

**CASCADIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR DISTRICT MEETING
Zoom Meeting ID: 987 6961 1557
1350 McKittrick St
Wenatchee, WA 98801
Friday, September 15, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Junell Wentz, Chair; Amy Bridges, Auditor; and M. Pete Teigen, Member.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dillon Miller, Vice Chair; and Kurt Hosman, Member.

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

Junell Wentz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:44 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

Consent Agenda: Approve the August 18, 2023, Regular District Meeting minutes, approve the August Treasurer’s Report and authorize payment of current bills.

M/S/C Amy moved and Junell seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. Pete abstained. (Passed)

CORRESPONDENCE: None

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) REPORT: Frank Curtin

NRCS staff are working hard to finish the Regional Partnership Program (RCPP) contracts. The deadline is October 1. Joe has been getting signatures on the agreements. Once the agreements are signed, they will be sent to headquarters. We are expecting a lot more RCPP applications next year. After the tour last month, Roylene and NRCS have updates to the guidance on forest practice requirements. One update is to allow removal of trees up to eight inches in diameter. Amanda Phillips, a Soil Conservationist for NRCS, has been detailed to help with the workload for 120 days. Hopefully the vacancy will be filled with a full-time person soon.

Other programs currently being worked on are Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The deadline for these programs is October 20. Many applications are coming in, including Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) applications. We have \$150,000 to spend the first quarter of the fiscal year and are working on large forestry projects that include fuels reduction and wildfire mitigation. It has been a busy couple of months quickly pushing these programs.

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION (WSCC) REPORT: Mike Baden

Mike asked Frank if he’s heard anything about a government shut down. Frank said he hasn’t heard any mention of a shutdown in his emails.

The Commission is still in the process of hiring an Executive Director. They hope to have a choice made in October. Kirk Robinson has been a great interim director, but his term ends next week. Retirement limits him to a certain number of hours per year, so he can’t extend his interim duties.

The election training is set for September 29. Regional managers are taking the lead on getting the next election process moving. If there are questions, please ask Mike. If someone can't attend the training that day, it is recorded for viewing later.

Mike touched on the Commission meeting for next week to approve their community engagement plan, a requirement to release funding. The Commission is working with the districts to develop outreach and get the word out about Commission programs. The forest health program has received many good applications. The largest request came from Cascadia. The first round of funding includes equipment, but there may be some requests for additional information before awards are finalized. Ryan and Craig volunteered to be on the committee for the Riparian Grant Program.

The Commission has a new page on their website that includes a table that shows all of their funding programs and includes reporting requirements, contacts, and other important information about the program. Mike asked the Board who plans to attend the Area Meeting in Ritzville on October 19. The Board members will let Ryan and Mike know.

STAFF REPORT: Mark Ingman will give a report in November.

Pete asked about salmon recovery work in the Entiat. Ryan replied that there are a lot of Beaver Dam Analogs (BDA)s going in. There are more projects coming, one of which is a Stage 0 project in Roaring Creek. The design contract will go out to bid this winter. Mark will talk about this in November.

Grant Application and Contract Review and Approval

Grant Applications:

US Forest Service – Community Wildfire Defense grant, a joint proposal with Chelan County and other local organizations to fund bilingual outreach, fuels treatment projects, a fuels crew, a website, and other programs. It is focused on the greater Leavenworth area.

US Forest Service – Small Landowner Program, a proposal to conduct fuels treatment projects in the Lake Chelan area for up to 5 years.

ILAs / MOUs / MOAs / Contracts:

Underwood CD – Center for Technical Development Staff Support. Work Order providing CTD support for riparian training and co-chair support.

Dept. of Natural Resources – Prescribed Burn Assoc. Outreach. Executive Director to sign contract for funding to conduct prescribed burn outreach events including learn and burns, pile burning workshops, and community presentations.

US Forest Service – Firewise project for Wenatchee River Ranger Station (Leavenworth). Executive Director to sign contract for funding to develop and implement a Firewise plan for the Wenatchee River Ranger District office in Leavenworth.

Wapato Real Property, LLC – Early termination of Wenatchee World Lease. Executive Director to sign agreement to terminate the lease with Wapato Real Property, LLC earlier than the original duration.

Landowner Agreements/Cost Share:

Phil Furniss – DOE riparian planting work on Brender Creek. Approve updated Cost Share agreement for a new landowner on an existing project, previously called Germain.

M/S/C Pete moved and Amy seconded to approve the grant applications and contracts as presented.
(Unanimous)

OTHER BUSINESS

Executive Director’s Report: Ryan provided some informational updates and requested approval for the following items:

Office Hour Change: The office hours are currently 8 am to 5 pm. Ryan proposed changing them to 9 am to 4 pm. The interior office doors can also be closed when staff are all out in the field. At the very least, there would be a sign available in the lobby entrance on how to get in touch with staff should no one be in the office.

