

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2011**

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 May 11, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Joe Heller
Larry Davis

Terry Lenssen
Ed Stone

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant
Chris Clark, WCD Engineer
Jon DeJong, Dairy Producer

Alex Hall, NRCS staff
David Haggith, N₃ & WS Dairy Federation
Jeff DeJong, Dairy Producer

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Joe Heller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Ed Stone moved that the minutes of the April 13, 2011 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Financial Report.

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

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, presented the financial report. All Washington State Conservation Commission grant funds will be utilized by the end of the fiscal year. There were no questions regarding the financial report.

Ed Stone moved to approve the Financial Report. Larry Davis 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:

April 2011 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>18524</u>	through	<u>18544</u>	and totaling	<u>10,335.41</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>18545</u>	through	<u>18558</u>	and totaling	<u>28,335.77</u>

Voucher (check) numbers	<u>18559</u>	through	<u>18560</u>	and totaling	<u>5,305.90</u>
May 2011					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>18561</u>	through	<u>18574</u>	and totaling	<u>18,591.47</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>18575</u>	through	<u>18588</u>	and totaling	<u>29,077.61</u>

Moved by Ed Stone. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Internal Audit –

Larry Davis, Stu Trefry and Dawn Bekenyi did the District's internal audit. It went well.

VI. Action Items.

A. Board Officer Elections.

Dawn reported that an updated Authorized Signature Form for the new fiscal year grants is required by the Washington State Conservation Commission by June 1, 2011. Since the Commission's May meeting, where they are going to approve appointed supervisor positions and certify the District's election, is later than our meeting, Dawn called the Commission office to determine if there were any candidates for the appointed position held by Joe Heller. Joe was the only candidate to submit an application. Therefore the Commission said it should be fine to elect officers, since the members on the Board will not change after the Commission's May meeting.

Election of District Officers –

Chair –

Terry Lenssen 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 –

Larry Davis nominated Terry Lenssen as Vice-Chair. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

There were no further nominations for Vice-Chair. The Board voted on the nomination. Terry Lenssen was unanimously re-elected as Vice-Chair.

Secretary/Treasurer –

Ed Stone nominated Larry Davis as Secretary/Treasurer. Terry Lenssen 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.

Washington State Conservation Commission –

Grant paperwork for next year's fiscal year was presented for approval and signature. Grant Application, Master Contract, Authorized Signature Form, Basic Allocation Form, Initial Payment Request for CREP TA, Livestock TA and Implementation.

Terry Lenssen moved to approve and sign the WS Conservation Commission Master Contract # 12-04 and all required grant paperwork. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. NACD Dues.

The Board acknowledged that Larry had offered to work with NACD on some committee activities. They also appreciated that our resolutions were passed at the national level and hoped

that they would be implemented. Dawn informed the Board that 1% of the eligible budget would be approximately \$550.

Terry Lensen moved to approve payment of the 2011 NACD dues in the amount of \$550. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

D. Approval & Certification of Conservation Plans.

Dairy Nutrient Management Plan (LNMP) Certification –

There was one Dairy Nutrient Management Plan submitted for Board certification.

Larry Davis moved to certify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Dyna Moo 2 (Glen Dykstra). Terry Lensen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

CREP Contracts –

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (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. The Conservation Commission funds districts to provide technical assistance and financial assistance to maintain the projects for up to five years. 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 State Conservation Commission prescribed standard-language maintenance agreement.

There was one CREP maintenance contract submitted for Board approval.

Larry Davis moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts for Andrea Campion. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VII. Other Business.

A. Alex Hall, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) – Staff is focusing on getting approvals and design work for all EQIP contracts. The cultural resources review process is backlogged. The NRCS Archeologist is scheduled to come in mid-June. There was discussion regarding outsourcing the cultural resource reviews to private firms, but that may be a problem. The state NRCS Archeologist is the only one that can approve cultural resources reviews for NRCS projects.

There is another sign-up for organic producers which ends in May. There was discussion regarding high tunnels, which were quite popular last year. Alex did **not** have any interest for them this year. Meeting program qualifications may be a factor.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – There were three applications by the deadline. Two have backed out. Staff is still working on one. They need to complete it by May 27, 2011.

Student Trainee – Mary is still working until June or July.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) – There are a few applications, but no funding for this program at this time.

Technical Service Provider (TSP) – NRCS is working on a new TSP work order request for Chris Clark and Bill Bensen.

Northwest Team – The Northwest Area team will have a review from the NRCS state office in July. This appraisal happens every five years or so.

State Agronomist – The NRCS state agronomist position is currently vacant. The Board discussed the need to refill the position in light of policy issues on the horizon. It was decided that George would draft a letter to Roylene Rides at the Door for Board signature outlining the needs for a State Agronomist.

Larry Davis moved to draft a letter to Roylene Rides at the Door, for Board signature, stating that the Board feels strongly that the NRCS State Agronomist vacancy needs to be filled in light of policy issues on the horizon. It would be desirable if the chosen candidate knows animal agriculture, climate and crops in Washington State. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. Annual Plan of Work.

The annual plan draft was reviewed. Larry suggested that the mission statement was too long. It should be concise. It was decided to adopt the mission as stated at the bottom of the page. "Mission of the Whatcom Conservation District is to assist land managers with their conservation choices." Other revisions were noted.

Terry Lenssen moved to adopt the FY 2012 Annual Plan of Work with the revised mission statement and notations. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Supervisor Reports.

Larry Davis –

Larry sent a letter of application to the executive committee of the Northwest Area Association of Conservation Districts to replace Karen Krug as one of the two Northwest Area Directors on the WACD board.

Terry Lenssen resolved to support Larry as a new Northwest Area Director to WACD and urge all other area Districts to similarly support him. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed. (Larry abstained from the vote.)

Terry Lenssen –

Terry said that we have had too much rain and it is impeding farming.

Ed Stone –

Ed said that solar panels were installed at his office. The solar panels work even on cloudy days. It is estimated that they work at 40% on cloudy days.

Joe Heller –

Joe thanked a few people for all of their work this year. Larry has put in effort to work with the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and local Districts through the Local Work Group. Sonya Schaller put in a lot of energy to CREP and she will be missed. Dick Yoder and the cattlemen put in a good word with the legislators.

D. George Boggs, Executive Director.

Department of Ecology Agreement – Skagit Conservation District needs to revise their MOA with the Department of Ecology immediately. Since the Board asked George to work on revising our MOA with Ecology, he is working with Skagit on their MOA as a pilot.

Air Quality – Nichole Embertson and George attended the Air Quality Conference and meeting of the Western Dairy Producers Association in Sacramento, CA. Each made a presentation regarding District programs. Nichole is working with the Yakima Clean Air Agency on nonattainment area voluntary compliance inspections. They are doing a pilot with half a dozen participants.

Dairy Nutrient Management Plans – As a follow-up to the meeting that staff had with other planners regarding Dairy Nutrient Management Plan specifications, David Haggith and the two dairy producers expressed concern that Whatcom producers were being put at an economic disadvantage because Whatcom planners were using the most current NRCS guidance regarding nutrient availability and losses. George explained that if we do not follow the ag specifications from the NRCS Field Guide, then we would not be following the Dairy Nutrient Management Act. Also, to do otherwise would undermine the District's credibility as technical planners. In which case, the industry could become subject to guidance from the Department of Ecology. That agency has been very critical of NRCS practices and district planning in general. Consistency among Districts is an issue. That is why planners from other districts had been invited and came to the meeting.

Chris pointed out that plans are site specific. While the example discussed at the work session showed that the sample operation needed more land base, in fact, some operations would benefit with the new numbers for waste mineralization. Chris discussed planning and changes with updates. Nutrients and nitrate issues are a big concern.

WSU Extension – WSU Extension is looking for a new Agriculture Agent. They are soliciting input from others. Chris explained that there is no independent manure research, since there is no profit in it. It appears that agencies, such as NRCS and Ecology, discount the credentials of the agronomists in the field. There is good research from Ag Canada at Agassiz, BC, but it is not accepted down here. It would be advantageous to have an agronomist with knowledge of livestock in the position of Extension Ag Agent. They could do field research that would help us get real numbers for planning.

Terry Lensen moved to write a letter supporting an agronomist with knowledge of livestock for the new Extension Ag Agent. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – George gave a rundown of the CREP program for this upcoming year. We have 27 signed applications and 30 new contracts plus 2 renewals for approximately 143 acres. There will be 130 projects being managed this upcoming fiscal year. Next year Whatcom will hit the one million trees planted under the CREP program.

Applied Risk Management (ARM) EPA Grant – Staff met with EPA again regarding the grant. The issues concerning this project do not appear to be with the District's qualifications as much as politics associated with the district engaging in the project.

Birch Bay Pilot – George gave a status of the grant project. The first meeting with the Advisory Committee took place. NSEA and George have met with the social marketer.

Fraser Valley Watershed Coalition – The Fraser Valley Watershed Coalition requested that George and Henry Bierlink, Whatcom Farm Friends, give a presentation at their May 19 meeting regarding CREP and buffers. Prior to that meeting, representatives from the group, a staff member of BC Ministry of Ag, a fish biologist, a frog biologist, and two dairy farms came for a tour of our CREP and buffer projects in Whatcom County. The tour was well received.

Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee (FRRCC) – The next FRRCC meeting is scheduled for June in Washington, DC. They will be discussing how to be productive without putting farmers out of business. George is a member of the committee.

Notice of Warning – George reported that the District received a copy of a Notice of Warning to a third party for manure application with a transfer agreement. The neighbor had a history of high nitrates in her well. Ecology indicated in its letter that no manure should be applied for five years. Chris Clark will work with the parties involved on the issue.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

11-27 Ed Stone moved that the minutes of the April 13, 2011 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

11-28 Ed Stone moved to approve the Financial Report. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

11-29

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Election of District Officers –

Chair –

11-30 Terry Lenssen 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 –

11-31 Larry Davis nominated Terry Lenssen as Vice-Chair. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

There were no further nominations for Vice-Chair. The Board voted on the nomination. Terry Lenssen was unanimously re-elected as Vice-Chair.

Secretary/Treasurer –

11-32 Ed Stone nominated Larry Davis as Secretary/Treasurer. Terry Lenssen 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.

11-33 Terry Lenssen moved to approve and sign the WS Conservation Commission Master Contract # 12-04 and all required grant paperwork. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

11-34 Terry Lenssen moved to approve payment of the 2011 NACD dues in the amount of \$550. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

11-35 Larry Davis moved to certify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Dyna Moo 2 (Glen Dykstra). Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

11-36 Larry Davis moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts for Andrea Campion. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- 11-37 Larry Davis moved to draft a letter to Roylene Rides at the Door, for Board signature, stating that the Board feels strongly that the NRCS State Agronomist vacancy needs to be filled in light of policy issues on the horizon. It would be desirable if the chosen candidate knows animal agriculture, climate and crops in Washington State. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 11-38 Terry Lenssen moved to adopt the FY 2012 Annual Plan of Work with the revised mission statement and notations. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 11-39 Terry Lenssen resolved to support Larry as a new Northwest Area Director to WACD and urge all other area Districts to similarly support him. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed. (Larry abstained from the vote.)
- 11-40 Terry Lenssen moved to write a letter supporting an agronomist with knowledge of livestock for the new Extension Ag Agent. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Ed Stone moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Dated: June 27, 2011

Approved: _____

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant