

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2009**

I. Time and Place of Meeting.

A regular meeting of the Board of Supervisor of the Whatcom Conservation District was held at the Ag Service Center, 6975 Hannegan Rd, Lynden, Washington on January 14, 2009, at 6:30 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dick Yoder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ed Stone
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sabina Gouran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Joe Heller
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Terry Lenssen		

Also in attendance were:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	George Boggs, District Manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alex Hall, NRCS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant		

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Dick Yoder as Chairman of the meeting called it to order at 6:35 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Joe Heller moved that the minutes of the December 16, 2008 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Financial Report.

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

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

Joe Heller moved to approve the Financial Report. Sabina Gouran 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:

Dec 2008 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>16501</u>	through	<u>16513</u>	and totaling	<u>79,935.06</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>16514</u>	through	<u>16527</u>	and totaling	<u>25,134.61</u>
January 2009					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>16528</u>	through	<u>16566</u>	and totaling	<u>40,931.25</u>

Payroll check numbers:	<u>16567</u>	through	<u>16580</u>	and totaling	<u>25,680.22</u>
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>16581</u>	through	<u>16582</u>	and totaling	<u>329.93</u>

moved by Joe Heller. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Action Items.

A. Approval of Contracts.

CREP Contracts –

There was one project submitted for Board approval. It is an assignment and assumption of the Lighthouse Mission CREP project.

Sabina Gouran moved to ratify the CREP contract for Dan & Chris Thompson (formerly Lighthouse Mission - 08-04-CR:08-30). Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

NRCS Agreement –

George distributed a draft agreement with NRCS for copy fees and vehicle use. The agreement will be ready for Board approval and signature at the next meeting following review by the NRCS state office.

George reported that the TSP agreement had expired. We are waiting for a renewal of the state and federal agreement before any further contracts are awarded. George spoke with Mark Clark at the WACD Convention regarding the matter. Mark said that the Commission would cover the vouchers until an agreement could get approved and signed.

B. Approval of Conservation Plans.

One Dairy Nutrient Management Plan was submitted for Board approval.

Sabina Gouran moved to approve the Dairy Nutrient Management Farm plan for Vander Haak Dairy. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Other Action Items.

Audit Exit Interview –

The auditor asked to set up an exit interview with the Board. Several dates and times were given. All Board members expressed the desire to be present. A special Board meeting was set up for January 22, 2009 at 1:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Ed Stone moved to set up a special meeting for the audit exit interview on January 22, 2009 from 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Employee Step Increases –

George reviewed the existing employment policy regarding step increases and said that all eligible employees warrant the increase under the guidelines. He stated that unless the Board wanted to depart from current policy, it should approve the step increase. Further, that it may want to create a committee to review the employee compensation package. There was discussion about the current policy. Ed asked whether staff were currently satisfied. George replied that they were.

Sabina Gouran moved to approve the step increases for eligible employees as noted. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Employee Matters –

Ed Stone moved to approve discussion of a cost of living increase. Terry Lensen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

It was then noted that only four people were eligible for step increases, since all other employees were at the top of their band. They would not receive step increases. There had been inflation the previous year for which federal, state and county employees had received a cost of living increase in 2008. However, the economy was deteriorating. It was questioned whether in light of this a cost of living adjustment should be made at this time.

In deliberating over the issue, the Board noted that the previously adopted 2008-09 budget anticipated a 3% cost of living increase. It was important to maintain a level of compensation to retain good staff. Further, that the 3% adjustment would not be a determinative factor if revenues dropped with the next biennium funding. The Board would be looking at more significant adjustments such as staff reductions, furloughs etc. to close any gaps. The Board expressed the desire to have staff input on any compensation changes contemplated.

Sabina Gouran moved to approve a 3% cost of living adjustment to the pay scale. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VII. Other Business.

A. Alex Hall, NRCS.

Flooding –

NRCS staff is working with Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Whatcom Conservation District staff to assess flood damage in Whatcom County. There are several state and federal programs available to assist landowners if there is enough damage to get the claims necessary for the programs. Alex mentioned the Emergency Conservation Program through FSA and the Emergency Watershed Program through NRCS that has an eminent danger clause. Whatcom County River and Flood is actively assessing flood damage in the County. We will continue to correspond with them on the matter.

NRCS Audit –

Alex informed the Board that the NRCS Audit was completed. There were no issues locally. Things looked pretty good state-wide as well.

EQIP –

Bill and Chris continued to work on EQIP projects while NRCS staff was working on the audit, so they are not too far behind. Local staff needs to get Cultural Resource Assessment requests in to area staff for EQIP projects.

NRCS will coordinate with the District's plant sale to assist EQIP participants to complete practices when scheduled.

Dairy Nutrient Management –

NRCS staff and the Conservation District staff are working on modifying manure application guidelines. NRCS is ensuring that manure application guidelines will still follow NRCS guidelines.

B. George Boggs.

Salmon Summit –

The Nooksack Recovery Team (NRT) is seeking partners in the Salmon Summit. In the past the District has been able to host a track. The funds are not available to participate at that level this year. There was discussion regarding the Salmon Summit and the outreach opportunity.

Sabina Gouran moved to advertise/participate at the Salmon Summit at the Chum level of \$250. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Bookcases –

District staff needs storage space. George tasked Andrew will soliciting three bids for sturdy shelving for four work stations that can be mounted on the wall. George reviewed the three bids with the Board. Blackburn Office - open shelf wall tracks for four workstations the total was \$3,456. Ferguson Woodworking – wooden bookcases at \$485 per bookcase for a total of \$1,940.00 with \$60/hr installation. Marky's Woodworks – wooden bookcases at \$212.50 per bookcase for a total of \$850 plus tax.

