

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
October 10, 2013**

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 October 10, 2013, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

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

Also in attendance were:

Wayne Chaudiere, CREP Specialist	Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant
George Boggs, Executive Director (from Salmon, ID via Facetime)	

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Joe Heller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Larry Helm moved that the minutes of the September 12, 2013 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Financial Report.

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

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, presented the financial report. There were no questions.

Larry Helm 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:

Sept 2013 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>20821</u>	through	<u>20854</u>	and totaling	<u>53,133.18</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>20855</u>	through	<u>20869</u>	and totaling	<u>32,594.39</u>
October 2013					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>20870</u>	through	<u>20892</u>	and totaling	<u>21,947.70</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>20893</u>	through	<u>20906</u>	and totaling	<u>28,735.48</u>

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

VI. Action Items.

A. Approval of Contracts.

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 nine CREP maintenance contracts submitted for Board approval.

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

- **Erika & Jordan Beaudin – 14-04-CS:13-12**
- **Ellen & Gary Gehling – 14-04-CS:13-10**
- **Michael Taylor – 14-04-CS:13-09.**

Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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

- **Rick & Denise Bosman – 14-04-CS:13-23**
- **Shamsher & Bakhtaur Lidder – 14-04-CS:13-19**
- **Carl & Shirley Obermeier – 14-04-CS:13-25**
- **Harry & Mary Pardue – 14-04-CS:13-22.**

Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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

- **David Webb – 14-04-CS:13-18**
- **David Webb – 14-04-CS:13-14.**

Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. CREP Maintenance Cap

Wayne gave the Board a history of the CREP maintenance cap. He has been involved in the process since 2004 when the caps were implemented by the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC). Different caps were set up for the east-side and west-side of the state. These caps assume a standard, average, straight-forward project. Most projects fit into this category and fall under the cap. At that time a method was added to allow Conservation District Board's to address special and unique circumstances in projects and thus adjust the cap upward to allow for those additional costs. The CREP project cap table was reviewed by the WSCC and adjusted in 2009. At that time there was thought to be an economy of scale in projects, but that is not necessarily the case. Most of the projects that need an adjustment in the maintenance cap are projects that are impacted by beaver or noxious weeds that require additional control. Wayne explained that the percentage of special & unique projects is small. The District manages

approximately 134 projects per year. Of these perhaps 14 projects require more maintenance per acre than the cap. In those cases the additional funding needed is around a couple hundred dollars more per acre. The majority of the CREP projects are maintained under the WSCC prescribed average project maintenance cap.

Wayne also explained that the adjustment in the maintenance cap comes before any expenses have been accrued, so it is not a "cost overrun." Adjustments are sought when technicians review seasonal maintenance and determine that the costs will exceed the existing maintenance cap, at which time a request comes to the Board to address the special and unique circumstance.

C. Employee Payroll Step Increase.

George conducted an employee review for Corina Cheever. She is currently eligible for a step increase. Following the review George determined that she has done exceptional work and taken on more duties this past year, which he described for the Board. George would like to advance Corina to a farm planning position next year. She has said that she would very much welcome the challenge and additional duties. George recommended that the Board give Corina a two-step increase in pay.

Larry Helm moved to approve a two-step increase in payroll for Corina Cheever. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

D. Supervisor Election.

Dawn explained that the meeting where the Supervisor Election Resolution is passed must be advertised twice in the paper prior to the meeting. She verified with the Board that the next meeting would be on November 14, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

E. WACD Annual Meeting.

There was discussion about who would be attending the WACD Annual meeting in Suncadia. Larry Davis, Larry Helm, Joe Heller and George will be attending. Terry said that he would try to attend. Rooms were reserved by the deadline.

F. Staff & Board Planning Session.

The Long Range Plan and Annual Plan of Work will need to be updated soon. The Board decided to have a staff & Board planning session. It is scheduled for December 9, 2013 from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm at Bellewood Acres meeting facility. All staff are required to attend. There was discussion regarding costs. George suggested that the District hire a meeting facilitator for the planning session. There was discussion regarding topics to include on the agenda; Long Range and Annual plans plus Employee matters. Staff will give input to the agenda.

Larry Helm moved to schedule an all-staff and Board planning session at Bellewood Acres on December 9, 2013 and authorize payment to Mary Dumont Associates to facilitate the meeting at \$1,500, plus facility rent and meal costs per the bid received in order to make the planning session a success to plan for the future of the Whatcom Conservation District. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VII. Other Business.

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

NRCS was not present due to the federal government shutdown.

B. Supervisor Reports.

Larry Davis –

WACD – Larry completed his last meeting as Northwest Area Director at San Juan Island Conservation District. He reported that there is a new District Manager. The meeting that Larry attended was interrupted when two Supervisors left after discussion, with one later resigning his position.

Northwest Area Meeting – Larry Davis, Larry Helm and George attended the NW Area Meeting. Eleven resolutions were brought to the area meeting for review. Three came from Conservation Districts. Larry reviewed the resolutions. All resolutions passed at the area meeting.

Larry gave an update on candidates for the Washington Association of Conservation District (WACD) officers.

Nichole Embertson and Andrew Phay were recognized by the Washington Conservation Commission as Northwest Employees of the Year.

Terry Lenssen –

Terry attended a meeting of producers that are interested in forming a county-wide ag coalition to address water rights. A county-wide ag coalition could be formed under the irrigation statute. There were 20 people present at the meeting of which 11 of them were actual agriculture producers. He is optimistic that this group could be effective.

George reported on a similar group that he learned about in his training in Salmon, Idaho.

Larry Helm –

Northwest Area Meeting – Larry reported on activities at the NW Area meeting.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) – The TDR program is forming in King, Pierce, Thurston and Snohomish counties.

Joe Heller –

Joe attended the last WSCC meeting. Whatcom Conservation District received funding for our livestock program through December. The Commission will further discuss funding again at the December Commission meeting.

C. George Boggs, Executive Director.

Buffer Issues – NRCS is developing a new Tech Note 14 that essentially embraces the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) buffer table. The new tech note could be a condition for receiving NRCS EQIP funds. It is a concern on how the buffer table tech note would be used. It could be used for funding or in regulations.

Larry Helm asked if there are any studies being done by universities to show what buffer sizes are required. George explained that there are none in Washington State. George expressed that it is key to continue engaged in the process. Get the ag community involved, have local input, and local control. There is a caveat in the rule that provides for buffer rules that are negotiated with tribes.

WRIA 1 Planning Unit – Larry Helm will continue to be engaged in this process. George doesn't believe that this is a productive use of his time and recommends that the District refrain from participation at this time.

Green Infrastructure – George sent the Board information regarding Whatcom County's Green Infrastructure Plan. There was discussion about holding a meeting next May or June through the Whatcom Community Foundation. George reviewed membership participation. The Board directed him to continue to pursue this project.

Cost-share – George sent the Board a draft cost-share ranking policy and landowner agreement. There was discussion and some revisions were made.

An appeal process was discussed regarding contesting how points are awarded. Producers can come to the Board if they have a differing opinion on how points are awarded and their project was ranked.

It was recommended that the form refer to a practice list, but all NRCS practices should be available for CD cost-share funds.

It was suggested that outreach start out small to work out the kinks, and it be focused in the Bertrand Creek Watershed.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

13-79 Larry Helm moved that the minutes of the September 12, 2013 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

13-80 Larry Helm 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.

13-81 Larry Davis moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Emily Hirsch for:

- Erika & Jordan Beaudin – 14-04-CS:13-12
- Ellen & Gary Gehling – 14-04-CS:13-10
- Michael Taylor – 14-04-CS:13-09.

Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

13-82 Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Frank Corey for:

- Rick & Denise Bosman – 14-04-CS:13-23
- Shamsher & Bakhtaur Lidder – 14-04-CS:13-19
- Carl & Shirley Obermeier – 14-04-CS:13-25
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Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

13-83 Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contracts provided by Wayne Chaudiere for:

- David Webb – 14-04-CS:13-18
- David Webb – 14-04-CS:13-14.

Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

13-84 Larry Helm moved to approve a two-step increase in payroll for Corina Cheever. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

13-85 Larry Helm moved to schedule an all-staff and Board planning session at Bellewood Acres on December 9, 2013 and authorize payment to Mary Dumont Associates to facilitate the meeting at \$1,500, plus facility rent and meal costs per the bid received in order to make the planning session a success to plan for the future of the Whatcom Conservation District. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Larry Helm moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Dated: November 21, 2013

Approved: _____

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant