

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Remote Connection through Zoom

October 16th, 2023

Work Session Minutes

Members Remotely Present

Mike Mumford, President (Pend Oreille CD)
Amy McKay, Vice President (Whitman CD)
Barbara Bailey, Secretary (Underwood 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)
Jeff Schibel, Northeast Area Director (Lincoln County CD)
John Floyd, Northeast Area Director (Pend Oreille CD)
Cindy Pierce, WADE President (Skagit CD)

Others Remotely 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
Craig Nelson, Okanogan CD District Manager
Dana Coggon, Pierce CD Executive Director
Jon Wyss, FSA Washington State Executive Director
Sarah Groth, WSCC Interim Executive Director
Joy Garitone, Kitsap CD District Coordinator
Kirstin Haugen, King CD Supervisor
Rosa Mendez-Perez, King CD Executive Director
Linda Lyshall, Snohomish CD Executive Director

President Mumford called the meeting to order at 6 PM. Ryan Baye conducted a roll call of those present. No one from the public wished to express a public comment.

Sarah Groth presented the three decision-packages and agency-request legislation that the Conservation Commission was submitting for the 2024 legislative session and answered questions. Jon Wyss provided an update on FSA's audit of their CREP contracts in Whatcom County. He shared how the audit would expand to cover the rest of the state and provided figures of the canceled, modified, and continued contracts to date.

Area Focus

Linda Lyshall was proud of the new drone at Snohomish Conservation District, was excited to use its LIDAR. She continued that the drone was available to other districts, with certain restrictions. She also reported the district received a \$2.4 million dollar grant for urban tree canopy in Snohomish County.

Dana Coggon presented on behalf of Pierce CD their resolution to lift the population cap on rates and charges, adopted the recent NW Area Meeting. They were working with other districts, and the resolution would be heard at the Annual Conference to prioritize this for 2024.

Joy Garitone spoke about Kitsap CD's decision to utilize an outside vendor to administer their 2024 election. She also encouraged the WACD Board of Directors to consider more actively advocating for funding for district election costs.

Rosa Mendez shared that King CD is exploring dividing the district into three election zones for their district elections, with legal and other expert consultations with a lot of community outreach expected. She also gave details on a legislative proviso where the district was studying artificial lighting's impact on Lake Sammamish fish species.

Alan Chapman repeated Jon Wyss's comments about Whatcom CD's focus on CREP. He reported on the recent NW Area meeting and shared his desire for more NW meetings for supervisors during the year.

Cindy Pierce spoke on behalf of Skagit Conservation District, beginning with a request for WACD to continue to focus on FSA's CREP audit. She made additional comments about requests for PMC staff availability to appear when requested, wanted to see guaranteed plant inventory availability for districts, and better communication around cancellation fees.

Treasurer's Report

Tom Salzer, in the absence of Treasurer Fenn, reported on WACD's September Financial Report and highlighted for the Board a \$42,000 decrease in the value of the investment account during the previous month. He also covered the current cash flow and aged receivables. He answered questions about PMC operations.

Tom Salzer also gave information to the board on a change he was seeking in WACD's web services provider because the current provider couldn't keep WACD's website consistently available. He had met with a new provider and sought input from the board members on switching service. He also provided an update on his request for new insurance options from the current health insurance provider, saying he had been unable to generate a response to his request for information.

PMC Update

Jim Brown shared information with the board on the nursery's operations. He described a recent Plant Materials Center tour for a chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society, orders to date for 2024 delivery, the initial preparations for harvest, and the success of their seed collection and processing for the year. He also spoke to their operations and how the main purpose of the PMC had historically been to raise funds for WACD.

2024 Preliminary Legislative Priorities

Ryan Baye discussed with the board a draft list of policy priorities for WACD in 2024, based on resolutions adopted by the membership. He also gave his thoughts on new priorities that might emerge from this year's set of resolutions and some of the decisions that would need to be made by the Board of Directors.

Progress on WACD Work Plan

Tom Salzer offered background information on the WACD FY24 Work Plan for the new board members and spoke to staff progress on Advocacy & Legislative Engagement, Member Services, Partnerships, and Administration for the Executive Office and Growing Operations, Processing, Maintenance, and Sales & Marketing for the Plant Materials Center.

Committee Updates

Ryan Baye provided updates on the activities of the Harmful Algal Bloom Work Group, the Livestock committee, and the Tribal Relations Committee. Heather Wendt reported on the Sustainable Funding Committee and the Shared Resources Work Group.

Resolution Update

Ryan Baye covered WACD's activities and progress on the 2022 resolutions, speaking to various efforts and committee activities.

Area Meeting Updates

Heather Wendt shared details with the Board of Directors on the 2024 area meeting schedule and the outcomes for the two meetings (NW and SW) that had been held to date. Ryan Baye gave details on the 2024 Annual Conference and some of the resolutions proposed by various member-districts.

Board Retreat & Orientation for New Area Directors

Ryan Baye briefed the board on a proposal to hold a mini retreat on the Monday morning of the WACD Annual Conference for the board members. He asked for feedback on the timing and scheduling, to ensure sufficient board members would be interested and available to participate.

Items for the November Board Meeting

Tom Salzer detailed some of the decisions that would await the board members at the November meeting.

Announcements/Updates

Mike Mumford announced a change in the date for the WACD Executive Committee's October meeting.

Ryan Baye announced the outcome of the voting in the NW and SW Area Director. Alan Chapman and Lisa Zaborac were re-elected, though Alan only agreed to serve until a replacement for his position could be selected.

Tom Salzer announced WACD had applied for a NACD Dairy Technical Assistance grant, working with several conservation districts and the Dairy Federation.

Tom Salzer announced WACD had received notification of a copyright infringement and was working with their general counsel and insurance provider.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22.