

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**Public Meeting Minutes**  
**June 13, 2013**

**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 June 13, 2013, at 7:00 p.m.

**II. Attendance and Quorum.**

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

Joe Heller, Chair	Terry Lenssen, Vice-Chair
Larry Davis, Treasurer	Larry Helm
Dick Yoder	

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director	Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant	Nichole Embertson, District staff

**III. Meeting Called to Order.**

Joe Heller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.**

**Larry Helm moved that the minutes of the May 9, 2013 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**V. Financial Report.**

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

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, presented the financial report. There were no questions.

**Larry Davis moved to approve the Financial Report. Larry Helm 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:

May 2013 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>20445</u>	through	<u>20481</u>	and totaling	<u>74,153.08</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>20482</u>	through	<u>20495</u>	and totaling	<u>29,951.85</u>
June 2013					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>20496</u>	through	<u>20519</u>	and totaling	<u>49,214.74</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>20520</u>	through	<u>20533</u>	and totaling	<u>28,754.48</u>

**Moved by Larry Davis. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

## **VI. Action Items.**

### **A. Approval of Contracts.**

WS Conservation Commission (WSCC) Master Contract –

The Board reviewed and signed the master contract with the Washington State Conservation Commission. The authorized signatures form was reviewed and approved.

**Terry Lensen moved to approve and sign the Master Contract with the Washington State Conservation Commission. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**Larry Davis moved to approve the FY14 Authorized Signatures Form as outlined with all Board members and George Boggs as authorized signatories for the respective categories. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

### **B. Nichole Embertson.**

Nichole Embertson gave the Board an update on her research and other projects. She is working on outreach and program tools to manage nutrients. We are moving away from set application dates to the consideration of more germane factors. This is to reduce losses and improve plant uptake and yields. Nichole is also assisting with Snohomish and King Conservation Districts planers on utilizing the latest planning tools including iPads.

Manure Spreading Advisory – The Manure Spreading Advisory has been “live” on our website since fall 2012. Producers can look at the website to assess weather conditions for manure applications. A counter on the manure spreading advisory webpage that shows people are accessing the information.

The Oregon State Department of Ag heard about the manure application advisory website and asked for assistance to set one up. They contracted with the District for Nichole and Andrew Phay to produce a weather advisory for Oregon. Nichole explained that the Oregon Department of Ag does farm planning in Oregon not the conservation districts.

Nichole reviewed how the manure spreading advisory works. It is color coded to show the risk for runoff. It shows a 3 day forecast. In Whatcom County where the Applied Risk Management (ARM) system is utilized, it is the first step in that process.

Livestock Speaker Series – The Livestock Speaker Series is going well. Staff are recording the presentations and posting them on our website. In the winter it was better attended. The summer has been limited in live participation. However the videos have received over 100 hits.

Manure Sampling Protocols Project – Nichole received a small grant from the Dairy Products Commission to develop effective manure sampling protocols. The protocols will address how to get the most accurate information when sampling. A current drawback in soil testing is that the results take several days and producers need to know now for manure application rates.

Administrative Efficiencies – Andrew and Nichole produced instructional videos for using iPads in field application and in farm plan development. There is a page on our website with the videos on how to use technologies in the field. (<http://www.whatcomcd.org/tablets>)

Pathways for Research and Information Dissemination – Nichole is working with others on how to get results from field research out to producers. Also, there will be a better way to inform researchers what would benefit farmers most.

Nichole has shared her work with other during various presentations, most recently at the Waste to Worth conference in Denver, CO. She gave a presentation on ARM and the Yakima Air Quality study. The Air Quality Assessment tool that came out of this project is going to be adopted in other states and by NRCS in Washington.

Nichole has been invited to be a member on a panel from WSU regarding joint research projects. Her hope is to effect change with real time planning tools that producers can use.

Nichole is also an adjunct faculty member with WSU. This allows her to build capacity by partnering with others. There was discussion regarding the limited space at the District office for doing research and having one or more grad students to assist in research.

**Larry Helm moved that George Boggs, Executive Director, explore the need for extra space for District programs. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**C. Approval of Conservation Plans.**

Dairy Nutrient Management Plan (DNMP) Approval –

There are two Dairy Nutrient Management Plans submitted for Board approval. The Veen Huizen plan update was written by Leif Fixen, Snohomish Conservation District, with the oversight of Nichole. The VanderHaak plan was written by Chris Clark.

**Terry Lenssen moved to approve and recertify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for:**

- **Veen Huizen LLC.**

**Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**Larry Helm moved to approve the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for:**

- **Tim VanderHaak.**

**Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Standard Farm Plan Checklist Approval –

Corina Cheever submitted a standard farm plan checklist and EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share application for Jim & Diane Bern for up to \$5,000 for heavy use protection, manure storage and fencing.

