



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

TO: The Record
SUBJECT: January 5, 2023; Board of Supervisors Meeting
LOCATION: Okanogan Conservation District Office, Okanogan, WA and Remotely via Microsoft Teams and Teleconference
FROM: Cassandra Lange, Administrative Assistant

PRESENT:

Ivan Oberg, District Chair	Chevelle Yeckel, Water Quality & Riparian Planner
Jerry Asmussen, Vice Chair	Aaron Wold, Range Planner Lead
Albert Roberts, District Auditor	Dylan Streeter, Wildfire Resiliency & Recovery Planner
Bob Clark, Associate Supervisor (Phone)	Justin Stanley, VSP Coordinator
Steve Colvin, Member	Eli Loftis, Wildfire & Community Resilience Lead
Lorah Super, Member	Emmy Engle, Communication & Outreach Specialist
Craig Nelson, Executive Director	Jordana Ellis, Irrigation Planner
Becky Drenner, Finance Director	Ed Townsend, Public
Cassandra Lange, Administrative Assistant	

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. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes: Steve Colvin moved to approve the December 6, 2022 board meeting minutes as presented. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report #836, which covers the checking account activity from December 7, 2022 to January 5, 2023, inclusive was presented for the Board's approval, the following checks/payroll direct withdrawals/electronic payments were approved for payment:

Checks – numbers 12068 – 12088 totaling \$91,417.70

Two payroll direct withdrawals – numbers ACH4388 – ACH4409 - totaling \$40,634.36.

Electronic payments – numbers EFT3137– EFT31 totaling \$33,943.51.

Deposits totaling \$206,827.05 were made, including a transfer from Savings to Checking of \$50,000.00 transfer to cover cost share payments until reimbursement.

Becky added that Treasurer's Report #835 was amended and presented for approval at the present board meeting. Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer's Report #835 as amended and #836 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Supervisor Reports:

Albert Roberts – Albert reported that since the last meeting he has used ten gallons of propane to start his tractor due to the cold weather. Albert added that he may not have enough hay to last until spring due to all the snow fall, and he has been busy shoveling snow.

Ivan Oberg – Ivan did not give a report.

Jerry Asmussen – Jerry reported that snow is the word, and he has been feeding lots of wildlife. Jerry added that he anticipates orchard damage due to deer, and he has noticed that chukars are enjoying the places where he has treated the sagebrush.

Steve Colvin – Steve reported that it is cold out, and he has had the opportunity to get free seed, which he feeds to wildlife. Steve added that a pickup load of seed lasts two weeks. Steve stated that other than the cold weather, things are good.

Lorah Super – Lorah reported that she has been busy shoveling snow off her roof, and she did not have frozen pipes in the cold weather.

Associate Supervisor Reports:

Bob reported that he has been shoveling snow and cleaning up tree branches from a fallen tree in his yard.

Staff Reports:

Craig reported that George Carr was selected as the new Education Specialist after interviews were conducted. George has prior teaching skills and will start on February 1st. Craig noted that this was the first time the district has had all job positions filled in a very long time. Craig added that the Conservation Celebration was being organized by Randy and Emmy. The Conservation Celebration will be held in the pig barn at the Okanogan Fairgrounds one week earlier than last year, on a weeknight, with a different food vendor. Craig invited all present to give suggestions for keynote speakers and a food vendor.

Craig went on to say that staff submitted four small project ideas to the Sustainable Farms and Fields program in the fall, and all projects were funded and must be spent by June 30, 2023. The new grant program is run by the Conservation Commission (with WSDA and WSU as partners) with the goal of increasing carbon sequestration on the farms and agricultural fields.

Becky reported that she had a great start to the new year.

Jordana reported that the Chewuch Canal Company and the district are working through some contract negotiations before continuing with the piping project.

Justin reported that he has an upcoming meeting with the commissioners to talk about the VSP work-group position description.

Emmy reported that she is looking into applying for the Good System Support grant that the Conservation Commission has made available. Emmy added that the grant would allow the district to get a view of resources and obstacles that farmers have in the process of getting their food to local markets. Emmy went on to thank everyone for their help with outreach activities.

Eli reported that the district is still waiting to hear back about the CWDG grant application. Eli added that the district received approval for Phase 1 of the Community Wildfire Resilience Project that is funded by the United States Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Phase 1 of the project will entail conducting outreach to recruit participants for home risk assessments to improve community planning and continuity of mitigation efforts. Eli added that staff originally applied for the grant in early 2021.

Review, Approve and Sign Contracts and Conservation Plans

Double J Ranch Shelterbelt Contract – Eli reported that the Double J Ranch was impacted by the 2020 Cold Springs fire and lost two shelterbelts that provided cover and wind control from the main ranch. The district put forward a project to the Conservation Commission Sustainable Farms and Fields program to provide a 75% cost-share of \$33,558.75 to restore and replant the shelter belts. The project has been approved by the Conservation Commission with an additional award of \$8,389.69 in technical assistance. Lorah Super moved to authorize Craig to sign the Double J Ranch Shelterbelt cost-share contract. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Kat Heim Purchased Services Contract – Eli reported that part of the DNR FAC pilot project involved the district retaining the services of Kat Heim to act as a community facilitator for data collection in the Newby Creek community in the Methow. The contract was active from May 15th, 2020 to May 31st, 2021. When the contract expired work began to develop a secondary contract that was stalled by Covid-19, transitions with staff, and uncertainty about the continuation of the project. Eli stated that as the DNR FAC pilot project is moving forward, the district is proposing entering another purchased service contract with Kat Heim to facilitate the transfer of data collected by Kat to Dr. Travis Paveglio and Dr. Matt Carroll for analysis, for Kat to assist Dr. Carroll in data correction and clarification, and other activities related to DNR FAC, with the total payment not to exceed \$1,970.00. Steve Colvin moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the Kat Heim purchased services contract. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ray Ledgerwood Purchased Services Contract – Eli reported that as part of the DNR FAC pilot program, the district is working with DNR and FAMV to coordinate two community meetings to be held in Twisp and Pateros on February 25th. Per an agreement between DNR and the district, a third-party facilitator will be hired to facilitate those meetings, with the aim of soliciting from community members their perspectives and desires regarding fire resiliency. Eli added that the district is proposing retaining the services of Rey Ledgerwood to act as the facilitator, with a purchased services contract of up to \$3,315.00. Lorah moved to authorize

Craig to sign the Ray Ledgerwood purchased services contract. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Libby Creek NRI Chipping Landowner Agreements – Eli reported that Libby Creek Road is four miles from the town of Carlton and comes off Highway 153, and the Libby Creek watershed is a densely forested landscape with steep slopes. There are 42 individual private property owners within the watershed; about 20 are full-time residents, 10 are part-time residents, and the rest of the private land is recreational forest land. The private land borders Forest Service land. The district received a Conservation Commission Natural Resource Investment Grant (NRI), providing chipping services to residents in the community to help reduce fuel loads. The first chipping service was provided on October 31st and November 1st, 2022. As part of the Libby Creek NRI, a district-implemented project (DIP), the district has been informed by the Conservation Commission that landowner agreements are required for each participating property. Seven property owners have already participated, and it is hoped that additional property owners will take part in the spring chipping event(s) as well. No funds are provided to participants, the agreements are meant to provide consent for the district and hired contractors to access private property for the purposes of the chipping service. Lorah Super moved to approve the Libby Creek NRI chipping landowner agreements and authorize Craig to sign the agreements as they become available. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Rangeland Drill and Seed – Aaron reported that there was an opportunity to purchase a rangeland drill and trailer along with native seed if an addendum could be submitted to the Conservation Commission for the Sustainable Farms and Fields funds. The purchase of the rangeland drill would be \$17,310.00; the trailer \$10,040.00; the native seed \$4,807.54; along with \$40,000 for technical assistance. Once purchased, the trailer and drill could be rented out when not being used by the district. Albert Roberts moved to approve and give staff authority to submit addendums to the Conservation Commission for Sustainable Farms and Fields funds. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

WSDA-SCBGP Flailing – Jordana reported that the WSDA-SCBGP grant has an objective of having orchardists adopt the practice of chipping and mulching the annual pruning waste instead of burning it. When local orchardists were asked at a recent Okanogan Horticulture Association (OHA) meeting, they were reluctant to consider chipping/mulching due to cost and the time required to implement a new practice. However, orchardists currently do orchard flailing, which involves pruning, raking, and mowing over pruning debris with a flailing attachment that chips the branches, providing mulch for the orchard. Flailing also reduces weed management and labor costs. The intent of the WSDA-SCBGP grant chipping objective is to reduce/eliminate burning. To complete the objective and meet the needs of orchardists, staff would like to provide funding for the practice of flailing in place of burning. The cost of the practice of flailing was estimated at \$33.29/ac, using NRCS 2023 Conservation Stewardship Program payment rates for (384) woody residue treatment and (386) field operation emission reduction. Jordana added that she is currently investigating the cost and feasibility of renting equipment for those orchardists who don't already have equipment. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve multiple landowner cost share contracts up to the budgeted amount provided by the WSDA-SCBGP grant and authorize Ivan

