

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
February 13, 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 February 13, 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 Davis, Treasurer
Dick Yoder

Terry Lenssen, Vice-Chair
Larry Helm

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant

Alex Hall, NRCS staff

III. Meeting Called to Order.

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

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

Doug Allen, Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE), sent a request to refine the December 2013 Board meeting minutes to more accurately communicate what had transpired. Specifically, he suggested that the first sentence of paragraph 7 on page 3 would be revised as follows: "George spoke with Roylene Rides at the Door at the WACD Annual meeting about concerns regarding the proposed 590 practice standards resulting from direct talks between NRCS and ECY."

Larry Helm moved to correct the December 2013 board meeting minutes as reflected above. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Larry Helm moved that the minutes of the January 9, 2014 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Financial Report.

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

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, presented the financial report. Larry Helm asked about any impacts noticed on employees' medical premiums caused by the Affordable Care Act. George expressed there were no changes at this time. However, the Health Care Authority was instructed by the State legislature to make a rule to impose surcharges for tobacco use and spouses that are eligible for but decline to accept health care coverage from their employer. Dawn state that the premium increase was less than 1%.

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:

Jan 2014 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>21183</u>	through	<u>21192</u>	and totaling	<u>18,045.88</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>21193</u>	through	<u>21207</u>	and totaling	<u>29,350.50</u>
February 2014					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>21208</u>	through	<u>21247</u>	and totaling	<u>83,136.42</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>21248</u>	through	<u>21261</u>	and totaling	<u>28,591.06</u>

Moved by Larry Helm. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VII. Action Items.

A. Approval of Conservation Plans.

Dairy Nutrient Management Plan (DNMP) Approval –

There was one Dairy Nutrient Management Plan submitted for Board approval. Staff recommended approval as it contained the necessary elements prescribed by the Conservation Commission and the operator had signed it indicating that it accurately reflects his operation and agrees to its implementation.

Larry Helm moved to approve the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for:

- **Aaron Lancaster #2.**

Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Dairy Nutrient Management Plan (DNMP) Certification –

There was one Dairy Nutrient Management Plan submitted for Board certification. Chuck Timblin reviewed the plan for Chad Postma and recommended that the Board certify it. It met the applicable requirements for certification and the producer certified that he was managing accordingly.

Larry Helm moved to certify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for:

- **Chad Postma.**

Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. Approval of Contracts.

EPA – Birch Bay Project Cost-share –

Frank Corey submitted a cost-share application for Carl Obermeier to do tree and shrub establishment in Terrell Creek as part of the EPA Birch Bay project.

Larry Helm moved to approve the EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share application for Carl Obermeier for \$340. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Frank Corey submitted a cost-share application for Jeff Sprecher to do fencing and tree and shrub establishment in Terrell Creek as part of the EPA Birch Bay project.

Larry Helm moved to approve the EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share application for Jeff Sprecher for \$4,750. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

RFQ Architectural Services –

The current floor plan for the building no longer meets the needs of the District and its renters due to changes in staffing levels of both USDA and WCD and the nature of their respective activities. To help ensure accuracy and completeness, George reviewed the Request for Qualifications for Professional Architectural Consulting Services for the planned remodel/addition of the District's facility with a retired architect.

Dick Yoder moved to publish in the paper as soon as possible the RFQ for Architectural Services for a planned remodel/addition to the District's facility. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Crop Mapping Project –

WSDA has requested assistance again this year from the District to update the Department of Agriculture's Crop Location Map (Agricultural Land Use Map). The contract total is \$6,000 to provide the mapping assistance to WSDA. Agricultural land use mapping provides geospatial crop system information. It is intended to be used by WSDA to provide data on crop locations for risk analysis.

Larry Helm moved to approve the Crop Location Map contract for \$6,000 with the WA State Department of Agriculture. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Washington State Conservation Commission Buffer Outreach Program –

George informed the Board that the Conservation Commission invited District's to participate in their Buffer Outreach Program. They will provide a \$7,500 grant. The Board agreed that the District accept the offered grant funding.

VIII. Other Business.

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

Farm Bill – Alex reported that there has been some major program consolidation in the new farm bill from 14 programs down to 6. The agency is in the rulemaking process for these programs, prior to announcing program eligibility. Comments and feedback on eligibility for non-ag landowners can be made now.

NRCS now has multi-year budgets, which is more stable than the previous yearly budgets. NRCS staff continues to work on contracts, though they cannot obligate any funds yet. A farm bill teleconference is scheduled for next week.

Cost-share Sign-Up Deadlines –

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) sign-up deadline is March 21, 2014.

Water Quality Initiative sign-up deadline is May 23, 2014.

High Tunnel & Energy Audit sign-up deadline is May 23, 2014.

Potential Cost-share Funding –

Alex said that they anticipate more National Water Quality Initiative funding in Whatcom county this year.

There is also the potential for Salmon Habitat Restoration Funds, so staff are working on getting some projects lined up.

590 Standards – An information sheet on the NRCS Nutrient Management (590) Standard will be released by the state office on February 14, 2014.

B. Supervisor Reports.

Dick Yoder: –

George informed the Board of a discharge found during routine water quality sampling in the Terrell Creek watershed. There was discussion about the incident. George reported that the Department of Ag contacted the farmer. The District was called to go and assess the matter and perhaps provide advice.

The Department of Ag has said that 93% of the State's dairies have exhibited a problem. Of the 7% that received a violation, 90% of those were due to poor management.

There was discussion about how the industry could help keep incidents like this from happening. The industry could create a rapid response team to deal with spills, "policing themselves."

Larry Helm: –

Larry informed the Board that the Whatcom County Council is requiring conditional use permits on all slaughter houses. He feels it is not economically feasible to build a small slaughter house, with the six month review process.

WRIA 1 Joint Board Meeting – Larry reported on the WRIA 1 Joint Board meeting.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) – There is a push for creating a Transfer of Development Rights program in Whatcom County.

Terry Lenssen: –

Terry reported on some meetings that he attended with the dairymen where there was a discussion about water quality.

Larry Davis: –

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) – The communications feedback resolution passed at the NACD annual meeting.

C. George Boggs, Executive Director.

Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) Legislative Days – George reviewed the proposed funding support at meetings.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) – NRCS is offering funding for Conservation Innovation Grants. George reviewed a pre-proposal idea to fund precision agriculture project. The proposed project would integrate the Applied Risk Management (ARM) project with state of the art manure application equipment to capture crop yield and water quality data. The Board authorized George to explore a grant application. The pre-proposals are due by March 7, 2014.

Water Quality – George shared the water quality results from testing in Whatcom County. Water quality test results were better in 2012 than 2013. They reviewed the map showing the testing sites.

Staffing – Corina Cheever is leaving at the end of April. Nichole needs an assistant to help with her ARM project, farm planning and education.

Larry Davis moved to authorize the Executive Director to replace the Resource Technician. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Joe Heller, Chair, left the meeting. Terry Lenssen, Vice-Chair, chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Strategic Thinking – Prior to the meeting George sent a paper to the Board and staff asking four questions about the benefits that County landowners and residents receive from our District to start discussion on developing our next long range plan.

Question 1: Do our current programs provide an appropriate mix of services and projects such that all classes of landowners (urban/rural) receive at least \$5.00 of benefit / parcel / year?

YES/NO (circle)

Question 2: If yes, please explain why this is so.

Question 3: If no, which landowners are underserved?

Question 4: What changes to current programs or additional new program (services/projects) would you recommend to ensure that those landowners identified above in your response to Question 3, were benefited?

The Board discussed the urban and rural impacts of our programs. They free-flowed some ideas of non-direct benefits, including clean water and air provided to all residents in Whatcom County. Proposed programs for underutilized groups were also discussed. Programs for urban residents include education efforts in schools, rain gardens, and Tree City USA.

Department of Ecology – George informed the Board that Ecology’s Bellingham Field Office is advertising for a Compliance Assurance Specialist. Some of the duties include: serving “as a senior environmental section specialist responsible for coordinating the effective and efficient planning, implementation and maintenance of nonpoint Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the Northwest Region to ensure compliance with Ecology standards and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) construction specifications and OFM quality standards. The position exercises independent professional judgment in managing complex projects, scheduling and overseeing work crews, coordinating with local agencies such as counties and conservation districts and provides technical assistance to livestock managers and landowners that help them protect water quality as part of a successful operation, including linking livestock managers with available cost-share funding programs.” Many of these duplicate the activities of our staff.

IX. Record of Board Actions.

14-07 Larry Helm moved to correct the December 2013 board meeting minutes as reflected above. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-08 Larry Helm moved that the minutes of the January 9, 2014 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-09 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.

14-10

The following voucher/warrants are approved for payment:

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14-11 Larry Helm moved to approve the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for:

- **Aaron Lancaster #2.**

Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-12 Larry Helm moved to certify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for:

- Chad Postma.

Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-13 Larry Helm moved to approve the EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share application for Carl Obermeier for \$340. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-14 Larry Helm moved to approve the EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share application for Jeff Sprecher for \$4,750. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-15 Dick Yoder moved to publish in the paper as soon as possible the RFQ for Architectural Services for a planned remodel/addition to the District's facility. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-16 Larry Helm moved to approve the Crop Location Map contract for \$6,000 with the WA State Department of Agriculture. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

14-17 Larry Davis moved to authorize the Executive Director to replace the Resource Technician. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

X. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Larry Helm 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: March 25, 2014

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____