

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
December 13, 2012**

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 December 13, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Terry Lenssen, Vice-Chair
Larry Helm

Larry Davis, Treasurer
Dick Yoder

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant

Alex Hall, NRCS staff

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Terry Lenssen, Vice Chair, was not present at the beginning of the meeting, but arrived later. Larry Davis, acting as Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Dick Yoder moved that the minutes of the November 8, 2012 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Financial Report.

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

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

Larry Helm moved to approve the Financial Report. Dick Yoder 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:

Nov 2012 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>20000</u>	through	<u>20038</u>	and totaling	<u>24,230.59</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>20039</u>	through	<u>20051</u>	and totaling	<u>21,413.15</u>
December 2012					
Nov payroll taxes	<u>EFT</u>			and totaling	<u>6,166.96</u>
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>20052</u>	through	<u>20067</u>	and totaling	<u>29,126.70</u>

Payroll check numbers: 20068 through 20080 and totaling 27,491.67

Moved by Larry Helm. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Action Items.

A. Approval of Conservation Plans.

Dairy Nutrient Management Plan (DNMP) Certification –

There was one Dairy Nutrient Management Plan submitted for certification by the Board. The certification checklist has been completed by Chris Clark. Vegetative and structural practices are in place and the producer has signed off certifying management according to the plan.

Larry Helm moved to certify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Eaglemill Farm & DJ Noon Challenge LLC (Jeff DeJong). Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. Approval of Contracts.

Conservation Partners Grant – The grant proposal submitted in June by Frank Corey to NRCS and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) was approved for funding. The grant will fund qualified staff to help recruit landowners in Puget Sound to enroll in the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), CREP and EQIP. Due to the granting agency's short turn around for signature on the contract and having Board prior approval of the grant proposal and the contract was signed by Larry Helm at the end of November and ratified at the December meeting.

Larry Helm moved to ratify the grant contract for a Conservation Partners Grant through NRCS and NFWF for \$91,000. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Intergovernmental Agreement with Department of Enterprise Services –

The State of Washington Department of Enterprise Services, Office of State Procurement Purchasing Cooperative Agreement, sent a renewal for six months while they contemplate fee changes. Staff recommends entering into the agreement as the annual dues is more than offset by the costs saved in using their bid process. The Board was advised that the District has used the State Purchasing Cooperative for software purchases, janitorial contract, office supplies and vehicles.

Dick Yoder moved to approve and sign the Inter-Governmental Agreement with the Department of Enterprise Services and submit dues in the amount of \$100 for a six-month extension of our membership. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Supervisor Terry Lenssen arrived.

C. Employee Matters.

Payroll Step Increases –

George reviewed the policy in our employee manual for payroll step increases. Most employees have reached the top of their band on the pay scale. There are two employees who are currently eligible for a step increase. George stated that the step increases were appropriate for the two employees.

Larry Helm moved to approve the payroll step increases for Chris Clark and Emily Hirsch. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Employee Medical Insurance –

Employee medical insurance will renew on January 1, 2013. Employee medical insurance premiums increased approximately 6% this year. Dawn reminded the Board that the current budget contemplated a 12% for medical increase this year.

Larry Helm move to approve the 6% medical premium increase. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

D. Janitorial.

Advantage Building Services (ABS) informed Dawn that due to their workload they will not be able to renew the janitorial contract to clean the District office in 2013. ABS will continue on until a replacement can be found. The Board discussed going through the Department of Enterprise Services again to seek another janitorial company, but decided against it as they would prefer a local company. The Board directed Dawn to advertise and seek bids for janitorial service.

E. Plant Sale.

A plant sale policy resolution was reviewed and adopted. Under this resolution approval of the annual plant sale budget will authorize the Executive Director to hire a plant sale intern. The resolution is also authorizing Dawn to set up payment processing accounting to facilitate the acceptance of credit cards.

Larry Helm moved to approve Plant Sale Resolution 2012-2 as written and the plant sale budget as presented. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

F. Banking.

The District was contacted by a representative from Bank of America who suggested that our credit cards could be changed to one that provides some benefit.

Dick Yoder moved to change the Whatcom Conservation District's credit card to a "Rewards Points" Business Visa account that will provide the District cash back. Larry Helm moved to second the motion. The motion passed.

G. Alternative Funding.

There was discussion regarding potential funding cuts from the state and what the impact on the District could be. Investigating other possible funding options such as Rates and Charges were discussed. It will be necessary for the District to work on public perception about the district and become more visible in the community. The Board directed George to put together some information on setting up the process and doing the groundwork for a Rates and Charges proposal.

VII. Other Business.

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

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) – Alex reported that December 21, 2012 is the sign-up deadline for the current round of EQIP. There are approximately 50 deferred contracts and a few new sign-ups. There are a lot of changes in handling contracts. There is a new screening tool that will filter out applicants before ranking. It appears that there will be ten core practices. Impact Areas with resource concerns may get priority in ranking. Alex has not seen the draft practice list yet.

NRCS has also changed the way it handles contract modifications. Alex reviewed the changes and potential impacts on producers.

Staff – Tony Sunseri, new District Conservationist, will start on December 17 and will be up at the Lynden field office on December 18, 2012.

Farm Bill – There is no news regarding a new Farm Bill at this point. NRCS is working under the 2008 Farm Bill. NRCS is able to obligate funds for EQIP and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), but not the Conservation Security Program (CSP).

Whatcom Clean Water Initiative (WCWI & formerly the Pollution Control Action Team or PCAT) – Alex attended the WCWI meeting and provided information regarding the NRCS planning process.

Technical Service Provider (TSP) – The TSP work order ended November 30, 2012. George spoke with Rick Noble regarding the next TSP work order. Rick is optimistic that a new work order will be available in March 2013. Bill Bonsen and Chris Clark provide engineering services (drawing and specifications) through TSP work orders for implementation of EQIP projects. The TSP is completed.

Local Work Group (LWG) – The kick off meeting for Chairs of the LWG is scheduled for January 22, 2013 in Ephrata. Larry, chair of the NW Local Work Group, will participate via webinar.

B. Supervisor Reports.

Dick Yoder – Dick reported that there are still wolves in the 'Wedge' area north of Spokane where the Department of Fish & Wildlife had eliminated the wolves. The Yakima Tribe has opened up hunting for wolves. There are still eight breeding pairs in Washington, which is a significant number of wolves. There was discussion regarding wolf sightings.

Larry Helm – Larry attended the WACD annual meeting. He noticed that very few resolutions were passed this year. The WACD by-laws were changed. The Board discussed how to get a clearer fiscal picture of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts and Plant Materials Center. The financials provided were unclear.

Larry H. discussed statewide communications. There were several significant disasters that happened and impacted other conservation districts. It would have been helpful if other Conservation Districts were made aware of any assistance that they could have offered. It may be helpful to develop something for future incidents. George explained that he offered incident command response training at the Washington Association of District Employees (WADE) training one year. It was not well attended.

Larry Davis – Larry is making his second round of NW Area Director visits to other Conservation Districts. He has been to Whidbey Island and will attend Skagit Conservation District's meeting in December.

C. George Boggs, Executive Director.

Whatcom Clean Water Initiative – The WCWI met in November. A draft strategy was discussed. Revisions were to have been made, but are not yet released. There is no approved strategy at this point.

George reviewed the workload of the livestock planning team. The District will continue to provide technical assistance and work with our dairies, Whatcom County, and through the voluntary planning process.

Three Director Talks (3DT) Best Management Practices (BMP) Implementation Approach – George reviewed the short deadline for comment on the 3DT BMP Implementation Approach. George discussed the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) and their stand on the 3DT. There are issues that need to be addressed with the draft approach, but not enough time to properly review. The Board directed George and Larry Davis to write a letter from the WCD to the WSCC regarding the process and short timeline.

Funding – George reviewed talking points for funding Conservation Districts. In the most recent Priorities of Government report, Conservation District activities were ranked 6th out of 150 natural resource activities conducted by all agencies.

Green Infrastructure Training – George is drafting a grant proposal for Green Infrastructure planning in Whatcom County. He received buy-off from the WRIA 1 stakeholders. They were supportive of the grant proposal idea. A training opportunity is available in West Virginia in Environment and Commerce Green Infrastructure in February 2013. George would like to create a support team of 4-7 people to attend the training to work on the process. The tuition for the group is \$600, plus \$140 per day for meals and lodging. The large expense is the flight. It would be approximately \$10,000 to send a team to WV for the training. George wants to include representatives from the tribes, City of Bellingham and others to be on the team.

Dick Yoder moved to authorize spending approximately \$10,000 to send a team of 4-7 people to West Virginia to attend the Green Infrastructure Training predicated on getting key stakeholders to participate in the process and attend. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

12-118 Dick Yoder moved that the minutes of the November 8, 2012 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-119 Larry Helm moved to approve the Financial Report. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer’s Report was approved.

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12-121 Larry Helm moved to certify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Eaglemill Farm & DJ Noon Challenge LLC (Jeff DeJong). Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-122 Larry Helm moved to ratify the grant contract for a Conservation Partners Grant through NRCS and NFWF for \$91,000. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-123 Dick Yoder moved to approve and sign the Inter-Governmental Agreement with the Department of Enterprise Services and submit dues in the amount of \$100 for a six-month extension of our membership. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-124 Larry Helm moved to approve the payroll step increases for Chris Clark and Emily Hirsch. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-125 Larry Helm move to approve the 6% medical premium increase. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-126 Larry Helm moved to approve Plant Sale Resolution 2012-2 as written and plant sale budget as presented. Dick Yoder seconded the motion. The motion passed.

12-127 Dick Yoder moved to change the Whatcom Conservation District's credit card to a "Rewards Points" Business Visa account that will provide the District cash back. Larry Helm moved to second the motion. The motion passed.

12-128 Dick Yoder moved to authorize spending approximately \$10,000 to send a team of 4-7 people to West Virginia to attend the Green Infrastructure Training predicated on getting key stakeholders to participate in the process and attend. 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 9:25 p.m. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Dated: January 22, 2013

Approved: _____

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant