

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

February 26, 2024

Summary of February Board Meeting Minutes

- **Motion:** Amy McKay moved to adopt the agenda. Second by Alan Chapman. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Amy McKay moved to adopt the January Board Meeting Minutes. Second by Mark Craven. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Jeff Schibel moved to accept the Treasurer's report. Second by John Preston. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Amy McKay moved to adopt the new Financial Policy and Procedure Manual as presented. Second by Barbara Bailey. Motion carried.

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Olympia Office - Remote Connection through Zoom

February 26, 2024

February Board Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Mike Mumford, President (Pend Oreille CD)
Amy McKay, Vice President (Whitman CD)
Barbara Bailey, Secretary (Underwood CD)
Mark Craven, Treasurer (Snohomish CD)
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)
Jeanette Dorner, Past President (Pierce CD)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
David Vliet, Northwest Area Director (Kitsap CD)
Lisa Zaborac, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor CD)
Jerry Kolke, Southwest Area Director (Clark CD)
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Columbia Basin CD)
John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)
Cindy Reed, South Central Area Director (North Yakima CD)
Jack Clark, South Central Area Director (Benton CD)
Jeff Schibel, Northeast Area Director (Lincoln County CD)
Mary Collins, Southeast Area Director (Palouse CD)
Cindy Pierce, WADE President (Skagit CD)

Others Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director
Jim Brown, WACD Director of Nursery Operations
Ryan Baye, WACD Director of Legislative & Membership Services
Heather Wendt, WACD Director of Development & Engagement
Roylene Comes at Night, USDA NRCS Washington State Conservationist
Jon Wyss, USDA FSA Washington State Executive Director

Jennifer Boie, Palouse CD Director
Renee Hadley, Walla Walla County CD District Manager
Jake Clement, Rock Lake CD District Manager

President Mumford called the meeting to order at 6 PM. Ryan Baye conducted a roll call to confirm a quorum and introduced guests. Amy McKay moved to adopt the agenda, second by Alan Chapman. Motion carried.

None of the individuals present wished to enter a public comment.

Southeast Area Focus

Jennifer Boie provided updates from Palouse CD. She shared how the district hosted an Ag & Water advisory committee meeting recently, and felt it was a great experience. She shared details of their new roller-crimper equipment rental program, their FLOURISH on-farm trial data, and district podcast. She answered questions about farmland preservation efforts the district was asked to become involved in.

Jake Clement introduced himself as the new District Manager at Rock Lake CD and his background working for other Eastern Washington Districts. He was excited to get the office back in order and looking forward to meeting folks.

Renee Hadley shared some recent changes among programs and staff at Walla Walla County CD. She thanked Doug Rushton for shepherding resolutions at NACD and getting their CRP fire break resolution passed.

Special Partner Reports

Roylene Comes at Night lauded Palouse's RCPP renewal, as one of only thirteen in the nation. She reported NRCS is working hard on obligations and commitments, just completed ranking of applications. She discussed ACT NOW now that they have 79 contracts completed, a great start for the new program. She also reported they were asking for \$5.2 million in new funding, mostly for tribal & high-tunnel projects. She also showed new tools on USDA's website.

Jon Wyss broke down his agency's work on FSA rental rates for CRP as well as CREP and their progress on obtaining more realistic rates. He described USDA's algorithm and how rental rates will stabilize starting next year. He also spoke about the CREP training March 19-20, but warned it could cancel as late as March 16 depending on if there was a government shutdown. He also discussed the ongoing CREP contracts, that they still have remaining contracts unresolved, with 133 in one county alone.

Doug Rushton reported on the NACD Annual Conference in San Diego earlier in February and that all five state resolutions were adopted. He shared the results of NACD elections and highlighted that WACD and North Yakima CD were recognized as Platinum dues paying members. There were reflections from conference attendee David Vliet on meeting like-minded people from across the country, how many Washingtonians were present, and the overwhelming experience.

Meeting Minutes

Barbara presented the January meeting minutes for adoption. Amy McKay moved to adopt the January Board Meeting Minutes. second by Mark Craven. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Mark Craven noted the investment account was moved in the report to be better displayed. He shared monthly income and expenses for EO was in line, PMC had brought in nearly 20% of yearly income in March, and noted their year-to-date gains & expenses.

Jeff Schibel moved to accept the Treasurer's report. Second by John Preston. Motion carried.

Tom presented preliminary information from the CPA on cash flow analysis, that the PMC had normal ebbs and flows with the executive office seeing a steady decline over the last three years.

WACD Operations

Jim Brown presented from Bow and was looking forward to the end of harvest in the next seven days. Sales were at \$1.5 M, slightly down from last year. He noted the sales gap from the previous year was shrinking, from 200K last month to 100K this month. The nursery was still fielding a lot of sales emails, unusually so in late February. He informed the board of a cold snap in October that hurt red cedar sales, that they had informed customers, and some were going elsewhere. He ended with the expected activities in March: planting plugs, seeding, and field clean-up.

Tom Salzer presented on WACD's 2024 Leg Day, giving lots of credit to Heather for scheduling appointments this year while Ryan was away. He recapped the Legislative Breakfast with James Thompson, WSCC staff, and WACD's lobbyist Brynn Brady. He reported there were lots of great conversations with legislators.

Heather Wendt informed the board of a planned Spring Legislative Meeting at the end of May in Ellensburg about future legislative priorities after consultations at the recent Managers meeting. That this would be to satisfy the recent WACD resolution. She was looking for government rates at a hotel before sending out more information.

Ryan Baye shared details about the upcoming Spring Fly-In, some initial Congressional priorities, dates, and WACD's contracted role to schedule Congressional and agency appointments.

WACD Policies

Heather Wendt presented two changes to the proposed financial policy manual compared to what was presented last month. Amy McKay moved to adopt the new Financial Policy and Procedure Manual as presented. Second by Barbara Bailey. Motion carried.

WACD Committee Updates

Heather Wendt updated the board on activities of several committees:

- Finance Committee – The committee met last week to review financial policy & review first quarter finances. Their May meeting will be focused on the FY 25 draft budget.
- Plant Materials Task Force – The task force just sent out a questionnaire to districts of their plant needs. The group agreed to change their name at their meeting last week to acknowledge the focus on obtaining plants.
- Shared Resources Work Group – The group was meeting monthly, and had developed common district needs & options to meet those needs. Heather reminded the board of a survey done of districts as to 2024's priority needs with a consensus to focus HR as the next need. They planned to host an HR workshop at WADE.

- Sustainable Funding Committee – The committee was meeting monthly and reviewing the work done by the old work group, a very diverse group of committee members asking a whole bunch of questions. They were coming to the consensus that multiple prongs to approach the issue of reliable district funding.
- Work Groups – Ryan Baye updated the board on the creation of the two temporary groups from 2023 resolutions, Ag Loans & Renewable Resource Policy.

Legislative Update

Ryan Baye provided a report on the legislative activities in the Legislature, focusing on WACD's budget reconciliation priorities, remaining bills on WACD's bill tracker, and the six citizen initiatives (and the connection between the Climate Commitment Act and state funding for the Conservation Commission)

Announcements

There were no announcements or board updates made.

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.