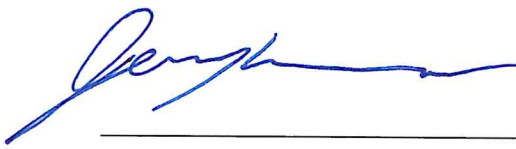
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Phillip Dart seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

 - vice chair
4-4-24

Lorah Super
Chair
Date

 4/4/2024

Cassandra Lange-Predeohl
Administrative Assistant
Date