

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

9:00 AM  
January 25, 2021

District Office – virtual meeting  
6975 Hannegan Rd

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Christianson called the meeting to order at 9:03 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, Riparian Habitat Coordinator
- X Nichole Embertson, Research Team
- X Mike Bozzo

Roll call of attendees.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

**OPEN SESSION (In person or written)**

None.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

1. Request approval of Meeting Summary for December 28, 2020 meeting of the Board.
2. Request approval of Financial Reports for December 2020.
3. Approve Farm Plan for Alpine Meadows Christmas Tree Farm
4. O'Connor Step Increase approval.
5. Approve Whatcom County Wildfire Risk Contract for Services for \$50,000.
6. Adoption of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) proposed amendment to the Employee Manual.

**REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA**

**OTHER ITEMS**

1. **Request for fiancé to be added to Health Insurance Coverage.**  
George followed up with Public Employees Benefit Board and was informed that the eligibility for coverage is set up statute and that fiancés are not eligible. It is moot, since we cannot provide the relief that was requested.

Minutes approved as submitted at the February 22, 2021 Board meeting.

**2. Science and Research Program Update.**

Nichole gave a slide show presentation on the Science and Research Program. Nichole answered Board questions.

**3. Cluster Engineer Agreement.**

George provided comments to the draft Cluster Engineer Agreement, including proof of insurance for Engineer. All Conservation Districts are members of Enduris and should have adequate general and professional liability coverage. George explained that the Commission funding provided for Cluster Engineers and any potential projects needed in excess of the Cluster Engineer hours are to be contracted separately. Each District is allocated a certain number of Cluster Engineer hours per the contract.

Larry asked about how often the Cluster Engineer committee meets. Larry wanted to know who the District representative to those meetings would be.

**It was moved by Chapman to approve and sign the alternate version with the redlines of the Cluster Engineer Agreement with Skagit Conservation District. Davis seconded. The motion passed.**

Alan Chapman agreed to be the District's appointed Cluster Engineer committee representative and review Tom Slocum's reports.

**4. Provide Comment to 76 Acre Surface Mine Request.**

Larry Davis reviewed that the Ag Advisory Committee did not find that the science showed the ability to return farmable ground to usable lands or to be returned to its original use through reclamation. Not sure how viable the land is to use for pasture after mining activities.

In this instance the company already owns the land in question and have been mining other sections of this land.

George gave a background on the mining rules. Pasture being the lowest ag use that a land could be returned to. Maybe able to return to pasture, but not crops. While they are actively mining and reclaiming the land, it is not available for ag production. There are no policies in place to require mitigation for the loss of those acres.

Some considerations on mining on ag land are: Is this a temporary loss or permanent? What type of ag land is being lost, marginal pasture or crop land?

George suggested that the Board may wish to set up a policy through their process to send to Whatcom County for information or a policy on future mining on ag lands.

There was discussion on the proposed property and the development for houses happening in the area.

The Board has two actions to contemplate - comment by February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Create a sub-committee of Larry and Alan to develop a policy on future mining on ag lands.

Not much value in providing a comment by February 3, 2021 on the current permit. Alan Chapman and Larry Davis will form a committee. There was discussion regarding

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participation in the committee, quorums and public meeting requirements. The Whatcom Conservation District is non-regulatory. We want to work with everyone.

**It was moved by Chapman to form a committee (Davis and Chapman) to report to the Board at subsequent meetings as creating a policy of how the Board can comment on future ag use issues. Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Due to conflict in schedule moved to Executive Director's report. Then back to Executive Director Search.

#### **5. Executive Director Search.**

Heather gave an overview of the committee to find a new District Manager/Executive Director. The committee was formed and a job description was drafted. Next steps are to seek candidates in February and review and interview in March. Bring back to the Board for review a suggested hire.

The Board talked about the job description and how to prioritize the qualities that the Board is seeking in a candidate; what the interest is in the position. George sent out a notice to his contacts that he was leaving the District.; and interviews of candidates. If they can be done in Executive Session or must be in a general meeting if more than two Supervisors are present.

Further discussion about the job title of District Manager as opposed to the title Executive Director and compensation, including pay, leave and medical insurance. Potential relocation expenses. The Whatcom Conservation District has never paid for relocation costs in the past.

Board worked through the job description honing it for release. It was decided to review and edit it down to be more concise and broad. District Manager is a complex job with multiple duties. Job descriptions capture expectations and can be edited to be more concise, broad strokes.

**It was moved by Chapman to delegate to the search committee the responsibility to modify and post the job description. Wade seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Spreadsheet of where to post the job description. If you have any ideas of where to post, add to the list. Heather also asked the Board to think of job interview questions to ask.

### **Executive Director and Supervisor Reports.**

#### **6. Executive Director's Report.**

Financials - We were able to run payroll with the new accounting software. We are working on paying bills this week.

Budget – George reviewed the first half of the fiscal year budget. Cash flow is not reflected in the budget. He shared a budget analysis with the Board for the first part of the year.

Alan expressed a desire to provide input into Quickbooks financial reports.

Minutes approved as submitted at the February 22, 2021 Board meeting.

Water Efficiencies – Aneka and Nichole drafted a staff position to provide support to Whatcom County for the Water Efficiencies program. Staff is in contact with Whatcom County for funding.

## **7. Supervisor Reports.**

Larry posted his report.

Valeri sat in on a Board meeting on the Fish Control Board from Fish and Wildlife regarding the barrier removal projects. One for Whatcom County was in the budget. Most effective for salmon recovery is removing dams. Valeri mentioned a group from California that is seeking work in Whatcom county.

Alan explained that the Fish Barrier Removal Board is not addressing the DOT projects. Alan shared his knowledge of the California group.

## **INTRODUCTION ITEMS**

None.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER ITEMS AND BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

None.

## **Record of Board Actions.**

### **21-01 IT WAS MOVED BY DAVIS AND SECONDED BY WADE TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS. MOTION CARRIED (5-0).**

1. Request approval of Meeting Summary for December 28, 2020 meeting of the Board.
2. Request approval of Financial Reports for December 2020.
3. Approve Farm Plan for Alpine Meadows Christmas Tree Farm
4. O'Connor Step Increase approval.
5. Approve Whatcom County Wildfire Risk Contract for Services for \$50,000.
6. Adoption of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) proposed amendment to the Employee Manual.

**21-02 It was moved by Chapman to approve and sign the alternate version with the redlines of the Cluster Engineer Agreement with Skagit Conservation District. Davis seconded. The motion passed.**

**21-03 It was moved by Chapman to form a committee (Davis and Chapman) to report to the Board at subsequent meetings as creating a policy of how the Board can comment on future ag use issues. Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**21-04 It was moved by Chapman to delegate to the search committee the responsibility to modify and post the job description. Wade seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

## **Adjournment.**

**IT WAS MOVED BY DAVIS. SECONDED BY WADE:**

Minutes approved as submitted at the February 22, 2021 Board meeting.

**to adjourn the meeting at 12:09 am.  
MOTION CARRIED. (5-0)**

**There being no further business before the meeting, adjourned the meeting at  
12:09 a.m.**

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Dawn Bekenyi, District Auditor