Terry Lenssen moved to accept the bid and purchase 4 wooden bookcases from Marky's Woodworks for \$850 plus tax. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Dairy Nutrient Management –

George gave the Board an outline of manure application recommendations as outlined in existing dairy nutrient farm plans. In 1997 after the shellfish bed closures recommendations were made to address the water quality issue. Assumptions were made on when manure should be applied based anecdotally on winter weather and rainfall data combined with T-sum 200. There are winter cut-off dates based on flooding potential and winter rainfall. If the area is prone to flooding then the cut off date is October 15th. Producers can apply after T-sum 200 or February 15th even if there is rain.

Fall applications are showing up in high fecal coliform counts in the shellfish beds. District staff is looking at the potential to change the manure application period to January 1 through September 30th, with management. Staff is putting together a checklist to manage manure application. Four areas will be addressed by the checklist.

1. Soil Moisture – a maximum % of soil moisture will be determined. This will involve looking at the soil moisture of a field, including a hand test. Are the soils saturated?
2. Application rates – set brackets designating what can and can not be done. Set up a table that takes into account soil moisture for application rates. Ohio and Michigan are looking at soil moisture and manure applications.
3. Set Back width – determine the minimum set back based on soil moisture.
4. Soil Type
5. Anticipated precipitation

The above outlined checklist would offer guidance for winter manure applications. Terry mentioned that the key to storage is the last cutting and application afterward to lower lagoon manure levels.

George predicted that the tribes and others could be concerned about a change from the status quo. It may be that to gain their support there would be some measures such as a notice of intent to apply manure required to ensure that producers were following the process. Should high levels be detected in the river or tributary, it could be possible to review where, when and how much was applied. It could be that a notice of intent to apply manure that would be sent to the WA State Department of Ag (WSDA) to ensure that a producer went through the checklist prior to manure application.

Staff is looking at forage covers and set backs. After the checklist and accompanying documents are completed, they will be given to Fred Likkel and David Haggith as representatives of the Dairy Federation to review and share with the Dairy Federation.

NRCS staff is working with the District to fit the proposed checklist into NRCS guidelines. There are some unknowns. All proposed changes are based on science. The documents will also be sent to John Gillies for his review and comments.

Dick asked about soil moisture monitors. Would installing monitors help? Soil moisture monitors cost \$1,500 each. There was discussion regarding the potential to seek state or federal cost-share for soil moisture monitor stations.

George wanted the Board and the industry to be comfortable with the planning process and the potential changes. Staff will be laying out cropping systems. There was discussion regarding potential ramifications if a producer discharged manure or was found to pollute.

Budget –

George reported that the Governor's proposed budget would have the WA Conservation Commission funded at levels that would maintain district programs. The WA Conservation Commission would cut the database project and the Pioneers in Conservation program. Other programs and Commission staff would be funded at current levels. However except for Livestock and CREP funds the other programs are in a single pot. It is uncertain how the Commission would distribute. This budget projects a \$5 billion deficit and will be revisited in March.

March 25, 2009 is the WACD legislative day. George requested Supervisor presence to give input to the Legislature regarding the Conservation District budget.

George reviewed some additional grant opportunities that the District is pursuing. A consultant approached George to be on a team for the Birch Bay Project. The National Park in Idaho would like to contract with Nichole to do a complete air quality assessment of the part. Timing may be a factor. Nichole is applying for grants for sustainable farming practices. The City of Abbotsford is working on a storm water low impact development (LID) cross border project. George shared with them Frank Corey and Tom Slocum's credentials on LID. George was contacted by Whatcom County to assist on a storm water plan on Lake Whatcom and Silver Creek.

George asked the Board if they desired to work towards getting an assessment for the District. It was decided that now was not the time. The District needs to develop a strategic plan and get it vetted by other agencies.

Flooding –

George showed a video of the flight showing the floods in Whatcom County that Andrew and Chris took. There was one dairy that had to move cows due to the floods. George and Chris went out to check out the flooding on the 8th and there was no water over the facility. It appears that the Sumas River overtopped causing the flooding at Van Middendorp dairy.

Bertrand WID –

The Bertrand Watershed Improvement District (WID) thanked the Conservation District for the mapping and GIS work that we provided to them. They gave the District a copy of their report.

Livestock Stakeholders Meeting –

There is a reporting requirement for all livestock operations of 1000 or more head to report certain types of releases, including nitrogen. Producers are encouraged to report or perhaps be subject to a fine for failure to report.

February Board Meeting –

Ed is going to be out of town on Feb 11. The Board rescheduled the February meeting to February 18th.

Miscellaneous –

There was discussion regarding Supervisor candidates. Sabina informed the Board that she will not be able to serve another term.

Joe informed the Board that there was some landslide damage in the form of debris torrents that have re-channeled some streams due to the flooding.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

09-1 Joe Heller moved that the minutes of the December 16, 2008 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

09-2 Joe Heller moved to approve the Financial Report. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

09-3

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09-5 Sabina Gouran moved to approve the Dairy Nutrient Management Farm plan for Vander Haak Dairy. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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09-9 Sabina Gouran moved to approve a 3% cost of living adjustment to the pay scale. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

09-10 Sabina Gouran moved to advertise/participate at the Salmon Summit at the Chum level of \$250. Terry Lensen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

09-11 Terry Lensen moved to accept the bid and purchase 4 wooden bookcases from Marky's Woodworks for \$850 plus tax. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Ed Stone moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Dated: February 24, 2009

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____