**Larry Helm moved to approve the Standard Farm Plan Checklist and EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share application for Jim & Diane Bern for up to \$5,000. Terry Lessen seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Chuck Timblin submitted a standard farm plan checklist and EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share application for Rick & Freya Rensink for up to \$5,000 for heavy use protection, manure storage and fencing.

**Larry Helm moved to approve the Standard Farm Plan Checklist and EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share application for Rick & Freya Rensink for up to \$5,000. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

The Board discussed wanting to see farm plans prior to the meeting where it is to be approved.

**Larry Helm moved that:**

- **Plans and agreements are to be made available for review not less than seven days before a board meeting, and**
- **A brief summary is to be provided to them by email**

**If this cannot be accomplished, then the responsible resource planner is to attend the meeting to:**

- **Explain why the plan and summary could not be provided in a timely manner, and**
- **The exigent circumstances that warrant approval at this meeting, and**

- **Provide a brief oral summary of the plan/agreement and answer any questions that they may have.**

**Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

The collective reasoning of the board was:

- They feel pressed to make a decision with little time to understand what it is they are being asked to approve.
- A firm deadline would enable staff to exact more cooperation from the landowner/operator.
- It would promote the conduct of District business as there are a lot of other matters with which they must address in the same meeting.

**D. Approval of contracts.**

Department of Enterprise Services –

The Department of Enterprise Services formerly Washington State Purchasing Cooperative has changed how they do business. Instead of annual biennial renewal they now have a one-time master contract with fees being attached to the respective contracts utilized by participating agencies.

**Terry Lenssen moved to approve and sign the master contract with the Washington Department of Enterprise Services. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Skagit Conservation District Firewise –

The Board received a Skagit Conservation District Firewise Work Proposal to the Whatcom Conservation District. They would like to provide technical assistance to Seattle City Light to bring the towns of Newhalem and Diablo through the Firewise Communities/USA process and involve Whatcom Conservation District staff. The towns are in Whatcom County, but accessible only through Skagit County.

**Larry Helm moved to enter into a contract with Skagit Conservation District for the Firewise program for \$2,500. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

WSU Energy Conservation Program –

WSU would like to enter into an interlocal agreement with Whatcom Conservation District to complete energy audits within Skagit and Whatcom counties. They are proposing to fund wages, travel and overhead to complete 10-20 energy audits. The Board directed George to go explore development of an interlocal agreement with WSU for the Energy Conservation Program.

**E. Employee Matters.**

Payroll Step Increase –

George explained that one employee is currently eligible for a step increase effective July 1. George stated that the step increase is appropriate for the employee.

**Dick Yoder moved to approve the payroll step increase for Nichole Embertson. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**F. WSCC Cost-share Policy.**

On March 21, 2013, the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) adopted Conservation District Cost Share Policy. The policy directs each conservation district to submit an approved Board resolution to the Conservation Commission stating the rate of reimbursement for Conservation Commission funds for all NRCS practices. It is to be kept on file with the WSCC and reviewed and updated annually.

**Larry Davis moved to approve Resolution 13-01 Whatcom Conservation District WSCC Cost-share Policy as amended to include language regarding NRCS hold down rates as set by the Local Work Group. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

## **VII. Other Business.**

### **A. Alex Hall, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).**

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) – The regular EQIP is done. The high tunnel and energy initiatives are active. The sign-ups have closed and they are working on contracting.

National Water Quality Initiative – 18 applications were received. \$400,000 is allocated for cost-share within Fishtrap and Wisser Lake Creek watersheds. Alex reported on how NRCS is going to handle the lagoon assessment issue. Manure handling is the primary focus for these funds.

Alex explained that there is an edge of the field monitoring component to the initiative. He explained how it was set up. The farmer would be responsible for the research equipment not the researcher. Payment for the monitoring would count toward the farmers cap and payment would go to the farmer who would have to pay the researcher. It needs to be set up differently to get some interest.

PSHIP – This initiative is strictly habitat restoration. Staff are currently ranking projects. There was not much in the first round. Three people signed up for \$1/2 million. There are 8 or 9 projects for approximately \$1 million in the second round. Frank Corey and Wayne Chaudiere helped with fish passage projects that were submitted. The deadline to obligate the funds is July 15, 2013.

Alex reported that NRCS's archeologist is coming next week. He reviewed the "call before you dig" requirements and the spacing of test holes required for the projects.

### **B. Supervisor Reports.**

Larry Davis – Larry passed out a report of the activities that he has done this past month. He voiced an interest in serving as either the WACD National Director or the WACD west-side representative on the Conservation Commission board. The Board expressed their support for him for either position that he chose to pursue.

Joe Heller – Joe attended the WSCC strategy meeting. He reported on the Commission's top four planning areas. There was discussion regarding the 3 Directors Talks paper. Mark Clark acknowledged that the process should have been bottom up, not top down.

Larry Helm – Larry also attended the WSCC meeting. He said that it sounded a lot like the Total Quality Management (TQM) of 90s government. That process was to standardize how people behave in certain areas. He also noticed that there were categories without measures for success.

Dick Yoder – Dick received a farm inspection from the Department of Ecology. He discussed his experience. There was discussion regarding Ecology desiring 35 foot setbacks. This would require a revision to the WAC or a new rule. In prescribing mandatory setbacks it appears that they are rule making without rule making through the public process.

Terry Lenssen – Terry reported that the sales tax exemption for manure handling equipment for farms that have certified plans will be reinstated on July 1, 2013.

### **C. George Boggs, Executive Director.**

Rates & Charges – George gave a brief presentation on rates and charges. He received some information from Ryan Mello, District Manager for Pierce Conservation District. Larry Helm and Larry Davis agreed to serve on a Rates and Charges sub-committee.

WACD Dues – George passed out the chart of WACD dues. It appears to be arbitrary and impacts smaller Districts more than it does larger ones. Maybe the calculations should be revisited to provide a more equitable distribution.

Election of Board Officers –

**Dick Yoder moved to keep the current slate of Board officers, Joe Heller as Chair; Terry Lenssen Vice-Chair and Larry Davis as Secretary/Treasurer. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Budget –

As of the Board meeting a state budget had not been passed by the Legislature. There was discussion about what to do if a budget was not passed and a government shutdown occurred. The Board decided to give staff peace of mind and allow funding for the month of July.

**Larry Helm moved to pay staff for the month of July out of District reserves if necessary in the event that there was no state budget. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Conservation District Consolidation Policy –

Larry Davis supports the proposal that there must be local initiative for Conservation Districts to consolidate rather than a legislative mandate.

Employee Awards –

Larry Helm explained how an increase to staff pay in recognition for their receiving a state or national award would work.

**VIII. Record of Board Actions.**

**13-36 Larry Helm moved that the minutes of the May 9, 2013 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**13-37 Larry Davis moved to approve the Financial Report. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved.**

**13-38**

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**Moved by Larry Davis. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**13-39 Terry Lenssen moved to approve and sign the Master Contract with the Washington State Conservation Commission. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**13-40 Larry Davis moved to approve the FY14 Authorized Signatures Form as outlined with all Board members and George Boggs as authorized signatories for the respective categories. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**13-41 Larry Helm moved that George Boggs, Executive Director, explore the need for extra space for District programs. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

- 13-42 Terry Lenssen moved to approve and recertify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for:
- Veen Huizen LLC.
- Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 13-43 Larry Helm moved to approve the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for:
- Tim VanderHaak.
- Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 13-44 Larry Helm moved to approve the Standard Farm Plan Checklist and EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share application for Jim & Diane Bern for up to \$5,000. Terry Lessen seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 13-45 Larry Helm moved to approve the Standard Farm Plan Checklist and EPA Birch Bay Project cost-share application for Rick & Freya Rensink for up to \$5,000. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 13-46 Larry Helm moved that:
- Plans and agreements are to be made available for review not less than seven days before a board meeting, and
  - A brief summary is to be provided to them by email
- If this cannot be accomplished, then the responsible resource planner is to attend the meeting to:
- Explain why the plan and summary could not be provided in a timely manner, and
  - The exigent circumstances that warrant approval at this meeting, and
  - Provide a brief oral summary of the plan/agreement and answer any questions that they may have.
- Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 13-47 Terry Lenssen moved to approve and sign the master contract with the Washington Department of Enterprise Services. Larry Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 13-48 Larry Helm moved to enter into a contract with Skagit Conservation District for the Firewise program for \$2,500. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 13-49 Dick Yoder moved to approve the payroll step increase for Nichole Embertson. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 13-50 Larry Davis moved to approve Resolution 13-01 Whatcom Conservation District WSCC Cost-share Policy as amended to include language regarding NRCS hold down rates as set by the Local Work Group. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 13-51 Dick Yoder moved to keep the current slate of Board officers, Joe Heller as Chair; Terry Lenssen Vice-Chair and Larry Davis as Secretary/Treasurer. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- 13-52 Larry Helm moved to pay staff for the month of July out of District reserves if necessary in the event that there was no state budget. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

## **IX. Adjournment.**

There being no further business before the meeting, Dick Yoder moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:24 p.m. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 10:24 p.m.

Dated: July 25, 2013

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant