

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

2:30 PM
November 22, 2021

District Office – hybrid meeting
6975 Hannegan Rd

MEETING SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Christianson called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM.

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PRESENT

Board Members

- X Heather Christianson, Chair
- Suzi Snyder, Vice-Chair
- X Valeri Wade, Secretary/Treasurer
- X Fred Berman
- X Alan Chapman

Administrative Staff & Others in Attendance

- X Brandy Reed, District Manager
- X Dawn Bekenyi, District Clerk/Auditor
- X Larry Davis, Associate Supervisor
- X Frank Corey
- X Corina Cheever
- X Jean Fike, WSCC
- X Alex Hall, NRCS
- X Dakota Stranik

Roll call of attendees.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

OPEN SESSION (In person or written)

None

CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. Request approval of Meeting Summary for October 25, 2021 meeting of the Board.
2. Approval of Farm Plans
 1. Matthew and Christy Aamot Farm Plan
3. Approval of Contracts
 1. WSCC Cost-share Project Approval for funding for Rich Appel
 2. 2022 Interlocal Agreement with WC for PIC Technical Assistance Amendment No 2 (ILA WC PIC TA)

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA

OTHER ITEMS

1. Organizational Assessment Presentation.

Brandy gave an organizational assessment as requested by the Board. She gave an overview of the staffing and funding needs of the organization. The presentation today being an introduction and with a more complete report to follow.

Minutes approved as presented at the December 30, 2021 Board meeting.

Brandy shared some slides with her recommendations. Preliminary. 6 areas covered. Brandy shared strengths and concerns. 1. District Policies and Procedures. Great staff and good systems in place. We have a personnel policy, Board Governance policies, and safety procedures. 2. Staff development and retention. 3. Compensation System, Salary Schedule and Benefits. 4. Program Capacity. 5. Equipment and Tangible Assets. 6. Cross-category Recommendations. After the overview, Brandy shared a proposed timeline to implement the recommendations.

Heather followed up with next steps. Brandy would like to meet with Board members one on one regarding the assessment, then meet with the board as a whole maybe in January. Brandy would like to meet with the Board to get to know them and what they are thinking.

2. **Alex Hall, NRCS.**

Flooding –

Alex gave a flood assessment of the County and livestock. Washington NRCS is working on an emergency funding to work with livestock producers in Whatcom and Skagit counties.

Inquiry for assistance from Dept. of Ag. Supply chain for feed is collapsing. They need help getting feed to animals. There is also concern about manure pumping and costs.

EQIP – 26 eligible applications were received and are now being processed.

Staffing –

NRCS is getting another planner in Mt Vernon. A Task Order with WCD was approved to work on CNMPs and restoration project plans.

FSA – Emergency Conservation Funding. FSA needs to hear about the need before they can get the funding.

Corina followed up on the feed shortage issue. Local feed mill in Sumas can't operate. This is causing a problem locally.

3. **Financial Report.**

The Oct 2021 Financials were reviewed and November checks approved.

Brandy gave an introduction to the financial report. Brandy discussed the financial reports. Summary of the check totals.

Berman moved to accept the October financial report. Wade seconded. Motion passed.

Wade moved to approve payments, check #s 28156 through 28182 in the amount of \$51,018.57, EFTs in the amount of \$82,408.36, and BOA EFT in the amount \$927.81 for a total of \$134,354.74. Berman seconded. Motion passed.

4. **WC PIC ILA for Outreach Cost-share.**

Corina presented on the new PIC amendment for Outreach, Farm Planning and Cost-share. There is additional TA funding for farm planning through the PIC Outreach in the amount of \$50,000 throughout Whatcom County.

Minutes approved as presented at the December 30, 2021 Board meeting.

Wade moved to approve the 2022 PIC ILA amendment with Public Works. Berman seconded the motion. Motion passed.

5. Sick Leave Reserve Fund.

Brandy followed up on the sick leave and the current policy to absorb back into the District funds. Brandy recommended that the portion of the funds that Nichole requested to donate be made into a reserve with a one-time balance to set up a reserve that it can be used for employees.

There was Board discussion regarding what to do with the request. For this request the Board will agree to dissolve the sick leave remaining for Nichole Embertson. No reserve account will be set up.

6. Paid Holidays – New Federal Holiday & Proposed New WCD Holidays.

Brandy reviewed a proposal of adding additional holidays for staff. There are three categories for holidays.

1. New federal holiday, Juneteenth, June 19th, in 2022. If the Board approves as they observe all federal holidays.
2. Unpaid Holidays for reasons of faith or conscience. Provide 2 unpaid holidays for staff for reasons of faith or conscience.
3. Holiday early release days. Half day (4 hour) holidays before Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years and add to leave.

Berman moved to adopt Juneteenth, June 19th as a designed WCD holiday. Wade seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Wade moved to adopt policy to provide two unpaid leave days for reasons of faith or conscience. Berman seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3-1 AC)

Wade moved to adopt as WCD holidays three half days (4 hours each) that fall prior to Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year effective immediately. Berman seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3-1 AC)

Executive Director and Supervisor Reports.

7. General Activity.

a. Emergency Response – November Flood-related Assistance.

Corina and Dakota gave an update of the list of Flood Response and Emergency Resources. Landowners can get property reassessed by WC for next year's taxes if impacted.

Brandy mentioned that there will be an enews and dairy newsletter going out to provide this information to people. WSU has a link on their webpage for contacts and information.

Temporary manure storage –

Dakota mentioned concerns by producers regarding manure storage and the added rainfall and flooding. Staff are trying to create a network to connect producers with full lagoons to those with empty lagoons. They are working with WSDA and Ecology on the

Minutes approved as presented at the December 30, 2021 Board meeting.

possibility of funding to haul manure and working with WSDA to identify where there are high dry fields to potentially receive manure applications.

Brandy spoke with Ecology to try to find funding for trucking to temporary storage and then back to application sites. The groups are looking at the potential for Ecology to partner with the WCD regarding this project.

Fred asked if Ecology would provide administrative costs on this project. Sounded like that was a no.

Frank gave briefing on the input on the flood impacts. Mitigation and flood response on WC Flood Project. There was discussion regarding levy damage and repairs. Flood, Fish and Farms projects may be impacted.

b. 2022 Supervisor Election Update.

Dawn gave a Supervisor Election Update.

c. Staffing and Hiring Update.

Brandy provided update on Meg Harris leaving the District. District staff are working with Whatcom County on a position notice to hire a replacement. Interviews for the intern position have taken place. Nichole's position is vacant. We are waiting to see if it should be filled.

d. WCD Strategic Plan Update.

The WCD Strategic Plan expires at the end of the year. There was discussion to extend the plan for a year and calendar time to address an update to the strategic plan next year.

Chapman moved to make a change to update the Long Range Strategic plan to expire Dec 31, 2022. Berman seconded the motion. The motion passed.

e. Agriculture Vision Statement.

Alan is looking for input, as a member of the Ag Advisory Committee to Whatcom County, on direction for what the Ag Advisory Committee priorities should be. It would be useful to have reflections on what the Board would like to see carried forward. Flood, Fish & Farms. County Ag Strategic Plan would be good to review and weigh in on what we would like to see happen. Brandy looked up the priorities on their website.

f. December Board Meeting Confirmation.

Change December board meeting to Thursday, Dec 30, 2021 at 2:30 pm.

8. Supervisor Reports.

Larry is working on his written report and will send it out.

Alan reported on WACD activities for the annual meeting. Let everyone know if you are going to be virtual or in person in Tacoma. Brandy and Larry are attending in person.

INTRODUCTION ITEMS

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS, OTHER ITEMS AND BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

None.

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Record of Board Actions.

21-61 IT WAS MOVED BY BERMAN AND SECONDED BY WADE TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS. MOTION CARRIED (5-0).

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21-67 Wade moved to adopt as WCD holidays three half days (4 hours each) that fall prior to Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year effective immediately. Berman seconded the motion. The motion passed. (3-1 AC)

21-68 Chapman moved to make a change to update the Long Range Strategic plan to expire Dec 31, 2022. Berman seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Adjournment.

**IT WAS MOVED BY CHAPMAN. SECONDED BY BERMAN:
to adjourn the meeting at 5:26 pm.
MOTION CARRIED. (5-0)**

There being no further business before the meeting, adjourned the meeting at 5:26 p.m.

Dawn Bekenyi, District Auditor