



Walla Walla County Conservation District
January 2025 Special Board Meeting

Date: Jan. 13, 2025

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Place: In person and via Microsoft Teams

Presiding Officer: Jeff Schulke, Chair

Supervisors Present: Jim Kent, Don Schwerin

Supervisors absent: Jesse McCaw

Other Agencies: None present

Also present: Renee Hadley, Grant Traynor, Annie Byerley, Grace Cooper, Jake Mantela

Members of the Public: Matt, Dan (via Zoom)

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Jeff Schulke.

Schulke invited the public to comment. Dan shared he was interested in a topic down the agenda and asked if it could be moved up so he could hear about it. Agenda was modified.

Minutes: The Board reviewed the December 9th board meeting minutes. **Motion by Don Schwerin and second by Jim Kent to approve the December 9th board minutes as presented, no discussion, motion passed.**

Financial Reports: The board reviewed the October Financial Reports. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Don Schwerin to pay the bills, motion passed.**

As of this date January 13th 2025 the Board reviewed the December financial reports with no further discussion: Checks 15088 to 15097, revenues \$336,982.25 and expenses \$93,635.19; total of bank accounts \$452,601.08.

(Total Matches Springbrook)

Old Business:

- 1. Rainfall sampling and weather station collaboration with WSU:** Hadley shared that the AgWeather station associated with WSU cost \$28,000 to install with WWCCD on the hook for the cost. This weather station recorded rainfall, wind, and soil moisture/temperature and there are currently a few in the county. Jeff shared his experience with a Weather Underground station he maintained for 10 years but finally scraped and uses AgWeather. Matt also shared that there is a new platform "GreenCast" that can provide soil information as well. The board would like to continue this conversation at the February board meeting with maps.

New Business:

1. **Partner Reports: Hadley** gave an update on behalf of NRCS that the Local Work Group meeting will be held in Dayton, WA on February 13th. Renee will be attending and board members are welcome to attend. Hadley also shared that the SCC has a new Legislative Director and today was the first day of the 2025 Washington Legislation. Hadley reminded the board that WWCCD's annual meeting will be held on January 21st at the Water and Environmental Center (WEC) at Walla Walla Community College. It was shared that the WSU Extension is hosting their Wheat Academy at WEC on January 24.
2. **Update on the NRCS office lease quarterly: Hadley** shared that the WWCCD contribution to our agreement with the NRCS has been on the light side but we are providing what is asked of us.
3. **Review 2024 Ag Burn permits: Hadley** shared the 2024 agricultural burn permit numbers. There were 53 total field burn permits, 22 spot burn permits, and 7 pile permits. This totals 12,734 acres requested; 2,031 acres refunded. WWCCD should receive roughly \$8,000 for issuing these permits. When it comes to burn permitting fees, WWCCD is on the hook for NSF fees or permit fees when payment defaults. Hadley also shared issues with client payment concerns. The board would like to see verbiage related to client issues (past policy from decades ago and new revision) for review at our next meeting.
4. **Review and approve grant applications: Hadley/Byerley/Mantela/Traynor** shared regarding the new grant applications that are being applied for.
 - a. **Bureau of Rec WaterSMART Environmental Resources Program:** Byerley shared that this will be for work on Lower Mill Creek between Bunchgrass Lane and Wallula Ave. It will cover the remaining costs of structures that are partially being covered by ECY Water Quality Grant. Amount for this grant is TBD.
Motion by Don Schwerin and second by Jim Kent to approve the request to apply for the USBR WaterSMART grant, as presented: motion passed.
 - b. **Bureau of Land Management OR/WA Fuels Reduction Grant:** Mantela presented that WWCCD would like to continue the partnership with County Fire District 4 and the WA State Penitentiary to do fuel reduction work on private property in the Mill Creek WUI. The grant request would also allow for District 4 to do a hazard assessment of all properties in the Mill Creek WUI to get a better understanding of hazard around the watershed. The grant request is \$95,000.
Motion by Don Schwerin and second by Jim Kent to approve the request to apply for the BLM OR/WA grant, as presented: motion passed.
 - c. **Community Wildfire Defense Grant:** Byerley shared an overview of the fuels reduction and fire ready assessments. Hadley reviewed the December minutes and informed the board they approved the CWGP project/proposal last month.
 - d. **WDFW Wildlife Diversity Grant:** Traynor shared that the WWCCD has partnered with WSU to do ferruginous hawk monitoring. This grant would cover 2 years of graduate work tracking the local ferruginous hawks. The total request will be roughly \$300,000.

Motion by Jim Kent and second by Don Schwerin to approve the request to apply for the WDFW Wildlife Diversity grant, as presented: motion passed.

- 5. Review of WWCCD Services provided annually:** Hadley shared that the outreach and education that WWCCD has done in 2024. This is tracked in-house to show what work has been done with partners and in the community.
- 6. Review comparison of long-range plan:** Hadley shared the long-range plan of the District. This document will need to be updated by the Board by the end of the year. The board agreed to tackle the update in one board meeting and see if more work will need to be done following that.

Program Updates:

A.) District Operations: Hadley reviewed district operations including staff updates, outreach efforts, and upcoming partner meetings.

Joint Agency Meetings: January 21st WWCCD annual meeting. January 24th WSU Extension Wheat Academy at WEC. February 13th 2025 for NRCS Work Group Meeting in Dayton, WA.

Misc. Discussion and Public Comments: NA

Executive session per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) for 30 minutes began at 5:54 and ended at 6:24.

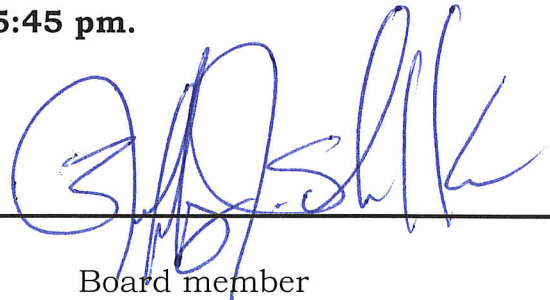
The Board resumed the open meeting.

Annual reviews were conducted at the end of the 2024 calendar year, confirmed by the WWCCD Performance Committee the first week in January. **Motion by Jim Kent and second by Don Schwerin to approve the increased the COLA by 3% per WA Office of Financial Management, increase base rate up to a specified dollar amount for two employees and increase the salary for the district manager as presented: motion passed.**

Meeting adjourned without a formal motion at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Annie Byerley
District Staff


Board member

Next meeting: Monday, Feb. 10, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

Motions:

To approve the December 9th board meeting minutes as written,

Motion: Schwerin
Second: Kent
Motion passed

To review the December Financial Reports and approve paying the bills,
as presented

Motion: Kent
Second: Schwerin
Motion passed

To approve the USBR WaterSMART grant as presented

Motion: Schwerin
Second: Kent
Motion passed

To approve the BLM OR/WA grant as presented

Motion: Schwerin
Second: Kent
Motion passed

To approve the WDFW Wildlife Diversity Grant

Motion: Kent
Second: Schwerin
Motion passed

To approve to increase the COLA by 3% per WA Office of Financial
Management, increase base rate up to a specified dollar amount for two
employees, and increase the salary for the district manager as presented

Motion: Kent
Second: Schwerin
Motion passed