

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
Public Meeting Minutes  
August 14, 2014**

**I. Time and Place of Meeting.**

A regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) was held at the Ag Service Center, 6975 Hannegan Rd, Lynden, Washington on August 14, 2014, at 7:00 p.m.

**II. Attendance and Quorum.**

The following Supervisors, being a quorum of the Board, were present:

Joe Heller, Chair	Larry Helm, Vice-Chair
Larry Davis, Treasurer	Dick Yoder

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director	Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant
Shana Joy, WS Conservation Commission	Chris Elder, Whatcom County PDR

**III. Meeting Called to Order.**

Joe Heller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**IV. Public Comment (written or in person).**

There were no written or public comments.

**V. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.**

**Dick Yoder moved that the minutes of the June 12, 2014 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**VI. Financial Report.**

The financial report was mailed to the Board with their draft minutes from the June meeting.

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, presented the financial report. Dawn provided some clarification on a few expenditures.

**Larry Davis moved to approve the Financial Report. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved.**

Accounts Payable –

A copy of District invoices and incurred expenses, as listed in the Accounts Payable Report, were reviewed and approved. The Board further authorizes the payment of District expenses incurred subject to their review and approval at the next Board meeting.

The following voucher/warrants are approved for payment:

June 2014 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>21557</u>	through	<u>21570</u>	and totaling	<u>3,041.87</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>21571</u>	through	<u>21584</u>	and totaling	<u>28,558.23</u>

July 2014					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>21585</u>	through	<u>21661</u>	and totaling	<u>147,392.15</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>21662</u>	through	<u>21674</u>	and totaling	<u>28,276.45</u>
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>21675</u>	through	<u>21712</u>	and totaling	<u>42,398.43</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>21713</u>	through	<u>21725</u>	and totaling	<u>28,697.92</u>
August 2014					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>21726</u>	through	<u>21743</u>	and totaling	<u>46,466.67</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>21744</u>	through	<u>21757</u>	and totaling	<u>28,167.79</u>

**Moved by Larry Davis. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

## VII. Action Items.

### A. Election of District Board Officers.

#### Chair –

**Larry Helm nominated Joe Heller as Chair. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

There were no further nominations for Chair. The Board closed the nominations for Chair. The Board voted. Joe Heller was unanimously re-elected as Chair.

#### Vice-Chair –

**Dick Yoder nominated Larry Helm as Vice-Chair. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Larry Helm spoke to the position. There were no further nominations for Vice-Chair. The Board voted on the nomination. Larry Helm was unanimously elected as Vice-Chair.

#### Secretary/Treasurer –

**Larry Helm nominated Larry Davis as Secretary/Treasurer. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

There were no further nominations for Secretary/Treasurer. The Board voted on the nomination. Larry Davis was unanimously re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

### B. Approval of Contracts.

#### Ag District Coalition Agreement –

During this past legislative session, the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) was appropriated funds to organize Water Irrigation Districts (WIDs) in Whatcom County. Since the Commission could not contract directly with the ADC it provided the funds to the District as a pass through administrator. The proposed agreement implements the intent of the legislation.

**Larry Helm moved to approve and sign the contract agreement with the Ag District Coalition. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed. 2 for 1 against.**

There was discussion regarding how the WIDs will be set up. Larry Helm would like a question and answer session with the Ag District Coalition.

### C. Approval of Membership Dues.

#### Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) Dues –

The District received a notification that 2014 WACD dues are \$4,560 plus \$10 per Associate Supervisor.

**Larry Helm moved to authorize payment of the WACD Dues in the amount of \$4,560. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Washington Conservation Society (WCS) –

Larry Davis is the current Secretary/Treasurer for the Washington Conservation Society. The WCS is a 501c3 entity, which can be utilized for grants if needed. They have small education grants available. Three Conservation Districts have joined to date.

**Larry Helm moved that the Whatcom Conservation District sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Washington Conservation Society, designating Larry Davis as the District's representative and pay annual dues of \$150. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**D. Approval of Conservation Plans.**

Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Conservation Farm Plan Approval –

Chuck Timblin developed a farm plan with Javier Lopez for Blueberry Farm. It fulfilled the requisite elements for that type of plan. Staff recommended Board approval.

**Larry Helm moved to approve the Critical Areas Ordinance Conservation Farm Plan for:**

- **Javier Lopez Blueberry Farm.**

**Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Contracts –

CREP is a joint federal and state program to enhance fish habitat and protect water quality. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is the administrative lead. District resource specialists (Wayne Chaudiere, Frank Corey or Emily Hirsch) works with a landowner to develop a conservation plan that includes practices meeting the landowner's needs. It is reviewed for technical sufficiency by the Natural Resources Conservation Service representative (Alex Hall) and George Boggs. The landowner signs the plan and it is passed on to FSA. The FSA County Oversight Committee (COC) approves all CREP plans. The current District policy is that once FSA approves the Federal Contract and CREP plan, then the CREP maintenance contract is brought to the Board for its approval. Absent unusual circumstances, the Board approves the standard-language maintenance agreement prescribed by the State Conservation Commission.

There were 12 CREP maintenance contracts submitted for Board approval.

**Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Emily Hirsch for:**

- **Steve Graham & Ebba Krarup – 14-04-CS:14-08**
- **James & Julie Fegel – 14-04-CS:14-09**

**Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Frank Corey for:**

- **James & Norine Amend – 14-04-CS:14-19**
- **Dale Dougherty – 14-04-CS:14-20**
- **Steven Nicholaas – 14-04-CS:14-21**
- **Judy McCormack – 14-04-CS:14-22**

**Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Wayne Chaudiere for:**

- **William & Vickie Blacklidge – 14-04-CS:14-01**
- **Leonard Kilmer – 14-04-CS:14-06**
- **Duck Pond Trust (Jacob Locker) – 14-04-CS:14-03**
- **Virgil Trust (Jacob Locker) – 14-04-CS:14-04**
- **Travis & Kara Millhollin – 14-04-CS:14-07**
- **Aaron Peterson & Sony Nawaz Soomro – 14-04-CS:14-05**
- **Dianne Wyngaert – 14-04-CS:14-11**

**Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

#### CREP PIP Loan –

FSA cannot reimburse a landowner until a practice is completed. A hardship arises when this spans many months. Landowners are not able to pay the contractor for the work and wait for reimbursement. In such cases, the landowner can obtain bridge funding from the Conservation Commission. In order to do this the local conservation district must approve the CREP PIP loan application. The Commission takes an assignment of payment to secure repayment. There is no risk of loss to either the Commission or local conservation district.

One landowner is seeking a CREP PIP loan to cover the 40% retainage for work already completed by the contractor. The bridge to complete the project is scheduled to be built by Lyle Bronkema in the summer of 2015. The total amount of the PIP loan to cover the amount owed to the contractor is \$6,036.40.

**Dick Yoder moved to approve the CREP PIP loan with Lyle Bronkema for \$6,036.40. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

#### EPA – Birch Bay Project Cost-share –

Frank Corey submitted two cost-share applications to complete septic tank repairs as part of the EPA Birch Bay project pursuant to the previously Board adopted cost-share policy.

**Dick Yoder moved to approve the EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share applications for**

- **Dave & Thea Kleiber - property at Fingalson Creek/Terrell Creek**
- **Cherry Myers - property adjacent to Terrell Creek**

**for 100% of the cost but not exceeding \$10,000 for each septic tank repair. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

#### **E. New Employees.**

George reported that he filled the education/outreach position previously authorized by the Board. He requested a resolution confirming the hire of Aneka Singlaub-Sweeney at Band C1 Step 4 with the benefit package set forth in the District's Personnel Manual.

**Larry Helm moved to authorize hiring Aneka Singlaub (Sweeney) as the Education/Outreach Coordinator at Band C1 Step 4 with medical/dental for her and her family, retirement and leave pursuant to the Personnel Manual. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Half-time support staff was anticipated in the budget for CREP technical assistance funding this year. This was necessitated by the additional requirement that mid-management prescriptions be developed for each of the CREP projects. Brandi Hutton worked previously as the District's temporary plant sale support staff. She enjoys a Botany major, has demonstrated proficiency in conducting CREP site inspections and is desirous to move from temporary to regular half-time work.

**Larry Helm moved to hire Brandi Hutton half-time at Band B1 Step 1 with medical/dental benefits for employee only and retirement as per the Personnel Manual. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

#### **F. WSCC Shellfish Cost-share Project Ranking.**

The Board reviewed the list and ranking sheets for the proposed Shellfish Cost-share Projects. George reviewed the development of the ranking form by the Board and staff and the point system. There are a total of 200 possible points available per project. Projects were ranked by staff using the ranking form. The proposed projects varied from 200 – 90 points. The Board discussed whether or not they should send any "weak" projects in for funding. It was decided that the cut off for a strong project was 140 points. Those on the list at or above 140 points are to be submitted to the Conservation Commission with recommendation for funding.

**Dick Yoder moved to approve the WSCC Shellfish Cost-share Projects as on the Whatcom Conservation District's August ranking list and submit all projects with 140 and more points to the Washington State Conservation Commission for consideration for funding. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

It was noted that several projects were tied for number of points awarded on the ranking sheet. After some discussion the Board decided to leave how to address tie-breakers until it became a problem. One proposed solution is to have a coin toss with both landowners present.

## **VIII. Other Business.**

### **A. Supervisor Reports.**

#### **Larry Helm –**

Larry informed the Board that the Whatcom County Ag Advisory Committee meeting minutes showed a letter that stated the majority on the Ag Advisory Committee are not favorable to CREP projects. Larry suggested that we educate them. George said that we could, but that these individuals have heard the statistics of the program before and they don't appear to appreciate the value of riparian projects. It seems more advisable to share information regarding the program with the Whatcom County Council members.

### **B. George Boggs, Executive Director.**

Tours – George reported that the District hosted a tour for Joe Montoni, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Examiner for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). He wanted to see the investments in water quality and fish habitat NRCS has been making. Also on the tour were Astor Boozer, Regional Conservationist; Dr. Wayne Honeycutt, Deputy for Science and Technology; Shaun McKinney, Natural Resources Specialist; Karm Anderson, Water Quality Specialist; Sherre Copeland; Roylene Rides at the Door, State Conservationist; Tony Sunseri, District Conservationist; Bonda Habets, State Resource Conservationist; and Steve Landino, Director of NOAA's Washington State Habitat Office. Most had been on a previous tour and wanted to show the person who scrutinizes their budget these projects. Tour stops included an engineered log jam and perched culvert.

Building a Better Book of Business (BBOB) – George met with the managers of Skagit and Snohomish Conservation Districts. They developed a brief paper describing how our three districts could achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness and synergy through the alignment of our staffing. The Boards of Skagit and Snohomish want to pursue the concept further. There are significant political, policy, and financial implications of such an alliance.

Larry Helm suggested that there be a joint meeting of the three District Boards. If it goes well, then keep scoping out the process for the BOBB. It was suggested that maybe a grad student could scope out the alliance.

Pollution and Identification and Correction (PIC) – George met with Whatcom County regarding providing funding to the Conservation District under the PIC program for resource technical and educational assistance.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) – Whatcom Conservation District's pre-proposal for funding was one of a very few that was selected to compete for the final round of review.

### **C. Shana Joy, Washington State Conservation Commission.**

Shana Joy is the Washington State Conservation Commission's new Puget Sound Regional Manager. She is visiting all the Conservation Districts in her area. She will be up later this month to provide Dan with new Supervisor orientation from the WSCC.

Shana gave the Board her background. She is from Pend Oreille County and she has been working with Conservation Districts in Alaska for the past six years.

**IX. Executive Session.**

9:20 pm. Joe Heller, Chair, announced that the public meeting was breaking so that the Whatcom Conservation District Board could go into Executive Session for 30 minutes to discuss the extension of its building lease to USDA.

