

**WHATCOM CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Public Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2009**

I. Time and Place of Meeting.

A regular meeting of the Board of Supervisor of the Whatcom Conservation District was held at the Ag Service Center, 6975 Hannegan Rd, Lynden, Washington on February 18, 2009, at 6:30 p.m.

II. Attendance and Quorum.

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dick Yoder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ed Stone
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sabina Gouran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Joe Heller
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Terry Lenssen		

Also in attendance were:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	George Boggs, District Manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alex Hall, NRCS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dawn Bekenyi, Admin. Assistant		Dean Martin, Whatcom County PDS

III. Meeting Called to Order.

Dick Yoder as Chairman of the meeting called it to order at 6:30 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Joe Heller moved that the minutes of the January 14, 2009 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

V. Financial Report.

The financial report was mailed to the Board with their draft minutes from the January 14, 2009 meeting.

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant, asked if there were any questions regarding the Financial Report. There were no questions.

Joe Heller moved to approve the Financial Report. Ed Stone 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:

January 2009 - balance					
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>16583</u>	through	<u>16591</u>	and totaling	<u>11,495.65</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>16592</u>	through	<u>16606</u>	and totaling	<u>29,880.01</u>
February 2009					

Voucher (check) numbers	<u>16607</u>	through	<u>16628</u>	and totaling	<u>14,499.00</u>
Payroll check numbers:	<u>16629</u>	through	<u>16643</u>	and totaling	<u>27,808.71</u>
Voucher (check) numbers	<u>16644</u>	through	<u>16663</u>	and totaling	<u>5,200.59</u>

moved by Joe Heller. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Action Items.

A. Approval of Contracts.

CREP Contracts –

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is the administrative lead on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) joint program. The FSA County Committee approves all plans. The current policy is that once FSA approves the Federal Contract and CREP plan the contract is then brought to the Board meeting for its approval. The Board approved the standard-language contract.

There was one project submitted for Board approval.

Sabina Gouran moved to ratify the CREP contract for Bill Crofutt (08-04-CR:08-15). Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

B. Certification of Conservation Plans.

Two dairy nutrient farm plans were submitted for certification.

Ed Stone moved to certify the Dairy Nutrient Farm plans for Allan Van Hofwegen and Matt Eldridge reviewed by staff and submitted for Board approval. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

C. Other Action Items.

EPA Grant Application –

Nichole is preparing an EPA grant application on nutrient management practices. The proposal will work with some farmers to try a few new practices and do the water and soil testing to show the science behind application timing, setbacks, etc. The District received letters of support for the project from the WA State Department of Ag, Dairy Fed, and Whatcom County.

Sabina Gouran moved to approve Nichole submitting the grant application to EPA. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Comdata Fuel Cards –

Washington State has changed their fleet fuel contract to Comdata from Voyager. The District is able to join Comdata as a member of the state purchasing cooperative. Dawn was advised by the Cooperative that the District could stay with Voyager if they wished. However, the District would then need to make a new contract between Voyager and the District, since the state contract had ended. The representative from the State Cooperative informed Dawn that there were benefits that the Comdata fleet cards offer that are not available through Voyager. This is one reason why WA State was switching over to Comdata. The Board approved the change to Comdata fleet credit cards.

Ed Stone moved to approve the Service Contract issued under State of Washington Fleet Credit Card Program (RFP #06507) with Comdata. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

WS Audit Invoices –

The WA State Auditor's Office completed their audit. Part of the process approved by the WA Conservation Commission is to have each Conservation District approve the invoices and submit to the Commission for payment. This allows the Conservation District's the opportunity to see the expense for their audits.

Sabina Gouran moved to approve the invoices from the WA State Auditor's Office in the amount of \$4,609.74 and submit them to the WA Conservation Commission for payment. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Employee Leave Adjustment –

The cost of living adjustment approved at the last meeting affects more than the hourly wages to be paid. Staff has accrued annual and sick leave. The accumulated leave has already been invoiced against grants at the then effective rate of pay. Absent an adjustment in the hours accrued, the recent cost of living adjustment will increase the leave liability. These funds would come out of discretionary funds.

There was discussion regarding the matter. It was decided to make no adjustments at this point, and to reconvene a committee to review the policy of leave accrual, benefits, and other employee matters. George suggested that the committee would investigate and draft a policy regarding furlough, lay-offs and reduced work-weeks among other things to address potential budget cuts.

Sabina Gouran moved to develop an Employee Policy Committee. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The committee should be made up of two supervisors and employee representatives. Dick agreed to be on the committee with George. Dawn will provide input to the committee. Sabina said that she would serve on the committee, but reminded the Board that she was not seeking another Board term.

Ed Stone moved to appoint Sabina Gouran to the Employee Policy Committee. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Purchasing Policy –

The WA State Auditor recommended that the Board create a purchasing policy. The draft purchasing policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board.

Terry Lenssen moved to approve the purchasing policy. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed. The policy was signed and adopted.

Internal Audit Committee –

The WA Conservation Commission requires two Supervisors to conduct an annual internal audit. The audit takes a couple of hours to review the District's accounts and paperwork. There is a form to complete and paperwork to review.

VII. Other Business.

A. Supervisors.

Joe Heller –

Joe spoke with Carolyn Kelly, Skagit Conservation District Manager, regarding forestry funding available for fire prevention. The area that is being considered is the foothills in the Glacier area along the snow water development and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land. There is an opportunity for funding crews to clean up fuel in forests under the early release funds similar to DNR's Fire Wise program.

B. Alex Hall, NRCS.

EQIP –

They are moving forward with state and federal funding of EQIP. \$12 million is allocated for WA State for this year's EQIP contracts. Additional ranking criteria was added to applications with an emphasis on energy saving and air quality. The new contracts will be indexed for inflation if there are no financial modifications done.

Cultural Resources Process –

The cultural resources process for NRCS is changing. There will be more control at the field office to determine if a project is exempt from a cultural resources assessment.

EQIP & Forestry –

A letter was sent from the state office to forestry landowners promoting EQIP for forestry. They may get some interest in forestry contracts this year.

TSP –

The TSP contract between the USDA and WA State Conservation Commission has been signed. Local offices can now write work orders. Alex is working on a new TSP work order agreement for Bill and Chris' services for March 1 through June 30.

Federal Programs –

Conservation Innovation Grants – deadline is March 3rd.

Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) – works similar to EQIP. The deadline for applications is March 3rd.

Flood Plan Enhancement – similar to the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) to plant trees. Participants receive \$2,500 per acre to plant trees for a permanent easement. Only eligible on ag lands.

Flooding –

Alex does not anticipate any Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) funds in Whatcom County due to the flooding. There will be some technical assistance provided to Farm Service Agency (FSA) through their emergency program.

C. Dean Martin, Whatcom County PDS.

The next Ag Advisory Committee meeting will be March 4. They will discuss county planning issues.

D. George Boggs.

Nichole is busing writing grants:

- EPA Protecting Coastal Watersheds Grant –

Nichole is writing an EPA application to develop a manure application alternative practice. It would also fund working with producers in assessing when/how to make applications and water quality monitoring. The monitoring would provide feedback on the practice effectiveness.

- CARE (Community Action for a Recovered Environment) grant. More about this at next meeting.

AWEP –

There are seven or eight priority areas in the US. The program enhances EQIP in a priority area. The Puget Sound was added as a priority area in the last Farm Bill. This could open up more funding for EQIP in the area. The new 2010 EQIP sign-up is through June 30th.

Budget –

The WA Conservation Commission is being asked to cut their budget by another 10%. This may impact us. March 25 & 26 is legislative days for the WACD. George has set up an appointment to meet with Kelli Linville. Joe will attend. Other supervisors were checking their schedules.

WC Budget –

Whatcom County Council has supported us on the CPAL contract. The contract is currently sitting on the County Executive's desk waiting to be signed. George has had six meetings with

Whatcom County. The WC Council would like the funds to come from the flood fund. George is optimistic that it will be signed soon.

Annual Plan of Work –

George will work on a draft annual plan of work for review at the April Board meeting. It will contemplate contingency plans if funding levels are not at current levels.

Copy Machine –

We have been tracking costs and complaints on our copier. Both are going up. It is 10 years old. Parts are becoming difficult to obtain. Repairs are more expensive since the maintenance contract expired. The Board agreed that looking into a replacement was a good idea..

CREP –

Contractors are complaining that reimbursement rates for contractors' costs are too low. Most CREP projects are smaller acreages (less than 4 acres) now. The mobilization costs are similar for large and small projects. Contractors' costs are increasing. A letter to the WA Conservation Commission seeking appropriate adjustment from FSA and for scheduled state maintenance costs was drafted.

Terry Lenssen moved to send the letter to the WA Conservation Commission and USDA Farm Service Agency seeking an adjustment in CREP reimbursement rates. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Air Quality –

George shared a study with the Board from Joe Harrison, WSU Extension, regarding livestock and air quality.

National Parks Service –

Nichole and George spoke with the National Parks Service. They were seeking information to stop a feed lot from moving in. That is not our mission. They also spoke with the feed lot representatives regarding BMPs that they could implement. He seemed willing to do more. After a lengthy discussion, the District and Park Service agreed that the money could be better spent elsewhere.

Drainage Improvement District (DID) Manual –

The third draft of the DID manual is being reviewed. It should be ready for printing soon.

Executive Session –

Board meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 7:57 to discuss potential Verizon lawsuit.

Executive session was adjourned at 8:05. Board reopened Public meeting at: 8:05. The chair announced that there was discussion regarding potential litigations with Verizon over the damage to the parking lot.

Ed Stone moved that the Board authorize George to proceed with a legal complaint on Verizon for damages to the parking lot. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Training –

Joe requested authorization to attend training for Supervisor skills put on by a Forestry group to be held in Idaho. He is seeking per diem and registration expense reimbursement. Other Supervisors were also encouraged to attend.

Ed Stone moved to approve sending Joe and anyone who wished to attend to the supervisor training in Idaho. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VIII. Record of Board Actions.

09-12 Joe Heller moved that the minutes of the January 14, 2009 Board meeting be approved as mailed. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

09-13 Joe Heller moved to approve the Financial Report. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

09-14

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09-19 Sabina Gouran moved to approve the invoices from the WA State Auditor's Office in the amount of \$4,609.74 and submit them to the WA Conservation Commission for payment. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

09-20 Sabina Gouran moved to develop an Employee Policy Committee. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed.

09-21 Ed Stone moved to appoint Sabina Gouran to the Employee Policy Committee. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

09-22 Terry Lenssen moved to approve the purchasing policy. Ed Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed. The policy was signed and adopted.

09-23 Terry Lenssen moved to send the letter to the WA Conservation Commission and USDA Farm Service Agency seeking an adjustment in CREP reimbursement rates. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

09-24 Ed Stone moved that the Board authorize George to proceed with a legal complaint on Verizon for damages to the parking lot. Sabina Gouran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

09-25 Ed Stone moved to approve sending Joe and anyone who wished to attend to the supervisor training in Idaho. Terry Lenssen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business before the meeting, Sabina Gouran moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Joe Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting on motion duly made, seconded and carried, adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Dated: April 6, 2009

Approved: _____

Dawn Bekenyi, Administrative Assistant