

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2015**

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 November 12, 2015, at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

Larry Davis, Chair
Joe Heller

Dan Heeringa, Treasurer
Larry Helm

Also in attendance were:

George Boggs, Executive Director
Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant
Emily Hirsch, Resource Specialist

Alex Hall, NRCS staff
Rick Noble, NRCS

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Larry Davis, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

IV. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Rick Noble came to meet with the Board.

V. Public Comment (written or in person).

There were no public comments, written or in person.

VI. Consent Agenda.

The Board adopted a consent agenda for approval of the previous meeting minutes, financial report and accounts payable. The financial report was mailed to the Board with their draft minutes from the October meeting. Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, presented the financial report. 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.

Larry Helm moved to approve the consent agenda: minutes of the October Board meeting as mailed, the financial report and authorize payment of District invoices and incurred expenses (below), as listed in the Accounts Payable Report. The Board further authorizes the payment of District expenses incurred subject to their review and approval at the next Board meeting. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The following voucher/warrants are approved for payment:

Oct 2015 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>23043</u>	through	<u>23075</u>	and totaling	<u>28,501.33</u>
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Voucher (check) numbers	<u>23093</u>	through	<u>23158</u>	and totaling	<u>84,659.24</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>23159</u>	through	<u>23175</u>	and totaling	<u>37,358.83</u>

VII. Action Items.

A. Election Resolution.

A conservation district must hold an election each year. The purpose of the Notice of the Adopted Election Resolution is to inform the public, voters and potential candidates of the date, time, place and manner of the election. The district must work within a strict framework of deadlines prescribed by the Washington State Conservation Commission. Staff put together two options for the Board to consider.

The Board approved Option 1 – District conducts the election the same as last year. Instructions will be revised to reduce confusion. The election will be held mid-month to facilitate hand processing of ballots and completing the election by the last day of March (as required by Commission). The estimated costs were given for each option.

Larry Helm moved to adopt the election resolution as follows:

- **The election will be held at the District office, 6975 Hannegan Road, Lynden, WA**
- **On Tuesday, March 15, 2016**
- **Polls will be open from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm**
- **Board selected Dawn Bekenyi as Election Supervisor**
- **Additionally, the District will have a mail-in election with ballot distribution by request only.**
- **Candidate filing deadline is January 29, 2016 at 4:00 pm.**
- **The last day to request an absentee ballot is February 16, 2016 at 4:00 pm.**

Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. Election Candidate Information Policy.

A conservation district may choose to publish candidate information under the election guidance provided by the Washington State Conservation Commission. (See WAC 135-110-430) Whatcom CD has historically made this option available to candidates. If a district chooses to publish information about candidates, it must provide equal opportunity for publication and equivalent space to each candidate. There are other considerations as well, such as ease of handling by staff and refusing to publish profane, libelous or defamatory language. While these are legitimate concerns, it is advisable to put candidates on notice of expectations in advance and also to provide an objective basis for staff when reviewing should a statement be submitted in contravention to these concerns. Commission guidance recommends, and staff agrees, that the Whatcom CD adopt a formal policy regarding the publishing of Candidate Statements. The following language was drawn from the Whatcom County Auditor's Office publication, "The Geographical's Good Road Map of Candidate Filing", 2015.

Joe Heller moved to adopt the following supervisor candidate statement policy:

Candidates are to submit their biographical information, candidate statement and photo for publication in the online and printed voter's sheet electronically by a link provided by email after the candidate application has been accepted as complete. This is due no later than the candidate filing deadline set forth in the Board's resolution for submitting a complete candidate application.

The Biography may not exceed 100 words. They must use the following 4 headings, which do not count toward the word limit:

- **Elected Experience**
- **Other Professional Experience**
- **Education**
- **Community Service**

The Candidate Statement may not exceed 200 words and cannot exceed 4 paragraphs.

- Hyphenated words count as two words. Statements exceeding the word limit will be shortened by deleting full sentences from the end.
- The Biography and Statement will be printed as submitted. Once submitted, changes will not be allowed.
- Only *italics* can be used to emphasize words or phrases. Bolding, underlining, and all caps are not allowed. Tables, lists, and bullets are not allowed. Text must be written in paragraphs.
- The Biography and Statement will not be checked for grammar, punctuation, spelling, or accuracy.
- Any candidate statement found to contain profane, libelous, or defamatory language or any matter prohibited by federal and/or state law will be reviewed by the District's attorney and the candidate will be notified of the attorney's determination.

Photos must be:

- Current (within 5 years)
- Head and shoulders photo
- Digital with a minimum of 300 dpi resolution
- No smaller than 4 x 5 inches

Photos must not:

- Show clothing or insignia that suggest a public office
- Show judicial robes, law enforcement, military uniforms etc.
- Show any animal or other person other than the candidate.

Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Approval of Conservation Plans.

Dairy Nutrient Management Plan (DNMP) Certification –

There was one Dairy Nutrient Management Plan submitted for Board certification. Chris Clark reviewed the plan for Paradise Jerseys (Rhonda Plagerman) and recommended that the Board certify it. It met the applicable requirements for certification and the producer certified that she was managing accordingly.

Dan Heeringa moved to certify the Dairy Nutrient Management Plan for Paradise Jerseys. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Contracts –

CREP is a joint federal and state program to enhance fish habitat and protect water quality. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is the administrative lead. A District resource specialist (Wayne Chaudiere, Frank Corey or Emily Hirsch) works with a landowner to develop a conservation plan that includes practices meeting the landowner's needs. It is reviewed for technical sufficiency by the Natural Resources Conservation Service representative (Alex Hall) and George Boggs. The landowner signs the plan and it is passed on to FSA. The FSA County Oversight Committee (COC) approves all CREP plans. The current District policy is that once FSA approves the Federal Contract and CREP plan, then the CREP maintenance contract is brought to the Board for its approval. Absent unusual circumstances, the Board approves the standard-language maintenance agreement prescribed by the State Conservation Commission.

There were 4 CREP maintenance contracts submitted for Board approval. Emily Hirsch was present to answer any questions from the Board regarding the plans.

Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for Rud Browne – Dudmaston LLC. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for Rud Browne – Woomera LLC. Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Joe Heller moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for Bruce Sines. Larry Helm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Larry Helm moved to ratify the CREP maintenance contract provided by Emily Hirsch for Mike & Ellen Dooley. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Inter-Local Agreements.

The Whatcom Conservation District currently has an Inter-local Agreement (ILA) with Okanogan Conservation District to share employees as needed. The ILA is in need of being updated to our current overhead rate of 25%.

Cascadia Conservation District (Chelan) has sent a draft document to enter into an ILA with the Whatcom Conservation District.

Larry Helm moved to approve and sign an Inter-local Agreement with the Okanogan Conservation District and Cascadia Conservation District (respectively). Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.

E. Employee Step Increase.

Until employees achieve the top step within their payscale band, they are eligible for an annual step increase based upon time served (1 year full time equivalent at each step). Corina Cheever is eligible for a step increase effective November 1, 2015. In addition to serving one more year, she has performed exemplarily in coordinating the District's technical and financial assistance to non-dairy livestock operations.

The proposed step increase was anticipated and included in the 2015-2016 annual budget.

Larry Helm move to approve a step increase in payroll for Corina Cheever to Band C1 Step 2. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

F. Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) Assistance.

The District received a request from WACD for Dawn Bekenyi to provide administrative help at the WACD annual meeting in Spokane, WA. The meeting dates are November 30 – December 2, plus travel time. WACD would provide mileage, registration, rooming and meals, but could not pay for staff time. The cost to the District was reviewed.

Larry Helm moved to send Dawn Bekenyi to the WACD Annual meeting in Spokane, WA to provide administrative assistance to WACD. Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.

G. WACD Resolutions.

Dave Vogel sent out the 24 resolutions passed by supervisors at the six 2015 Area Meetings. The Board reviewed each of the motions and discussed how to vote on each in order that those supervisors who attend the annual meeting can, in turn, vote the preference of the Whatcom Conservation District.

In addition, the Board reviewed which committee meetings that they would attend to make sure that the comments and concerns of the Board were shared at the committee meeting.

VIII. Other Business.

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

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) –

Alex reported that the sign-up ended on October 27. There were 27 new applicants with 60 that carried forward from last fiscal year for a total of 87 applications for this fiscal year. He explained that maybe 7 would be funded through regular EQIP and others would not be eligible, but that other EQIP initiatives could fund some of the applications.

National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) –

There may be additional NWQI funds for next year.

District Conservationist (DC) –

The District Conservationist Mt. Vernon position was advertised. It is estimated that it will take three months or more to fill. Alex will be acting DC until March 2016.

Engineering Tech –

The Engineering Tech position in Lynden was offered to one of those interviewed and was not accepted so will have to be re-advertised. It looks like that may happen in the spring.

Local Work Group (LWG) –

Alex reported that the schedule for Local Work Group meetings has moved to the fall. The meeting for this next funding cycle is November 17, 2015.

Building –

NRCS met with the landlord at a building near the district office. The building is being remodeled now and the move in date is February 10, 2016.

B. Supervisor Reports.

Dan Heeringa –

Dan attended the Dairy Federation sponsored public meeting with Maia Bellon and Kelly Susewind from the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Larry Helm –

Larry mentioned the meetings that he has attended at the Ag Advisory Committee. Larry has submitted his application to be on the Wolf Compensation Board (of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife).

Larry Davis –

Larry provided the Board a written report of his activities.

Larry will be giving a presentation on the Supervisor Leadership Group's survey at the WACD annual meeting.

C. George Boggs, Executive Director.

Upcoming Meetings –

WACD Annual meeting in Spokane, WA – Nov 30 – Dec 2
Skagit Conservation District Partnership Breakfast – Dec 15
WACD Legislative Days – 1st week in February 2016

Miscellaneous –

George worked on the Near Term Actions for the Puget Sound Partnership document for their funding process.

George reported that the Conservation District received a Public Records Request on 13 farmers from the lawyer representing the Lummi Nation. He advised the Board that he and staff will provide the requested information.

People are pursuing pollution insurance. A Wisconsin firm is offering it. There was some discussion about it.

Wayne met with an equipment dealership to look at a hedgerow trimmer to demonstrate this spring. It is hoped that the equipment could be used to manage hedgerows.

IX. Record of Board Actions.

15-115 Larry Helm moved to approve the consent agenda: minutes of the October Board meeting as mailed the financial report and authorize payment of District invoices and incurred expenses (below), as listed in the Accounts Payable Report. The Board further authorizes the payment of District expenses incurred subject to their review and approval at the next Board meeting. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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X. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Larry Helm moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m. Dan Heeringa seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Dated: December 29, 2015

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____