9:50 pm. Joe Heller adjourned the Executive Session and resumed the public meeting. No action was taken during the executive session.

**X. Other Business.**

**A. Building Lease.**

There was a discussion of the advisability of extending the District's lease of office space to USDA. It was observed that the District needed more space to meet community needs for services. To accommodate District needs, the footprint of the building would have to be expanded in an amount approximate to what USDA was seeking to lease. It was observed that because the District is a public agency it had to pay prevailing wage for all construction. This made an expansion very expensive. There was uncertainty of being able to lease the space to USDA long enough to retire the debt incurred by such an expansion. Additionally, there was suitable commercial space available nearby at a very competitive rate.

**Larry Helm moved that due to economic considerations, staffing needs and building limitations, the District should to decline to accept anticipated terms of its building lease to USDA. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**XI. Record of Board Actions.**

**14-52 Dick Yoder moved that the minutes of the June 12, 2014 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**14-53 Larry Davis moved to approve the Financial Report. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved.**

**14-54**

The following voucher/warrants are approved for payment:

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**Moved by Larry Davis. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Chair –

**14-55 Larry Helm nominated Joe Heller as Chair. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

There were no further nominations for Chair. The Board closed the nominations for Chair. The Board voted. Joe Heller was unanimously re-elected as Chair.

Vice-Chair –

- 14-56 Dick Yoder nominated Larry Helm as Vice-Chair. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Larry Helm spoke to the position. There were no further nominations for Vice-Chair. The Board voted on the nomination. Larry Helm was unanimously elected as Vice-Chair.

Secretary/Treasurer –

- 14-57 Larry Helm nominated Larry Davis as Secretary/Treasurer. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

There were no further nominations for Secretary/Treasurer. The Board voted on the nomination. Larry Davis was unanimously re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

- 14-58 Larry Helm moved to approve and sign the contract agreement with the Ag District Coalition. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed. 2 for 1 against.**
- 14-59 Larry Helm moved to authorize payment of the WACD Dues in the amount of \$4,560. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 14-60 Larry Helm moved that the Whatcom Conservation District sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Washington Conservation Society, designating Larry Davis as the District's representative and pay annual dues of \$150. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 14-61 Larry Helm moved to approve the Critical Areas Ordinance Conservation Farm Plan for:**
- Javier Lopez Blueberry Farm.
- Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 14-62 Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Emily Hirsch for:**
- Steve Graham & Ebba Krarup – 14-04-CS:14-08
  - James & Julie Fegel – 14-04-CS:14-09
- Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Frank Corey for:**
- James & Norine Amend – 14-04-CS:14-19
  - Dale Dougherty – 14-04-CS:14-20
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- Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Wayne Chaudiere for:**
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  - Virgil Trust (Jacob Locker) – 14-04-CS:14-04
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  - Aaron Peterson & Sony Nawaz Soomro – 14-04-CS:14-05
  - Dianne Wyngaert – 14-04-CS:14-11
- Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 14-63 Dick Yoder moved to approve the CREP PIP loan with Lyle Bronkema for \$6,036.40. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 14-64 Dick Yoder moved to approve the EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share applications for**

- Dave & Thea Kleiber - property at Fingalson Creek/Terrell Creek
  - Cherry Myers - property adjacent to Terrell Creek
- for 100% of the cost but not exceeding \$10,000 for each septic tank repair. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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14-66 Larry Helm moved to hire Brandi Hutton half-time at Band B1 Step 1 with medical/dental benefits for employee only and retirement as per the Personnel Manual. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-67 Dick Yoder moved to approve the WSCC Shellfish Cost-share Projects as on the Whatcom Conservation District's August ranking list and submit all projects with 140 and more points to the Washington State Conservation Commission for consideration for funding. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-68 Larry Helm moved that due to economic considerations, staffing needs and building limitations, the District should to decline to accept anticipated terms of its building lease to USDA. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

## **XII. Adjournment.**

**There being no further business before the meeting, Dick Yoder moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 p.m. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Dated: September 26, 2014

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant