

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

September 16, 2024

Summary of Motions

Motion: Amy McKay moved to adopt the Board meeting agenda, with the addition of “Previous Meeting” and “Partner Reports” after the Southwest Area Focus. Second by Alan Chapman, Motion Carried.

Motion: Amy McKay moved to approve the June meeting minutes as presented. Second by Mark Craven. Motion carried.

Motion: Amy McKay moved to approve the June, July, and August Financial Reports. Second by John Preston. Motion carried.

Motion: Mark Craven moved to authorize a modification to the current WACD budget to allow tasks to be performed under the new NRCS-WACD contract, with grant-related expenditures not to exceed \$71,700, and with the understanding that staff will bring forward an adjusted budget at the November meeting of the Board of Directors. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.

Motion: Amy McKay moved to re-activate the WACD Professional Service Award. Second by Mark Craven. Motion carried.

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Remote Connection through Zoom

September 16, 2024

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)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
David Vliet, Northwest Area Director (Kitsap CD)
Lisa Zaborac, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor CD)
Bruce McDonald, Southwest Area Director (Lewis CD)
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Columbia Basin CD)
John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)
Jack Clark, South Central Area Director (Benton CD)
Cindy Reed, South Central Area Director (North Yakima CD)
John W. Floyd, Northeast Area Director (Pend Oreille CD)
Chevelle Yeckel, WADE President (Okanogan CD)

Others Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director
Heather Wendt, WACD Director of Development & Engagement
Jim Brown, WACD Director of Nursery Operations
Ryan Baye, WACD Director of Legislative & Membership Services
James Thompson, WSCC Executive Director
Roylene Comes At Night, USDA-NRCS Washington State Conservationist
Kris Neely, Spokane CD Associate Supervisor
Mary Malone, Pend Oreille CD Executive Director

Vice President Amy McKay called the meeting to order at 6:01. Ryan Baye called the roll of Officers and Directors to confirm a quorum was present. Amy McKay moved to adopt the Board meeting agenda, with the addition of “Previous Meeting” and “Partner Reports” after the Southwest Area Focus. Second by Alan Chapman, Motion Carried.

New Southwest Area Director

Bruce McDonald introduced himself to the Board of Directors, explaining he was stepping into the vacancy until the election in October. He spoke to his three years of experience at Lewis CD, having retired from the Washington State Department of Natural Resource after serving with five different agencies.

Area Focus

Bruce McDonald spoke for Lewis CD: the district’s search for a Stream Team/Outreach person and that their District Manager Bob Amrine would likely retire sometime after the first of the year.

Doug Rushton spoke for Thuston CD: that the district was focused on securing a long-term office solution and described a recent retreat for board members and district staff.

Public Comment

No public comments were offered during the open comment period.

Partner Reports

Doug Rushton described his, and Ryan Baye’s, recent trip to Alaska for the NACD Regional Meeting and their takeaways. Ryan Baye added his appreciation for the more casual atmosphere at the regional meeting, his experiences from Alaskan field tours, and his appreciation to network with nearby states and territories.

Chevelle Yeckel announced the WADE conference dates of June 9 – 11, 2025 but that there would be cost increases for food service and on-site lodging. Notifications will go out next week with more information.

Roylene Comes at Night stated that NRCS was 100% done with contracting with 98% of their EQIP funding allocated and that their portion of the CREP audit was complete. There have been 42 hires so far this year, with 180 staff now in Washington. She supplied more information about their agency’s program, partnership agreements, and the expected increase in funding for FY25. She answered a question about the impact of federal elections on NRCS.

James Thompson had also attended the NACD Regional Meeting as WSCC Executive Director along with other Commission staff and Commissioners. A new Office of Farmland Preservation staff person had started on Monday with several more positions queued for release. He answered a question about telework at the Commission.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Amy McKay moved to approve the June meeting minutes as presented. Second by Mark Craven. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Mark Craven described the June, July, and August financials and tracked the aged receivables amounts as well as the performance of the investment account. He noted that there was a big expense in August at the PMC due to the cost of installing the new pump. Amy McKay moved to approve the June, July, and August Financial Reports. Second by John Preston. Motion carried.

Heather Wendt updated the board on the progress of dues payments by member-districts, with only two CDs not paying dues by September 13th. She expected both CDs to pay their dues before the Annual Meeting. Heather also provided information on the ongoing audit, that they were very thorough and expected a very comprehensive review of current procedures. She answered a question about the timeline of an audit report, Heather believed a final report would be ready for the board by the November meeting.

Tom Salzer presented a report on the performance of WACD's savings account and money markets versus the state's Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) for the year to date after receiving a request at the June board meeting. He recommended getting more accustomed to LGIP and eventually transferring a portion of WACD's savings into LGIP. He answered questions about timing, he answered that he was concerned about completing the paperwork during the busiest time of the year for staff. He also asked the board to approve a change to the budget to incorporate the new NRCS contract. Mark Craven moved to authorize a modification to the current WACD budget to allow tasks to be performed under the new NRCS-WACD contract, with grant-related expenditures not to exceed \$71,700, and with the understanding that staff will bring forward an adjusted budget at the November meeting of the Board of Directors. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.

WACD Operations

Jim Brown offered a supplement to his written report. He made sure to note that there were more weeding costs and packing supply spending, plus the new irrigation pump. He wasn't sure as to the reason yet, but sales at the start of the fiscal year were down \$200,000 from the previous year. He also spoke about the success of the tour in August for conservation districts.

Mike Mumford and Heather Wendt shared a preliminary draft of an updated Executive Director job description and his intention to give board members the time to review the draft and having a discussion at the October Work session. He answered questions about metrics to objectively measure the performance of the Director, inclusion of additional partners, and whether or not "the public" should be listed as an entity the Executive Director should be engaged with.

Heather Wendt briefed the Board on the new NRCS agreement, the deliverables of the contract, and how it will affect staff's workload.

Ryan Baye brought forward a proposal to re-activate the WACD Professional Service Award, to ensure employees of CDs, agencies, or non-governmental organizations were recognized each year. He answered a question on what type of staff would be eligible. Amy McKay moved to re-activate the WACD Professional Service Award. Second by Mark Craven. Motion carried.

WACD Committee Updates

Heather Wendt conducted a round robin briefing of the WACD committees and task forces and what work products would be brought forward at the area meetings from the Renewable Energy Workgroup and the Plant Materials Task Force. Ryan Baye requested feedback from the board members of a proposal to recruit an Area Director from each area to serve as part of the 2024 WACD Awards Committee.

Area Meetings

Ryan Baye reported on the progress of the six area meetings scheduled for October and informed the board members of expected WACD attendance by staff and officers. He also shared which Area Directors were up for re-election and some of the topics for potential resolutions under consideration by local districts.

Annual Conference

Ryan Baye reported on the progress of the WACD Annual Conference and would be sending out a draft of the conference schedule for the board members to review and provide feedback. He also informed the board that Amy McKay was a declared candidate for the open President position while Jeff Schibel was a declared candidate for the Vice President position.

Announcements

Tom Salzer announced to the Board that WACD staff had met with Department of Ecology staff on the topic of WACD's resolution to re-create a template memorandum of agreement for potential use by conservation districts and local ecology offices.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32.