

SPOKANE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
4422 E 8th Ave, Spokane Valley, WA 99212
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Attendees

Supervisors in person: Vice Chair Tom Miller and Jaki Shrauger

Attending by phone: Jerry Scheele, Wendy Knopp

Absent: Chair Randy James

Associate Supervisors: Chris Mahelona

SCD Staff: Vicki Carter, Cori Turntine, Hilary Sepulveda, Jess Brown, Jeff Cunningham, Eric Allen, Charlie Peterson

Visitors: Brian Werst with WBM, PLLC, Deanna Willman with WBM, PLLC, Bryan Leners from FSA, Tiffani Walker with NRCS, and Joy Navarrete from FSA

Opening of Meeting

The meeting was a hybrid of on-site and remote attendees using the Microsoft Teams app to connect the participants.

Vice Chair Tom Miller called the meeting to order at 04:00pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes/Treasurer's Report

Acceptance of Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda was previously distributed. The board accepted the Consent Agenda items consisting of:

- August 15, 2023, Board Agenda
- July 11, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- July 2023 Treasurer's Report
- August 2023 Payables Report

Motion Shrauger/Knopp to accept the Consent Agenda, including the August Payables Report for \$392,367.96. Motion carried.

Shrauger verified that the financial accounts matched the bank statements.

New Business/Linkage to Community

Brian Werst and Deanna Willman, SCD's legal counsel, introduced themselves and shared that they were here to discuss the recent actions of our neighbor at 4248 E 8th Ave, Spokane Valley, WA 99212. On August 31, 2023, the property owner arranged for a tree on SCD property to be cut and tossed down the granite ravine on the west side of the campus. Due to the increased pedestrian traffic, including our new tenants from the SBDC; the children with the Nest, who frequently explore the campus; the Master Gardeners who have established garden beds on campus; other invitees, SCD staff, etc. this is a serious safety concern. The Conservation District filed a police report on August 31, 2023, but was advised this is considered a civil matter. After further discussion, which included the past behavior of the neighbor, who has twice cut down the safety fence SCD installed, as well as factoring in the safety liability, the Board decided that it would be in the best interest of the Conservation District to pursue litigation.

Motion Shrauger/Knopp to pursue litigation against the named property owner at 4248 E 8th Ave, Spokane Valley, WA 99212 for actions taken against the Spokane Conservation District. Motion carried.

Governance Culture

WSSC Report: None

Bryan Leners and Joy Navarrete from FSA, and Tiffani Walker with NRCS shared that they were in attendance to discuss updates to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts. Leners explained that each CRP includes a conservation plan, specific to each producer's contract, agreeing that the plan abides by NRCS standards. Leners stated that previously the NACD and NRCS had a waiver which recused Conservation Districts from signing the conservation plans, but this is no longer in effect. The conservation plans must now be reviewed and signed by the Conservation District, resulting in approximately fifty contracts that the SCD is required to review and sign by September 22, 2023. Navarrete emphasized the importance of reviewing, signing, and submitting the conservation plan contracts, sharing that the Farm Bill expires September 30, 2023, and cautioned there would be no guarantee of funds, or opportunities to submit CRP contracts if the Bill does not pass.

Walker shared that while the conservation plan is specific to each producer's contract, that they are rather generic, and between she and SCD staff member Charlie Peterson, they have visited and/or reviewed most sites already.

After discussion, which included legal counsel, and clarifying with the FSA and NRCS whose signature would suffice, it was proposed that Carter be allowed to assign signatory authority for NRCS plans.

Motion Shrauger/Scheele to authorize the District's Director to assign signatory authority for NRCS plans. Motion carried.

Financial Report:

Turntine shared that the district's budget position is more aligned with expectations since last month's budget amendment was approved. She stated that the legislative funds for the Scale House Market and Kitchen have not been accounted for and that we could expect to see that addition at the year-end amendment. Additionally, we have the first payment for the most recent DOE loan that was closed out from our SRF Program due by the end of the year that will also be included in the year-end budget amendment.

Turntine shared that we received \$2.6M of grant funding for the HC Riparian Pilot Program and while much of the funds are reserved for landowner payments over the next fifteen years, that we are researching investment options for the excess funds.

Approval is needed for four WSSC Grant Addendums in total. The first addendum, 24-40-SFF, the Sustainable Farms and Fields Grant for \$92,716. Intermediate outcome number one allocates \$1483.00 to cover SCD travel costs and staff time to provide technical assistance. Outcome two is for the cost share amount of \$91,233.00 for the installation of an incline screen separation system.

The second addendum, 24-40-LT, is for our Livestock Grant of \$20,000. Intermediate outcome one provides \$15,000.00 for conservation planning activities, including two dairy nutrient management plan

updates and the development of ten livestock management plans. Intermediate outcome two is for \$5000.00, covering staff time and travel costs to provide livestock technical assistance.

The next addendum is 24-40-RGP for our Riparian Grant Program, totaling \$53,167.00 for intermediate outcome number one, which is for SCD staff time to assist the SCC in the development of the new Riparian Grant Program.

The fourth addendum is 24-40-RPP for our Riparian Plant Propagation program, including \$107,584.42 for intermediate outcome number one, allotting \$36,249.95 for the maintenance of plants at SCD's plant propagation site. Intermediate outcome number two in the amount of \$71,334.47 is for the expansion and/or creation of SCD's plant propagation site.

Motion Knopp/Shrauger to accept the addendums to four WSCC Award Contracts, including grant numbers 24-40 SFF, 24-40 LT, 24-40 RGP, and 24-40 RPP. Motion carried.

Director's Report

Carter shared that there has been an immense amount of outreach being done by our Forestry department in response to the devastating Gray and Oregon Road fires, including attendance in both community's meetings. We have also created a landowner's assistance page through SmartSheets to gauge the needs of affected property owners in real time. Carter reported that Senator Schoesler contacted the SCD, stating that he intends to create a funding package for landowners affected by fires and would like the SCD to administer this. The package is primarily to assist with livestock and fencing, and Carter shared that she's been working with NRCS to put together an assessment, including a GIS layering of cropland and forestland that has been burned by the fires. Carter said that we will keep Schoesler's office apprised of the needs of the landowner's feedback so we can move forward with a funding package to best help those affected.

Carter stated that a campus Boundary Line Adjustment (BLA) had been done about two years ago but was mistakenly not submitted to the City of Spokane Valley. This has allowed us to rezone some of the boundary lines to reflect our current design of campus more appropriately and in conjunction with the City of Spokane Valley, saving the District in cost.

Carter learned that the Conservation District, together with a committed, private partner, is eligible to apply for additional CERB loan funding. Our committed, private partner for this venture is Four Roots and, if awarded, the CERB funds would be used for the build-out of the Scale House Market and Kitchen. The application is due September 18, 2023, and the resolution itself has been reviewed by Brian Werst, with our legal counsel. Board approval is needed to move forward with the partnership, application, and resolution.

Motion Knopp/Scheele to approve the CERB resolution AD09.11.23 for \$1.5M. Motion Carried.

Carter mentioned that we have received wide support regarding plans for the Event Center in the Aspen Building. We procured proposals from three different companies for design services, and one was chosen, who provided us with a space design that includes six additional offices available to lease, additional bathrooms, and a configuration of three separate conference spaces that could be used in a multitude of ways. Authorization from the Board is needed for the next step in the project, which is construction drawings.

Motion Shrauger/Knopp to authorize construction drawings for the Event Center in our Aspen Building. Motion carried.

Carter shared that because of the new biennium, a form must be signed by the Board of Directors

regarding engineering funds. The SCD has an interlocal agreement with five Northeast Conservation Districts to share engineering dollars, with Stevens County Conservation District administering the funds. The form acknowledges that the Board is the signatory for the SCD and that the membership includes Spokane, Stevens, Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Lincoln Conservation Districts. It also outlines that they appoint one representative to the Board, our Director, to vote on engineering fund decisions on behalf of the SCD.

Motion Shrauger/Knopp to accept professional engineering services for the biennium, including fiscal years 2024-2025. Motion carried.

Staff Reports

Allen, from the Water Resources department, shared that they have been busy at work on the Hangman Creek project, a one-mile stretch of stream reconstruction. The field crew has been dwindling as crew is returning to school, but this project is expected to wrap up for the season in October.

New projects include the Dartford Creek Project with Beaver Dam Analogs to help restore streamflow levels.

The Massender Restoration project continues, as well as researching the dwindling supply of water at Marshall Creek. The Silverton project is an upcoming large water restoration project, which is currently in the engineering phase. He shared that he has been working with drone mapping technology to track the progress of several of their projects.

Allen reported that the SCD's commodity buffer project has been so successful, the WSSC has awarded SCD funds to assist them with the development of the program guidelines for their new Riparian Grant Program.

Cunningham shared he's been working with the SBDC, our newest tenant and partner in the Aspen Building, to make their move-in as smooth as possible.

Brown reported that she and Turntine reviewed the SCD's Asset Inventory Policy and that a physical inventory will take place later this year, after seasonal projects wind down. Brown and Turntine will attend a Records Keeping Workshop in Cheney this week.

Close of Meeting

Correspondence & Announcements

Carter shared that the third campus Open House is scheduled for this Thursday, September 14th, from noon until 2:00pm and invited the Board to the event. She also shared that the campus planning summit will be held on September 20th from 9am-3pm, and September 21st from 12pm-4pm, followed by a mixer gathering from 4pm-6pm.

Reading of the Motions

Brown read the motions.

Motion Shrauger/Knopp to accept the Consent Agenda, including the August Payables Report for \$392,367.96. Motion carried.

Motion Shrauger/Knopp to pursue litigation against the named property owner at 4248 E 8th Ave, Spokane Valley, WA 99212 for actions taken against the Spokane Conservation District. Motion carried.

Motion Shrauger/Scheele to authorize the District's Director to assign signatory authority for NRCS plans. Motion carried.

Motion Knopp/Shrauger to accept the addendums to four WSCC Award Contracts, including grant numbers 24-40 SFF, 24-40 LT, 24-40 RGP, and 24-40 RPP. Motion carried.

Motion Knopp/Scheele to approve the CERB resolution AD09.11.23 for \$1.5M. Motion Carried.

Motion Shrauger/Knopp to authorize construction drawings for the Event Center in our Aspen Building. Motion carried.

Motion Shrauger/Knopp to accept professional engineering services for the biennium, including fiscal years 2024-2025. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6pm.
Respectfully submitted by Jessica Brown.

Tom Miller, Vice Chair

Jaki Shrauger, Treasurer