

**CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR DISTRICT MEETING
Zoom Meeting ID: 987 6961 1557
1350 McKittrick St
Wenatchee, WA 98801
Friday, October 20, 2023**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: M. Pete Teigen, Member.

OTHERS PRESENT: Frank Curtin, NRCS; and the following District staff: Ryan Williams, Valerie Hampton, Isobel Woolner and Nada Wentz. Attendees were present in person and via Zoom.

Junell Wentz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Consent Agenda: Approve the September 15, 2023, Regular District Meeting minutes, approve the September Treasurer's Report and authorize payment of current bills.

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

Two letters from the Commission were read by Kurt Hosman. Cascadia Conservation District was selected as North Central Area District of the Year. The second letter is in special recognition of Ryan's work with the District and the Commission.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) REPORT: Frank Curtin

Frank reported on the sign-up deadlines for Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program and Regional Partnership Program (RCPP) applications. Sign-ups are continuous for high tunnels, planting and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) programs.

NRCS is working on additional funding for forestry projects. Frank is continuing discussions with the PUD to publish RCPP notices in the PUD newsletter.

STAFF REPORT: Isobel Woolner

Isobel gave a brief biography of her previous work before joining the District. She showed a slide presentation of work done this fall, which included fuels reduction, chipping, and planting projects. The project areas and assistance from other agencies were described. One such group was the Northwest Youth Corps. Two Youth Corps members helped with the chipping, and two others helped with the planting.

GRANT APPLICATION, CONTRACT REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Grant Contract:

Department of Ecology (DOE) – a Wenatchee Basin Stream Restoration and Water Quality Improvement project, to include planting, a livestock bridge, fencing, waste storage, project maintenance, technical assistance, adult and youth educational activities;

Landowner Agreements/Cost Share:

Paton – WSCC Natural Resource Investment (NRI) - irrigation pipeline and sprinkler system;

John Kinssies – WSCC Forest Health - land clearing, tree/shrub pruning, woody residue treatment;

Susan Kidd – WSCC NRI - micro-irrigation;

Katie Selasco – WSCC NRI – hedgerow and micro-irrigation;

Matt Jones – WSCC NRI – hedgerow, irrigation pipeline, sprinkler system, and a cover crop.

M/S/C Kurt moved and Dillon seconded to approve the grant contract and cost share agreements as presented. (Unanimous)

OTHER BUSINESS

Executive Director's Report:

Office Move: The office move will be finished by October 31. The main office equipment is moved. The cage area will be moved next. The move went well and the cost has been reasonable.

Grip Hoist Conclusion: A mix up on payments and returns of the grip hoist orders resulted in the District keeping both grip hoists instead of returning one of them. Payment for the first order was thought not to have cleared the bank, but then the equipment arrived at the office. Meantime, a second hoist had been purchased at a lesser price. Staff decided it would be better to keep both hoists rather than return the first hoist. The seller agreed to a reduced price on the second order rather than have the first order returned.

Auction Items: The online auction of items no longer needed at the office just closed. About 12 to 14 items were sold. The Polycom phones and some shelving along with the three ring binders were among those items. We will offer what is left to nonprofit organizations and have Vamonos haul off what is not taken.

Audit: Valerie has not been contacted by the Auditor's office to set a date for the audit. They are behind schedule, so the District's audit may not be set until early 2024.

WACD Annual Conference & Feedback: The WACD conference is November 27 – 29. Ryan discussed a resolution made at the Area meeting in Ritzville regarding funding for archaeological work. Resolutions will be voted on at the Annual Conference. Attendance is free for Board members on Business Day so that they may vote on the resolutions presented.

The idea was discussed at the Area meeting to hold the Annual meeting on a Friday/Saturday schedule instead of on –Monday-Wednesday. The goal is to encourage better attendance. For this year, Early Bird registration needs to be in by November 16. Ryan asked that the Board let him know if they plan to go.

Chumstick – Lower Peshastin NEPA Process: A letter was submitted regarding the Chumstick to Lower Peshastin NEPA process. This project is for US Forest Service Work. Cascadia CD staff are interested in participating in the process. The goal is to conduct outreach with partners and landowners with property surrounded by forest service land. The outreach portion would include discussions on fuels reduction work on forest service land that can only be accessed with landowner permission to cross their land. The focus is on putting plans in place for emergency and wildfire crisis situations before they happen.

Annual Reviews: Ryan will be starting the annual reviews for staff in the next month or so. The reviews will be brought to the Board at the January meeting.

Cost of Living Adjustments: The end of the year brings decisions regarding the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) for staff in 2024. At this time the CPI is at 4.1%, which is lower than last year. More discussion is to come at the November and December meetings.

Health and Dental Coverage: Valerie has not yet received any information for health and dental coverage for 2024. She will contact different vendors to compare the insurance plans offered. She hopes to have two or three plans to discuss at the November meeting.

Outreach / Bilingual Specialist: Ryan is working with the County on a community wildfire defense fund grant setting up cost share funding for landowners. He is also working with Okanogan Conservation District on funding for two joint bi-lingual positions between the two counties. We will hear from the USFS sometime in March of 2024.

Elections: The regional managers are now in charge of the election process. They will provide an advertising campaign for the March elections. The last few District elections have been held at Pybus Market, but Valerie asked the Board for their thoughts on holding the 2024 election at our new office and including an open house to encourage more participation, make information available about the work we do, and to show off our new office space. There was general agreement with this idea.

NRCS EQIP Funding: NRCS is receiving a lot more money for their EQIP program. There is a push to hire district planners to help with the workload that will be needed for the next five years.

November Meeting Date and Agenda: The next Regular meeting is November 17, 2023, at 1:30 p.m. at the District office.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Summary of Official Actions:

Approved the Consent Agenda;

Approved the following Grant applications, and Contracts:

Grant Applications:

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CHAIR_____

OFFICE ASSISTANT_____