



Okanogon Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogon, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: July 5, 2022; Board of Supervisors Meeting
LOCATION: Okanogon Conservation District Office, Okanogon, WA and Remotely via Microsoft Teams
FROM: Kim Kogler, Education Specialist/Becky Drenner, Finance Director

PRESENT:

Ivan Oberg, District Chair – Present	Chevelle Yeckel, Water Quality & Riparian Planner – Present
Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair – Present	Kim Kogler, Education Specialist – Present
Albert Roberts, District Auditor – Present	Dylan Streeter, Conservation Planner – Present
Gerri Oberg, Associate Supervisor – Present	Justin Stanley, VSP Coordinator – Present
Randy Kelley, Associate Supervisor – Present	Eli Loftis, Wildfire & Community Resilience Lead – Present
Bob Clark, Associate Supervisor – Present	Aaron Wold, Range Planner Lead – Present
Craig Nelson, Executive Director – Present	Emmy Engle, Communication – Present
Becky Drenner, Finance Director – Present	Mike Baden, WSCC – Present

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.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

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

Approval of Minutes: Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the June 7, 2022 board meeting minutes as amended. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #830, which covers the checking account activity from June 8, 2022, to July 5, 2022, inclusive was presented for the Board's approval, the following checks/payroll direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

Checks – numbers 11955 - 11982 totaling \$242,223.16.

Two payroll direct withdrawals – numbers ACH62– ACH4281 - totaling \$29,658.68.

Electronic payments – numbers EFT3047 – EFT3057 totaling \$16,784.70.

Deposits totaling \$196,473.89 were made.

Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer's Report #830. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Albert Roberts – Albert reported that everything is behind – hay. It's good because he still has hay to harvest. Losing cows because grass keeps growing taller than the cows.

Ivan Oberg – Ivan reported 0.60 inches of rain

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry reported rain. He toured around the county and experienced a lot of rain in Chesaw. Crops are behind, he saw an apple tree blooming on June 13th.

Steve Colvin – Steve was not present

Lorah Super – Lorah was not present

Associate Supervisor Reports:

Randy reported that he has been working on cases with NRCS office and working with Justin on VSP monitoring.

Bob reported that he worked with CD staff on fire recovery assessments.

Staff Report:

Craig reported that between 4 and 6 pm yesterday, Muckamuck fire scar received 1.2 inches of rain. The district is wrapping up commission grants for the fiscal year and is applying for the next round of grants. We submitted the water bank grant for around \$867,000. He attended an event for the watershed council in Twisp park on Saturday. Most people attending were new faces with Trout Unlimited, WA F&W, and others. We have been without an engineer for our cluster, but with some shuffling we will have Ryan Roberts back after contracting is sorted. Craig has been conversing with the building owner. They are going to increase rent by 5%, which he feels is a good deal. Craig reported that he was elected as the WADE vice-president. He taught the new employee training at WADE and reported that there were around 70 people in the room. Kim Kogler was nominated for WADE Employee of the Year; Cindy Pierce won the award.

Becky reported that one of the most insightful presentations at WADE was one by Sarah and Zorah. She reported closing out many grants and cost share contracts, a very busy time.

Justin introduced himself as the VSP Coordinator. He reported gaining as much knowledge as possible and coordinating outreach. The first work group meeting is this Thursday.

Dylan reported closing out cost share projects and starting new cost share projects.

Eli reported that he echoed Dylan's report and thanked him for his ability to start quickly on the job.

Emmy introduced herself as the newly hired Communication and Outreach Specialist. She reported that this was her second day on the job. She is learning about all the grants.

Chevelle reported that she was very appreciative for the experience at WADE. She finished a re-evaluation for a CREP project. She spent a fair amount of the CREP budget and looks forward to spending the remaining money on new projects.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans

Araia Fire Recovery Fencing Project – Replacing 2,469 ft. of fencing (1,517 ft. moderate terrain, 952 ft. difficult terrain) that was severely damaged or destroyed during the Walker Creek Fire in August 2021. The Araia property was the southern edge of the burn nearest Walker Lake and experienced a mixed severity fire that destroyed the only remaining fence line on the property with wood posts and damaged portions of a recently installed wildlife friendly all metal constructed fence. The impacted areas include a small wetland/pond that abuts Walker Lake. The goal of this project is replacing the damaged or destroyed fencing, excluding free ranging cattle from disturbing the riparian area. Total BMP Costs of \$7,880.37. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve Araia Fire Recovery Fencing Project and authorize Craig Nelson or Ivan Oberg to sign the cost-share agreement once funding is made available by WSCC. Albert Roberts seconded the motion the motion passed unanimously.

Fairburn Fire Recovery Fencing Project – The Fairburn property is composed of two disjointed sections along Bunch Rd, which burned in the Walker Creek Fire. The Okanogan CD is proposing entering into a cost-share agreement to repair or replace 10,124 feet of fencing. Most of the project area is on difficult terrain and in need of full replacement, at 8,602 feet. A 1,522-foot section that was damaged sporadically due to spot fires is marked as needing partial replacement on difficult terrain. The replacement or repair of these fences will aid in managing the movement of cattle both on the cooperator's property, and those of their neighbors, prevent cattle from accessing riparian areas on or bordering both sections, and prevent cattle grazing on private ground from wandering onto national forest grazing allotments and vice versa. The total BMP Cost is \$49,367.07, with a cost-share payable to a maximum of \$37,025.30. Albert Roberts moved to approve Fairburn Fire Recovery Fencing Project and authorize Craig Nelson or Ivan Oberg to sign the cost-share agreement once funding is made available by WSCC. Ivan Oberg seconded the motion and Jerry Asmussen abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

Wells Fire Recovery Pumping Plant Project – Pump infrastructure was damaged in the 2020 Cold Springs Fire. This project would cover the restoration of the pumping plant, facilitating improved livestock management and distribution of grazing on the Wells property as they continue to recover. The total cost of the project is \$3,980.40, with \$2,985.30 of cost-share. Albert Roberts moved to approve Wells Fire Recovery Pumping Plant Project and authorize Craig Nelson or Ivan Oberg to sign the cost-share agreement once funding is made available by WSCC. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion the motion passed unanimously.

Amy Martin Personal Services Contract – Amy is no longer an employee of the district as of last Friday. However, she has offered to continue to help us on a limited basis through the end of December 2022 through a personal services contract. Amy's knowledge and skillset will be critical to completing a couple of projects and getting others transitioned to new staff. This would be for a couple hours a week, roughly 250 hours until the end of the year, totaling to \$12,700. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve Amy Martin Personal Services Contract and

authorized Ivan Oberg to sign a personal services contract with Amy Martin for technical services. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Fire Recovery Cost Share – There are several projects ready to be submitted into form stack. We are seeking permission to submit the projects before the next board meeting as soon as it becomes available. It will be all fence repairs. There are up to four, possibly five projects, waiting to be submitted. There is a \$50,000 cap and one landowner is requesting cost share on 7 miles of fence. We are working with WSCC to work out the details. Jerry Asmussen moved to allow Craig Nelson to submit cost-share applications before the next board meeting to expedite the process. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

SRFB Grant - Loup Loup Watershed – We had a grant from RCO, Resource Conservation Office, for year and half, two years to do a project on the Lassila project on Loup Loup Creek and to do a sub-basin watershed analysis on Loup Loup Creek. After many conversations with partners, we determined we should do a deeper analysis. Estimated increase in cost is about \$100,000. We are going to make a run for some of the salmon recovery funding from WSCC. If that does not pan out, we will request an increase with RCO. Albert Roberts moved to authorize staff to apply for more funding for the Loup Loup project. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion the motion passed unanimously.

Grant Extension for RCO SRFB - Loup Loup – We want to request a grant time extension for RCO. Albert Roberts moved to authorize staff to request a time extension for the RCO SRFB grant. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion the motion passed unanimously.

NRCS Report

Sarah Troutman was not present.

Partner Reports

Mike Baden – Myself and the WSCC staff are shifting into the new fiscal year. We approved 9 projects this morning, which is great. There is a brief report due for the TA funding. We allocated quite a bit of the Fire Recovery money and are looking forward to allocating the rest. We are still figuring out the details of the salmon recovery funding. There is an application process that we are receiving comments and concerns for that hopefully will make it into the final drafts. There is CREP additional technical assistance available. We are starting to ask districts for estimates on funding needs for various WSCC budgets: RCPP, NRI, TA, Community Wildfire, 1198 funding from DNR. We need this information by Friday. Shout out to Craig and Eli for their feedback on post wildfire recovery program by DNR.

Old Business:

Water Bank Update – We did submit the grant and are waiting to hear back.

New Business:

2022 CRM State Executive Committee Tour – We have been asked to host the 2022 Washington State Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Executive Committee Annual Meeting and Tour. We would host a tour of projects related to our CRMs for Executive Committee members. The Executive Committee is comprised of representatives of the agencies

and organizations that are signatories for the Washington State CRM MOU. These include the Conservation Commission, Ecology, DNR, WDFW, USDA Forest Service, USDA NRCS, and several other groups. We last hosted this meeting and tour in 2015 in the Methow and toured some wildfire impacted areas that are part of the CRMs affected by the 2014 Carlton Complex. To host this event Aaron will need to coordinate with Alison Halpern at the Conservation Commission and local CRM cooperators to put together a tour schedule and a brief presentation for the Executive Committee the evening before the tour. The tour will likely be held in early October 2022.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve hosting the 2022 Washington State CRM Executive Committee meeting and tour and authorize staff to assist with the event including a presentation and tour for participants. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

2023 OCD & Washington Conservation Society MOU – Craig informed the Washington Conservation Society (WCS) provides a vital link for conservation districts and conservation education. The WCS is a 201c(3) that can be a fiscal manager for grants if we need one with very little overhead. They are responsible for offering greater communication between CDs through a hosted discussion board as well as providing remembrance of passed Washington CD family members through their “Leaving a Legacy” program. Albert Roberts moved to approve the OCD/WCS MOU and authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the contract. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

2022 WACD Annual Dues – The Washington Association of Conservation Districts annual dues are due. Fully paid dues support the association that works for all 45 Washington CDs through collaboration with partners, communicating CD priorities, and advocating for public policies important to voluntary conservation. Furthermore, with fully paid dues, CD board members will be allowed to vote during upcoming WACD Area and Annual meetings. WACD is offering a one-time \$400 reduction in dues as they emerge from COVID operations. Craig recommended we pay the full amount and let them have the \$400 and challenge other CDs to do the same. This is an opportunity for WACD to build a little strength for the future. We have it budgeted and can easily afford the full amount. Albert Roberts moved to authorize staff to pay the WACD annual dues in full. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

COLA Wage Changes – The Washington State Office of Financial Management has released a draft Cost of Living wage adjustment proposed to go into effect on July 1. This is the wage structure we use for our staff wages. This is an effort to keep wages closer aligned with inflation without having a major jump at one time in the future. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve the cost-of-living wage adjustments as represented in the Washington State General Services salary schedule for non-represented employees dated and effective July 1, 2022. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Exchange Leave Accrual Variance – Current district policy states that, for exchange leave (overtime hours accumulated by FLSA Exempt employees), no more than 24 accumulated hours may be carried over from one pay period to the next. However, this may be exceeded with board approval. Becky has a higher-than-normal workload related to end of the fiscal year duties

coupled with a shortage of available staff support due to Jess McDaniel's recent resignation. Craig asked the board to authorize Becky to carry up to 50 hours of exchange leave over from pay period to pay period through August 16. She will need to return to 24 or fewer hours before September 1, 2022. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve Becky to carry up to 50 hours of exchange leave over from pay period to pay period through August 16. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval to Hire Grants and Contracts Director – With Amy Martin's departure as our Conservation Director, staff have been assessing the duties and tasks that we need to help the district continue to succeed. Through several conversations with staff, including one Craig had with Amy on this issue, it has become clear that having a person perform grant and contract management, help with individual grant budget tracking, assisting with grant progress reports, and applying for new grants was the highest priority for every staff member. The Conservation Director position description is focused mostly on providing technical oversight on projects with a much smaller percentage of time spent on grant and contract management. We would like to remove the technical oversight part of the position as that can be addressed through training and provided by the Executive Director, partner organizations, or through contracts with specialists as necessary. Albert Roberts moved to authorize Craig Nelson to develop a Grant and Contracts Director position description to be reviewed by the OCD Personnel Committee and, once complete, to fill the position. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ivan Oberg adjourned the meeting at 7:16 PM.

Summary of Motions

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Ivan Oberg _____
Chair Date


Becky Drenner _____
Finance Director Date