Oberg or Craig Nelson to sign the contracts when they are complete. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Title III 2022 Budget Amendment – Eli reported that Title III is an annual grant the district receives from Okanogan County. Due to unforeseen challenges including losing partners and staff transitions, a large portion of the allocated funds for the Title III 2022 grant have been unused. Over the past month, district staff worked with Lanie Johns, Clerk of Board Okanogan County Commissioners, to amend the Title III 2022 budget to reallocate unspent funds towards staff time and the acquisition of a new camera, camera equipment, and a computer. The County Commissioners gave informal approval on December 20th and formally approved the amendment on December 28th. Jerry Asmussen moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the Title III budget amendment. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Title III 2023 Contract – Eli reported that Title III is an annual grant the district receives from Okanogan County. The district was awarded \$74,928.00 to provide home risk assessments, community risk assessments, outreach materials, and other activities to support district fire resiliency programs and the Okanogan Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Lorah moved to authorize Ivan to sign the interlocal agreement once it is available. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

NRCS Report

Sarah Troutman was not present but sent an email that was included with board documents.

Partner Reports

There were no partners present.

Old Business:

Water Bank Update – Craig reported that he has been working on making changes to the Aspect Consulting contract. The Department of Ecology just released their water banking report which entailed that only three water bank applications were received, and that Ecology plans on extending the water bank program. Craig noted that the district is working with the Barkley Irrigation Company, who plans on sending a letter of intent to sell their water bank. Craig added that he is giving a presentation at NACD annual national meeting about water bank.

CCC Pipeline Project Update – Jordana reported there is ongoing conversation with the Chewuch Canal Company (CCC) regarding terms and conditions for the pipeline project, and that she would have more details at the next board meeting.

New Business:

Executive Session – Discuss Personnel Evaluations – Ivan called the executive session at 7:23 PM, to reconvene at 8:00 PM. At 8:00 PM, the board stated they would need an additional 20 minutes. At 8:20 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 January 1, 2023:

- Becky Drenner, salary range 67, step B, exempt status, \$77,028.00 annually

- Jordana Ellis, employment status changed from probationary to regular, salary range 50, step B, non-exempt status, \$24.23 per hour
- Emmy Engle, employment status changed from probationary to regular, salary range 57, step B, non-exempt status, \$28.81 per hour
- Cassandra Lange, employment status changed from probationary to regular, salary range 50, step B, exempt status, \$24.23 per hour
- Eli Loftis, salary range 57, step C, non-exempt status, \$29.52 per hour
- Justin Stanley, employment status changed from probationary to regular, salary range 50, step B, non-exempt status, \$24.23 per hour
- Dylan Streeter, employment status changed from probationary to regular, salary range 50, step B, non-exempt status, \$24.23 per hour
- Aaron Wold, salary range 57, step D, non-exempt status, \$30.28 per hour
- Chevelle Yeckel, salary range 50, step C, non-exempt status, \$24.85 per hour

Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Kim sent out evaluation forms for staff to fill out regarding Craig's performance before the board meeting. Kim compiled the summary report based on the answers staff provided in the evaluation forms. During the executive session the summary report was reviewed. Jerry Asmussen moved to approve a one-step wage increase to salary range 75, step B, exempt status, \$93,840.00 annually for Craig, effective January 1, 2023. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Becky informed the board that Kim Kogler did not get a step increase, but felt Kim deserved one after transitioning into her new role as the Grants and Contracts Director. Steve Colvin moved to approve a one-step wage increase to salary Range 67, step B, exempt status, \$77,028.00 annually for Kim, effective January 1, 2023. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ivan Oberg adjourned the meeting at 8:32 PM.

Summary of Motions

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

Steve Colvin moved to approve the December 6, 2023 board meeting minutes as presented. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Becky added that Treasurer's Report #835 was amended and presented for approval at the present board meeting. Albert Roberts moved to approve Treasurer's Report #835 as amended and #836 as presented. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah Super moved to authorize Craig to sign the Double J Ranch Shelterbelt cost-share contract. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Colvin moved to authorize Craig Nelson to sign the Kat Heim purchased services contract. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah moved to authorize Craig to sign the Ray Ledgerwood purchased services contract. Albert Roberts seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah Super moved to approve the Libby Creek NRI chipping landowner agreements and authorize Craig to sign the agreements as they become available. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Roberts moved to approve and give staff authority to submit addendums to the Conservation Commission for Sustainable Farms and Fields funds. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to approve multiple landowner cost share contracts up to the budgeted amount provided by the WSDA-SCBGP grant and authorize Ivan Oberg or Craig Nelson to sign the contracts when they are complete. Lorah Super seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jerry Asmussen moved to authorize Ivan Oberg to sign the Title III budget amendment. Steve Colvin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Lorah moved to authorize Ivan to sign the interlocal agreement once it is available. Jerry Asmussen seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

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