

**CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
REGULAR DISTRICT MEETING  
Zoom Meeting ID: 987 6961 1557  
14 N Mission St.  
Wenatchee, WA 98801  
Friday, December 17, 2021  
1:30 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Junell Wentz, Chair; Dillon Miller, Vice Chair; Amy Bridges, Auditor; Kurt Hosman, Member; and Jim Bartelme, Member.

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Wright, NRCS; and the following District staff: Ryan Williams, Valerie Hampton, Elizabeth Jackson, Amanda Newell, and Nada Wentz. Attendees were present in person and via Zoom Meeting / conference call.

Junell Wentz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

**Consent Agenda:** Approve the November 19, 2021, Regular Meeting minutes, approve the November Treasurer's Report, the corrections to the October Treasurer's Report, and authorize payment of bills.

M/S/C Dillon moved and Kurt seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. (Unanimous)

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Notice was received from Ricoh regarding the close-out settlement information for the copy machine previously leased by the District.

WEX, formerly known as Shell, sent a notice that the District gas credit card limit was raised to \$1,000 from the previous limit of \$700.

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) REPORT:** Chris Wright

Chris continues to work on current Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) contracts. NRCS is waiting for news about the Joint Chiefs Partnership application. The NRCS office is quiet and getting ready for the Holidays.

**STAFF REPORT:** Elizabeth (Liz) Jackson

Liz presented information about the Heritage Gardens program. Discussion followed the presentation regarding the origin of the program, the opportunities to encourage better water usage, technical assistance on care of native plants, and the potential for inter-district partnerships. The next step is to enter an agreement with Benton Conservation District.

M/S/C Amy moved and Dillon seconded to approve moving forward with plans for the Heritage Garden program including an agreement with Benton Conservation District for the use of their program materials. (Unanimous)

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Grant Applications:**

**Cutler Fish Barrier Removal Project Application Resolution:** The Cutler project was discussed at the November meeting. A resolution is required to apply for funding from the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board. The Board was asked to adopt Resolution 2021-12.

M/S/C Kurt moved and Dillon seconded to adopt Resolution 2021-12 to apply for the Cutler Fish Barrier Removal grant. (Unanimous)

**Drinking Water Protection Partnership Application:** This application is for a joint annual program with the state Department of Health (DOH) and the US Forest Service. Staff are putting together two applications, one for support for the Salmon Safe program and the other for Beaver Dam Analog (BDA) work.

**Icicle Fund Application:** This is a community fund for environmental arts. Amanda and Kirk are putting together an application to support the Kids in the Creek/Kids in the Forest (KITC/KITF) and the No Child Left Inside (NCLI) programs. It would include support of the library sponsored snowshoeing classes. Ryan gave them the 'go ahead' to submit the application as it was due last week. The funds would cover staff time and transportation expenses to get the kids to the events.

**Wenatchee River Institute (WRI) Agreement:** Ryan, Valerie and the Board discussed the details of a proposed agreement between the District and WRI. The agreement covers a donation for the District KITC program and assistance with WRI's river science camp program. Board approval to proceed with an agreement was requested.

M/S/C Kurt moved and Dillon seconded to approve applications for the Drinking Water Protection Partnership and Icicle Fund; and approval to proceed with the Wenatchee River Institute agreement. (Unanimous)

**Grant Contracts:**

**National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Grant:** The District was awarded the NFWF irrigation efficiencies grant and staff are currently working through the contracting process. Board approval is needed to sign the contract.

M/S/C Dillon moved and Jim seconded to approve the NFWF grant contract. (Unanimous)

**Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Contract:** The District was approached by DNR regarding a contract for chipping and other work they may have, to be completed by June 30, 2022. The contract is not ready yet. Ryan gave the Board further details about the other work requested of the District. Should the contract be ready to sign before the next Board meeting, the Board was asked to have a member review and approve the contract. Junell volunteered as the lead to review and approve, Dillon agreed to be the backup if needed.

M/S/C Kurt moved and Dillon seconded to approve the DNR contract pending Junell's or Dillon's final review and approval. (Unanimous)

**Other Business:**

**VEBA Benefit Policy Change:** The Board was asked to approve changing the contribution in lieu of coverage to 50% of the waived employee medical and/or dental premium.

M/S/C Amy moved and Kurt seconded to approve the VEBA benefit policy change to 50% of the waived employee medical and/or dental premium for contributions in lieu of coverage. (Unanimous)

**2022 Elections:** Staff and Board Members discussed changing the election date from February to March, advertising the open position using different media, and additional methods to improve voter turnout. The Election Resolution will be presented to the Board for approval at the January meeting.

**Computer Equipment Surplus:** Several District computers and laptops are so outdated they are not useful as donations. Ryan asked the Board for approval to surplus them.

M/S/C Dillon moved and Amy seconded to approve the surplus of outdated computers and laptops. (Unanimous)

**Executive Director's Report:**

**Health Care Report:** The Board agreed at the November meeting that Ryan should make the final decision on the District health care plan. He reported that the District will stay with the same plans as 2021. The cost of the health care plan went down close to \$100 per month and the dental plan went up by about \$2 a month.

**District Budgeting – Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA):** The Consumer Price Index (CPI) used to determine the annual COLA reported a 6.8% increase. Ryan re-calculated the budget and is comfortable there is enough cushion to handle the increase. He suggested a 3.6% COLA. After some discussion, the Board decided on the 6.8% increase.

M/S/C Jim moved and Kurt seconded to approve a 6.8% COLA for District employees for 2022. (Unanimous)

**Policy Updates:** Ryan is working on employee policy updates for the handbook. He and the Board briefly talked about whether it is better to go over the updates at a meeting or have a special committee to review the updates. He will send the updates to all the Board Members. Kurt and Dillon are available to review the updates.

**Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT):** Ryan discussed the potential of having a cost share agreement with CDLT. The District may or may not be the fiscal lead. The Board will be updated as plans develop.

**Cascade Fisheries and Trout Unlimited (TU):** Trout Unlimited and Cascade Fisheries submitted joint applications for funding from the Department of Ecology (DOE) for work in the Icicle Creek Watershed. TU asked if the District would be interested in sponsoring the project by acting as a pass through for DOE funds. The Board was asked to approve working with DOE for the Icicle Creek contract.

M/S/C Jim moved and Dillon seconded to approve sponsoring the Icicle Creek contract with DOE for Cascade Fisheries and Trout Unlimited. (Unanimous)

**Strategic Planning Meeting:** Ryan recommended having an in depth, strategic planning workshop before the District Annual Planning meeting in March. All staff would attend to

discuss and give feedback on current and future projects. Junell may be able to attend. Dillon won't know his availability until closer to March.

**Indirect Rates:** The District was approved for a rate of 30% in the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, (NICRA) for 2022. It applies to most federal agreements. The possibility of a multi-year rate was discussed, which would be nice but is not practical for this year. It will be considered again after seeing how things adjust in the 2021 data. Ryan is waiting for the document to sign. State rates, such as DOE and the Commission, will remain at 25%.

### **Project Updates by Region**

**Lake Chelan Basin:** Patrick has been talking with landowners regarding post fire concerns in the 25 Mile Creek area.

**Entiat Watershed:** Staff toured some potential work sites with Mariah from the Forest Service in the Roaring Creek / Mad River area. Mark Ingman is making site visits and getting to know the folks in Entiat.

**Wenatchee Watershed:** Mark I. and Patrick visited with landowners to explore project opportunities for next season. The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) contracts are getting close. Staff are thinking about outreach that can be done when Joe starts work.

**Southern Chelan County Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 40:** Amanda is looking for volunteers to assist at the Squilchuck snowshoeing program. It is the winter version of the Kids in the Forest (KITF) program.

**Set January 2022 Regular District Meeting Date and Agenda:** The next Regular Meeting is Friday, January 21, 2022, at 1:30.

The meeting adjourned at 3:46 p.m.

### **Summary of Official Actions:**

Approved the Consent Agenda;

Approved moving forward with plans for the Heritage Garden program including an agreement with Benton Conservation District for the use of their program materials;

Adopted Resolution 2021-12 to apply for the Cutler Fish Barrier Removal grant;

Approved applications for the Drinking Water Protection Partnership and Icicle Fund; and approval to proceed with the Wenatchee River Institute agreement;

Approved the NFWF grant contract;

Approved the DNR contract pending Junell's or Dillon's final review and approval;

Approved the VEBA benefit policy change to 50% of the waived employee medical and/or dental premium for contributions in lieu of coverage;

Approved the surplus of outdated computers and laptops;

Approved a 6.8% COLA for District employees for 2022;

Approved sponsoring the Icicle Creek contract with DOE for Cascade Fisheries and Trout Unlimited.

CHAIR\_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE ASSISTANT\_\_\_\_\_