The office will be closed the first week of October to allow us that week to get moved and organized before the public comes in. The Board asked about press releases placed in the Wenatchee World newspaper. Ryan is working on that. There are plans to have an open house for partners in November.

M/S/C Pete moved and Amy seconded to approve changing the official office hours to 9 am to 4 pm.
(Unanimous)

Claims Agent Change: A new Claims Agent resolution is needed to acknowledge the new office address and hours of operation.

M/S/C Pete moved and Amy seconded to approve adopting Resolution 2023-4, Claims Agent new Office Address and Office Hours. (Unanimous)

Community Wildfire Outreach Position: Part of the Community Wildfire funding will cover another outreach position with the District. Ryan requested approval to hire someone to fill this position pending official word that the funding is in place. Once the funding is a go, he will finish the job description, which will include working on newsletter articles, District events, the website and bilingual assistance.

M/S/C Amy moved and Pete seconded to approve hiring for an outreach position, pending the Community Wildfire funding outcome. (Unanimous)

Forest Health and Community Wildfire Resilience Grant Update: The District received \$1.745 million for many programs. Some highlights include funding for a program to provide \$500 incentives for landowners to do home hardening projects, and support for Kids in the Forest. We did not receive a “No Child Left Inside” (NCLI) grant this year, and this funding replaces that. Amanda and Kirk are relieved that their programs have funding to keep going. A variety of other elements are also included in the grant, which should be finalized in the coming weeks.

WACD Area Meeting: The Area meeting is in Ritzville on October 19. Ryan was planning to carpool with Foster Creek folks. Please let him know if you plan to attend also.

South Douglas Conservation District Meeting: Ryan and Kirk attended the South Douglas CD meeting in Douglas County. South Douglas is appreciative of the education programs we've done on their behalf. They have provided funds in each of the past several years for program materials and student bus transportation.

Moving Logistics & Surplus List: Ryan reported that the City of Wenatchee has been awesome to work with. They gave us many moving boxes to use. The PUD needs to put in another connection box for our internet service, and Ryan is working on the storage unit to house field tools. Staff will be in the office September 20 and 26 to have packing parties, boxing up cube spaces and taking apart the cube walls.

Valerie and Ryan have been working on a surplus list. As of this meeting date, they are not 100% sure what needs to be sold and what can be dumped. The debate is centered on how much items are worth. The worst-case scenario is to rent a storage unit and auction the items off after the move. There was a brief discussion about using the online auction service used by the City of Wenatchee. Donations are allowed to charitable organizations that use it for the poor and infirm.

Retirement Audit: The audit went pretty well. Two staff have not met the minimum annual hours to be eligible to participate. They will be removed from the plan. One person's hours worked were not reported correctly early in 2022, so a correction report will be completed. There is a requirement to get a written statement from every employee on whether they have retired from a Washington State plan, no matter the age of the employee.

Commission Authorized Signatures Needed: With the new biennium, a new Authorized Signatures sheet is required. Board members will be asked to sign the new sheet.

Three Year Audit: The District is due for a three-year audit this fall. Valerie is anticipating this to happen around the middle of October. She has not been contacted by the Auditor's office yet.

Indirect Rate Negotiations: Negotiations were completed with the Department of Interior for the new indirect rate. The rate was agreed upon at 25% for the years 2024 and 2025. The new office rent would not be reflected until after those rate years but will factor in to the costs used to calculate the rate by the time the negotiation is due for rate year 2026. The next negotiation round may set a rate for up to a four-year term.

October 2023 Meeting Date and Agenda: The next Regular meeting is October 20, 2023, at 1:30 p.m. at the new office space, 1350 McKittrick St., Suite B, Wenatchee.

The meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

Summary of Official Actions:

Approved the Consent Agenda; Pete abstained;

Approved the following Grant applications, and Contracts:

Grant Applications:

The USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant; the USFS Small Landowner Program;

ILAs / MOUs / MOAs / Contracts:

Underwood CD – Center for Technical Development Staff support;

Dept. of Natural Resources Prescribed Burn Association Outreach;

US Forest Service Firewise project for Wenatchee River Ranger Station in Leavenworth;

Wapato Real Property, LLC early termination of Wenatchee World lease;
Approved changing the official office hours to 9 am to 4 pm;
Approved adopting Resolution 2023-4, Claims Agent new Office Address and Office Hours;
Approved hiring for an outreach position, pending the Community Wildfire funding outcome.

CHAIR_____

OFFICE ASSISTANT_____