

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2016**

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 January 14, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Larry Davis, Chair
Joe Heller

Dan Heeringa, Treasurer
Larry Helm

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant

Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Henry Bierlink, Ag Water Board

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Larry Davis, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

IV. Public Comment (written or in person).

Henry Bierlink was asked by the Watershed Improvement Districts (WIDs) and Ag Water Board to seek participation from the Whatcom Conservation District technical staff in their Ag Watershed Characterization & Mapping project for the Watershed Improvement Districts. Henry thanked the District for all the support the District has provided in the past. The Board is supportive of the WIDs, but expressed uncertainty about the availability of staff to participate due to timing and workload issues.

V. Consent Agenda.

The Board adopted a consent agenda for approval of the previous meeting minutes, financial report and accounts payable. The financial report was mailed to the Board with their draft minutes from the December 10, 2015 meeting. Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, presented the financial report. 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.

Larry Helm moved to approve the consent agenda: minutes of the December 10, 2015 Board meeting as mailed, the financial report and authorize payment of District invoices and incurred expenses (below), as listed in the Accounts Payable Report. The Board further authorizes the payment of District expenses incurred subject to their review and approval at the next Board meeting. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The following voucher/warrants are approved for payment:

Dec 2015 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>23272</u>	through	<u>23288</u>	and totaling	<u>4,491.17</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>23289</u>	through	<u>23305</u>	and totaling	<u>32,993.73</u>
January 2016					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>23306</u>	through	<u>23324</u>	and totaling	<u>21,434.13</u>

Payroll check numbers:	<u>23325</u>	through	<u>23340</u>	and totaling	<u>32,138.92</u>
Voucher	<u>EFT</u>			and totaling	<u>3.20</u>

VI. Action Items.

A. Approval of Conservation Plans.

Dairy Nutrient Management Plan (DNMP) Approval –

There were two Dairy Nutrient Management Plans submitted for Board approval. Staff recommended approval as the plans contain the necessary elements prescribed by the Conservation Commission and the operator has signed it indicating that it accurately reflects the operation and agrees to its implementation.

Larry Helm moved to approve the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Meadow Park #2 (Kevin Engelsma). Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.

One of the Dairy Nutrient Management Plans is also submitted for Board certification. Nichole Embertson reviewed the plan for Twin Brook Creamery and recommended that the Board approve and recertify it. It met the applicable requirements for certification and the producer certified that he was managing accordingly.

Joe Heller moved to approve and recertify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Twin Brook Creamery (Larry Stap). Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Conservation Farm Plan Approval –

Chuck Timblin completed an inventory and farm plan for three moderate intensity farms. The plans fulfill the requisite elements for that type of plan. Staff recommended Board approval.

Joe Heller moved to approve the Conservation Farm Plan for Brar Brothers (Harbinder & Jamail Brar). Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Larry Helm moved to approve the Conservation Farm Plan for KN Berry Farms (Harman Brar). Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Larry Helm moved to approve the Conservation Farm Plan for Maberry Packing (Jon Maberry). Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Dues.

NACD sent 2016 membership dues information for renewal. There was discussion that it is beneficial to support the efforts of Wade Troutman (NACD Executive Board member and supervisor from Foster Creek CD) and Michael Crowder (WACD National Director to NACD and supervisor from Benton CD). In the past it was suggested to provide 1% of the District's discretionary funds, which would be \$390 this year.

Larry Helm moved to renew the National Association of Conservation District membership dues for \$390.00 total. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Employee Step Increase.

Until employees achieve the top step within their payscale band, they are eligible for an annual step increase based upon time served (1 year full time equivalent at each step). Emily Hirsch is eligible for a step increase effective January 1, 2016. In addition to serving one more year, she has performed exemplarily and has become a fully accredited Professional Wetland Scientist.

The proposed step increase was anticipated and included in the 2015-2016 annual budget.

Larry Helm asked that step increases be included in the consent agenda, since staff has never been turned down for an increase in the four years that he has been on the Board. If there were a concern over an Employee and an increase, the item could be removed from the consent agenda and addressed. Addressing employee step increases within the consent agenda was approved.

Larry Helm move to approve a step increase in payroll for Emily Hirsch to Band C1 Step 6. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

D. Election Envelopes.

George and Dawn talked with Debbie Adelstein, Whatcom County Auditor and her staff regarding ways to make our elections materials more similar and therefore familiar to voters. We are seeking bids to print 10,000 envelopes each (mailing, return and secrecy envelopes) in the format used by Whatcom County for their election process. Based upon the interest in our 2015 election we estimate that 10,000 envelopes will be enough for several years.

Larry Helm move to authorize hiring a printer to produce election envelopes and other necessary materials for the 2016 Supervisor Election up to \$5,000. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VII. Other Business.

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

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) –

NRCS staff worked in December on end of the year activities. They have a January 15 deadline to have all EQIP applications “eligible.” There are 89 applications that staff is working through. NRCS hired a new program assistant in the Mt. Vernon field office, who has been a tremendous help with the process.

The ranking deadline is February 19. Preapprovals are due on March 4. Applicants will have 90 days to commit to a contract that has been preapproved. June 3 is the obligation deadline.

Joy Hawley participated in the production of a national webinar on working with dairymen in the EQIP program.

Staffing –

Sarah Tanuvasa has been hired as the new District Conservationist for the NRCS Northwest Area in Mt. Vernon. Alex gave the Board her background. Sarah will be visiting the Lynden office on January 28.

A TSP agreement for 2016 is under development for Chris Clark, Bill Bonsen and Frank Corey.

Building –

Alex reported that the USDA agencies will probably not be able to move out mid-February, since the building into which they are moving will not be ready by that date. Options to accommodate the lab were discussed.

B. Supervisor Reports.

Larry Helm –

Larry Helm reported that the Whatcom County Ag Advisory Committee has not had a quorum for four months.

The Technical Advisory Committee is working on updating Whatcom County’s Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). There was discussion regarding concerns with some proposed language. The Board directed George to write a letter to Whatcom County Planning Commission and Whatcom County Council explaining the District’s perspective on the CAO.

Nooksack Indian Tribe Proposal for National Estuary Program Grant Funding –

Larry Helm said that he would like a presentation on the project before he voted. George talked with Oliver Grah prior to the meeting and invited him to attend. The Board discussed that farmer support for the project is important, and waiting until after the tribes and farmers reach agreement on water quality issues.

Larry Helm moved to write a letter to the Nooksack Tribe explaining that to receive Whatcom Conservation District support of their proposed projects there needs to be buy-in support from farmers and landowners impacted. Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The Board directed George to write a letter to the Nooksack Tribe explaining that the Whatcom Conservation District supports farmers sitting down with the tribes to have full support of projects and that this request for support is premature.

Larry Davis –

As Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) Secretary/Treasurer, Larry is assisting WACD with the search for a new Executive Director, since Dave Vogel is retiring at the end of February.

WACD Legislative Days – Legislative Days is scheduled for February 22 & 23. Larry Helm, Larry Davis and George will attend. There was discussion at WACD about having an educational booth at WACD Legislative Days. The Board decided not to participate in a booth.

C. George Boggs, Executive Director.

WACD Annual Meeting Resolutions & By-Laws –

George passed out copies of the WACD annual meeting resolutions and by-laws changes that were adopted at the annual meeting in Spokane.

Staff Workload –

Following the public records requests to the Whatcom Conservation District and other agencies, there has been an increase in farmers requesting farm plan updates and calling with concerns. These added requests mean a workload issue for staff. George refreshed the Board on the workload priority that was adopted. He sought direction on how to proceed.

The Board decided to work with George on a workload and compensation analysis for current staff. Options for funding should be reviewed as well. Larry Davis and Larry Helm agreed to be on a committee that reviews employee compensation and funding options in addition to completing revisions to the Personnel Manual. Draft changes of the manual should be sent to the other Board members and staff for comment.

Lab Manager –

George reported that he and Nichole Embertson completed interviews for the Lab Manager under the CIG grant.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

16-01 Larry Helm moved to approve the consent agenda: minutes of the December 10, 2015 Board meeting as mailed, the financial report and authorize payment of District invoices and incurred expenses (below), as listed in the Accounts Payable Report. The Board further authorizes the payment of District expenses incurred subject to their review and approval at the next Board meeting. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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- 16-02 Larry Helm moved to approve the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Meadow Park #2 (Kevin Engelsma). Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-03 Joe Heller moved to approve and recertify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Twin Brook Creamery (Larry Stap). Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-04 Joe Heller moved to approve the Conservation Farm Plan for Brar Brothers (Harbinder & Jamail Brar). Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-05 Larry Helm moved to approve the Conservation Farm Plan for KN Berry Farms (Harman Brar). Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-06 Larry Helm moved to approve the Conservation Farm Plan for Maberry Packing (Jon Maberry). Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-07 Larry Helm moved to renew the National Association of Conservation District membership dues for \$390.00 total. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-08 Larry Helm move to approve a step increase in payroll for Emily Hirsch to Band C1 Step 6. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-09 Larry Helm move to authorize hiring a printer to produce election envelopes and other necessary materials for the 2016 Supervisor Election up to \$5,000. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.**
- 16-10 Larry Helm moved to write a letter to the Nooksack Tribe explaining that to receive Whatcom Conservation District support of their proposed projects there needs to be buy-in support from farmers and landowners impacted. Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Dan Heeringa moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 p.m. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Dated: February 22, 2016

Approved: _____

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant