

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2010**

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 11, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Joe Heller	Terry Lenssen
Larry Davis	Ed Stone
Dick Yoder	

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director	Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant	Robyn du Pré, Fruit Tree Planting Foundation

III. Meeting Called to Order.

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

IV. Financial Report.

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

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, asked if there were any questions regarding the Financial Report. There were no questions.

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

July 2010 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>17872</u>	through	<u>17938</u>	and totaling	<u>\$90,441.22</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>17939</u>	through	<u>17952</u>	and totaling	<u>\$28,146.84</u>
August 2010					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>17953</u>	through	<u>17970</u>	and totaling	<u>\$25,524.58</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>17971</u>	through	<u>17985</u>	and totaling	<u>\$28,483.91</u>

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

V. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Larry Davis moved that the minutes of the July 7, 2010 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Robyn du Pré, Fruit Tree Planting Foundation Presentation.

The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation (FTPF) strategically donates orchards where the harvest will benefit communities for generations – at places such as public schools, homeless shelters, drug rehabs, low-income neighborhoods, international hunger relief sites. The Foundation was founded in 2002 by David Wolfe, respected authority on raw food nutrition.

Robyn du Pré is FTPF's director for Outreach & Development and comes to FTPF with more than twenty years experience working in nonprofit conservation organizations. Robyn serves as FTPF's media contact and directs all fundraising efforts nationwide.

Robyn shared some of the successful projects that the FTPF has completed. They have done projects in the United States and abroad.

The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation has four staff members. They rely heavily on volunteers to complete their projects. The examples show that they plant small and large trees and how the FTPF partners with various groups and volunteers.

Robyn is interested in partnering with the Whatcom Conservation District on a project. She did not have a particular project in mind. Ideas were brainstormed including the potential to partner with the 6th Grade Tour and pollinator habitat. The issue will be further researched as to logistics and legality and brought back to the Board.

VII. Action Items.

A. Approval of Contracts.

Livestock Cost-share Application –

There was one application for livestock cost-share submitted for Board approval and submittal to the WA Conservation Commission for funding consideration.

Terry Lenssen moved to approve the Livestock Cost-share Application for \$25,000 for Corby Groen for a manure transfer, pumping plant and sprinkler and submit it to the WA Conservation Commission for funding consideration. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. Drug Free Workplace Policy –

Our EPA grant requires that the District have a Drug Free Workplace Policy. Dawn did some research and provided the supervisors with some sample language. The Board discussed the draft and approved the policy.

Ed Stone moved to approve and adopt the Drug Free Workplace Policy shown on the attached Resolution 2010-1. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Skagit Conservation District Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) –

The Memorandum of Agreement with Skagit Conservation District expired. Skagit CD submitted for renewal. George reviewed and updated the MOA deleting clauses that no longer reflected current or anticipated district activities. Also, it was recommended to extend the expiration date to 2015.

Ed Stone moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with Skagit Conservation District setting the expiration date for 2015. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

D. Bids on Heating, Ventilation and Air Condition (HVAC) Units –

As per direction from the Board, staff solicited bids for the replacement of two of the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Units. The Board reviewed the three responses. The rebates were less than expected. Since this potential expenditure was quite significant and the Board did not want to deplete the District's reserves, it was decided to consider the recommendation to replace computers before deciding on making any purchase.

E. Upgrading Computers and Software –

Andrew Phay supplied the Board with a cost estimate for computer and software upgrades for all staff as per their request at the last meeting.

As noted in Andrew's memo to the Board, it has become apparent in the last couple of years that the software used throughout the office has become very out-dated. The District is presently using MS Office XP/2002. The software licenses were purchased in 2003, so it has been in use for roughly 7 years. There have been 3 iterations of MS Office since then. At this point staff aren't able to open and work with many of the files that are being sent to them from the Commission and other agencies.

Over the past couple of years the District's computers have become very obsolete. Three of our employees are working on computers that were purchased in 2002. These old computers are causing quite a bit of time being wasted while the users are waiting for them to do something. There is a need to upgrade the hardware to keep employees working efficiently. The cost of the hardware upgrade for computers will come to approximately \$9,100.

Along with the hardware upgrade the District will also have to do a software upgrade, as mentioned last month. In addition to MS Office Suite 2010, the Adobe software will need to be updated. It has become apparent with the purchase of the CREP machines that the Adobe software currently in use does not run well on Windows 7 because it was made for Windows XP. To bring most computers up-to-date and all running Windows 7 the District will need to purchase a few copies of the operating system. The upgrade cost of the software is about \$6,000.

The plotter (large format printer) was purchased 10 years ago and also needs replacing. The plotter is used to print maps larger than 11x17in and up to 36x48in. This includes wall maps and posters for CREP, dairy, small farm, education and other projects. With the increase in the use of aerial photography and more graphics on posters, the plotter can't keep up with the amount of data that needs to print. Andrew spent over 6 hours printing a display poster that should have taken about 20 min. The replacement costs for this plotter is about \$7,000.

The accompanying spreadsheet has a breakdown of the pricing. The total will be ~\$22,000. In the future Andrew will create a schedule to keep the machines up-to-date by buying a few every year and moving the older machines to those users that don't use as much processing power.

It was decided to get the computers as outlined, less the one for Beth, since she is leaving the District's employ. The Board decided to wait on replacing the plotter, seeking further input from Andrew at the next meeting.

Terry Lenssen moved to approve purchasing computers and software as outlined in the cost estimate, less one for Beth. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

F. Bids on Heating, Ventilation and Air Condition (HVAC) Units (cont.) –

The Board returned to the issue of the HVAC unit bids. The equipment was nearing but had not yet reached the end of its useful life. The incentives that were available from Puget Sound Energy and Sustainable Connections were insufficient to offset this.

Ed Stone moved to reject all bids for the HVAC unit replacements at this time. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed with one objection (Dick Yoder.)

VIII. Other Business.

A. Supervisor Reports.

Joe Heller –

Joe attended the EPA tour put on by District staff. There was discussion regarding the tour and the challenges faced to put it on. The handouts were very good.

Terry Lenssen –

Terry's farm was the stop on the EPA tour. There were 24 EPA, State Department of Ag, Community and WACD representatives on the tour, including Larry Elworth, Chief Agricultural Counselor, from EPA's Washington, DC office and Dan Newhouse, Washington State Department of Ag Director. There was discussion on the tour regarding the ARM system and dairy producers' challenges. The farm stop was well received and there was a good exchange of questions and answers by agency staff and the District.

Larry Elworth is the Chair of the Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee. George is on this committee.

Larry Davis –

Due to travel restrictions, Joe and George were in the van with Larry Elworth and Wayne Chaudiere. Larry Davis was on the bus with WCD staff and the other agency representatives. The presentation on the bus was very good as well. Larry Elworth asked good questions. It was a favorable tour.

B. George Boggs, Executive Director.

Staffing Change –

Beth Chisholm reluctantly resigned her position with the District. She is taking a new job at WSU Extension working on their Community Gardens grant. It will allow her to work from home and be in town closer to her family. Her last day is August 19, 2010. Beth expressed her appreciation of her time at the District and thanked the Board. George informed them that we were having a luncheon at the office for Beth on August 19, 2010.

George advised that with uncertainties associated with the State's budget, and the fact that continued support from the County for the small farm program was unlikely, he could not recommend filling Beth's position at this time. Chuck would take over the entire small farms that he shared with Beth. The Board asked about keeping the intern on to help with workload. The Budget will be reviewed to determine if have a part-time position is feasible.

CPAL contract –

George informed the Board that at Whatcom County's budget meeting it was tentatively proposed to give the District \$37,000 per year for the CPAL program for 2011 and 2012. With the deterioration of the County's financial situation this isn't something to plan on.

Pesticides in Manure –

George reported that the chemical used on some fields got into the manure. Apparently this was exported as compost to home owners and manure to a few organic farms. It was reported that there were crop failures. George talked about the chemical labeling. If the reports were true, following the label could have prevented that injury. The Department of Ecology is looking into the issue. George reviewed how crops and grasses react to the herbicide. The problems are that the herbicide is very toxic to sensitive crops at very, very low concentrations, is very persistent (long lasting) in the soil, is shed by the animal eating hay from fields treated with the pesticide so that it is in the manure, and does not brake down when composted.

Dairy Nutrient Management Planning (DNMP) –

The Departments of Ecology and Agriculture along with the WA Conservation Commission and Washington Association of Conservation Districts are meeting together to discuss what updates there should be to the Dairy Nutrient Management Act. George and Nichole Embertson were invited to participate in the process as experts.

Birch Bay Grant –

Whatcom County signed the inter-local agreement for the Birch Bay EPA project. The next step in the project is to solicit bids for two contractors. One is a marketing consultant to do outreach materials. The other is for the part-time watershed steward in Birch Bay. The Birch Bay Watershed Aquatic Resource Management committee is setting up an advisory group to work with the watershed steward.

Swift Creek –

There is a meeting with EPA scheduled for September 2, 2010 regarding Swift Creek. There is a hope to get funds to cover the cost for changing water rights withdrawals from surface to ground. The Department of Ecology said that it would cost \$250,000 to process 20 requests.

Upcoming Events –

Craig MacConnell is retiring from WSU Extension. There is a gathering on Monday, August 16, 2010.

Skagit Conservation District is having their Awards Dinner on September 14, 2010.

The NW Area meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2010 at the Bellwether Hotel. Whatcom is hosting this year.

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

Programs –

The 2010 Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and Wetland Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) are complete. They got funding for one more organic project.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) sign-ups were approved for funding.

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) –

Alex reported on sign-ups for next year's EQIP. There are a dozen or so new sign-ups plus seven deferred from last year.

Technical Service Provider (TSP) – The TSP funding is helping to fund technical staff to work on EQIP projects.

NRCS Area Meeting – Alex reported that they attended an area meeting. Washington State is a leader in getting federal funds to landowners through NRCS programs.

There was a lot of positive feedback from the congressional tour. Whatcom showcased good partnerships. Roylene Rides at the Door told her staff that this should have a positive impact on the future Farm Bill on which Congress is currently working.

IX. Record of Board Actions.

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10-72 Ed Stone moved to reject all bids for the HVAC unit replacements at this time. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed with one objection (Dick Yoder.)

X. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Larry Davis moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Dated: September 16, 2010

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____