

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Board of Supervisor Regular Meeting**

9:00 AM
October 26, 2020

District Office – virtual meeting
6975 Hannegan Rd

MEETING SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Christianson called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PRESENT

Board Members

- X Heather Christianson, Chair
- X Suzzi Snyder, Vice-Chair
- X Larry Davis, Secretary/Treasurer
- X Alan Chapman
- X Valeri Wade

Administrative Staff & Others in Attendance

- X George Boggs, Executive Director
- X Dawn Bekenyi, District Clerk/Auditor
- X Frank Corey
- X Jean Fike, WSCC
- X Aneka Sweeney, Outreach Coordinator
- X Corina Cheever, Livestock Program Coordinator
- X Alex Hall, NRCS

Roll call of attendees.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

OPEN SESSION (In person or written)

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED BY CHAPMAN AND SECONDED BY WADE TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS. MOTION CARRIED (5-0).

1. Request approval of Meeting Summary for September 28, 2020 special meeting of the Board.
2. Request approval of Financial Reports for September 2020.
3. Request approval of CREP state reimbursement contracts for DeKriek & South Nooksack Farms LLC.
4. Request approval of CREP state reimbursement contracts for Alan Freysinger & Badger Acres LLC.
5. Request approval signed agreement with Dept of Fish & Wildlife to extend NRCS RCPP project through September 2021.

Discussed ranking criteria for RCPP projects. Frank will send a copy of the ranking criteria to the Board.

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA

Minutes approved as presented at the November 23, 2020 Board meeting.

OTHER ITEMS**1. Blaine Connections Program Collaboration Agreement.**

The North Cascades Institute and Blaine School District offered a contract to provide some in-person classroom learning with the Watershed Explorer. There are some gaps in teaching with distance learning, they want to address. The project will fund Gabriella one day a week for outreach in-person learning. Aneka shared the project budget of approximately \$2,000 and timeline of December 25, 2020.

Aneka shared more details on how the program will work with the small group of kids and educators and specialized presenters and where the classes will be held. Aneka answered questions regarding the program. It was made clear that there will only be environmental education.

Snydar moved to approve the agreement with the Blaine School District and North Cascades Institute subject to Enduris providing insurance. Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

2. Livestock Team Report.

Corina Cheever gave a presentation on the Livestock program. 2020 Cost-share programs, including PIC Program and Washington State Conservation Commission Cost-share. Corina reported on landowner match. She shared pictures of projects funded through PIC program. Corina shared customer service survey results regarding the livestock program.

There was discussion regarding the technical assistance provided to landowners that allows them to participate in NRCS EQIP funding. It was explained that there are limitations and requirements to be eligible to participate in the livestock programs and EQIP funding program. EQIP is mostly for commercial operations due to revenue requirements for eligibility. Our funding for cost-share and technical assistance is for bacteria treatment focus, water quality improvements, not farming practice enhancements to produce greater yields.

3. Overhead Charge.

George reviewed the overhead/indirect rate allowed on salaries and benefits for grants. 25% indirect has not changed since he started 20 years ago. While our expenses have gone up. That has not sustained our costs to run the operation. He reported on the various indirect rates allowed by granting agencies; our negotiated rate with EPA for federal project, WSCC allows 25% and Ecology allows 30%.

Discussed how the rate is calculated and factored into proposed new projects. George endeavor to have indirect rates to cover as much as possible of the project. Fair and reasonable expense.

The Board directed George to negotiate hard, but negotiate to something improving the overhead rate for all future funding opportunities.

4. Potential changes to CD Elections Process.

Jean Fike discussed concerns that legislature might have regarding District elections and accountability by Conservation District's for their elections. On November 21 there will be another state-wide meeting on Supervisor elections.

Minutes approved as presented at the November 23, 2020 Board meeting.

The Washington State Conservation Commission sent out a survey with four options for elections seeking input. Each option was reviewed in detail by the Board and the form was completed for submittal.

- Extend board terms of office to four years – yes
- Conduction elections every other year – yes
- Allow CDs to set the election date at a point during the year – yes, necessary if on general ballot
- Provide option for districting/zones for elected board supervisor elections – not in agreement

The Whatcom Conservation District 2021 Supervisor Election Resolution will be approved at November board meeting.

5. Alex Hall, NRCS.

EQIP deadline sign up in November 20, 2020.

The National Water Quality Initiative watershed reports completed by the Whatcom Conservation District have been received by NRCS and are being reviewed to add these additional watersheds for the opportunity for federal cost-share funding.

6. Adjudication of Water Rights/District's Role in the Matter?

There was Board discussion regarding the impacts of water rights adjudication in the farming community and their concerns. There is potential funding for facilitating adjudication and costs to do the process. George explained how current water rights work with the use it or lose it mandate. There has to be a better way to manage water use.

The District does not currently have funding for this issues. The Board agreed that the District should be responsive to requests for assistance, as asked, and find were we can participate in the process seeking funding as needed.

7. Executive Director Report.

George reported on things that have been accomplished.

County's Executive Budget did not include anything for fire prevention like the previous budget. It will need someone from the County Council to request funding for the program. The District received a letter from the City of Bellingham to Satpal Singh Sindhu in support of funding the program. We need \$25,000 each year to support a fire prevention program. George reported some potential sources of funding. He asked the Board to reach out to Council members for support.

The District Office has a new phone system with faster internet.

George is not sure how long staff will be out of the office.

George reported on needed building repairs and the potential for funding to install solar panels to save expenses.

Minutes approved as presented at the November 23, 2020 Board meeting.

George provided a fiscal report for the first quarter of the fiscal year. We are shifting our accounting software by the end of the year.

INTRODUCTION ITEMS

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER ITEMS AND BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

None.

Record of Board Actions.

20-37 IT WAS MOVED BY CHAPMAN AND SECONDED BY WADE TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS. MOTION CARRIED (5-0).

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20-38 Snyder moved to approve the agreement with the Blaine School District and North Cascades Institute subject to Enduris providing insurance. Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Adjournment.

**IT WAS MOVED BY DAVIS. SECONDED BY WADE:
to adjourn the meeting at 12:05 am.
MOTION CARRIED. (5-0)**

There being no further business before the meeting, adjourned the meeting at 12:05 a.m.

Dawn Bekenyi, District Auditor