

SPOKANE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
4422 E 8th Ave, Spokane Valley, WA 99212
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, July 11, 2023

Attendees

Supervisors in person: Chair Randy James, Tom Miller, Jaki Shrauger

Attending by phone: Jerry Scheele, Wendy Knopp

Absent: None

Associate Supervisors: Chris Mahelona

SCD Staff: Vicki Carter, Cori Turntine, Hilary Sepulveda, Jeannie Jesseph, Jess Brown, Jeff Cunningham, Dan Ross, Amber Ramirez, Stacey Selcho

Visitors: Ryan Baye, Director of Legislative & Membership, WACD

Opening of Meeting

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

Chair Randy James called the meeting to order at 12:00 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:

- July 11, 2023, Board Agenda
- June 13, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- June 2023 Treasurer's Report
- July 2023 Payables Report

Motion Shrauger/Knopp to accept the Consent Agenda, including the July Payables Report for \$487,036.23. Motion carried.

Shrauger verified that the financial accounts matched the bank statements.

New Business/Linkage to Community

Public Comments

none

Governance Culture

WSCC Report

Ryan Baye provided the following update on behalf of the WSCC:

Due to new funding, six new positions are to be filled within the Commission.

A search firm for the executive director hire will be selected at next week's Conservation

Commission meeting in Wenatchee. Programmatic changes will also be presented at the meeting.

Baye shared the unfortunate news that Ron Schultz, long-term Policy Director for the Commission, has passed away. There's a possibility that January's legislative session may be held without an executive director or policy director; Baye stated that this has occurred in the past and assures that there are enough staff within the Commission to assist.

WACD Partner Report

Baye shared that the WACD dues letter has been disbursed and our financial support is appreciated.

A new position, Director of Development and Engagement, has been created, which will include recruitment and training of Supervisors. WACD hopes to hire for this position by August 1st. Other WACD Committees that have been active this summer include livestock and technical assistance. The WACD Board of Directors has also authorized the creation of a legal retainer with the purpose of pooling resources for Conservation Districts statewide.

Financial Report:

Turntine shared that she ran a new unpaid invoices report as there has been lot of accounting activity with wrapping up the biennium and wanted the report to include the vouchers. In June our revenue came in at \$350,000, while our costs were about \$1,200,000 with nearly \$600,000 of this in grant expenditures. Most vouchers for Q2, including June, have been completed, which amounts to nearly \$3,800,000 in receivables. We expect to receive most of these funds from the State in July, so next month's budget position should look much different from June's. Turntine reiterated that we received several grants that we weren't anticipating in the beginning of the year and therefore not reflected on the budget position report, so we will be updating this and taking a deep dive into this report next month.

Director's Report

Carter acknowledged that early this year the board and staff spoke of having different meeting dates for the board meeting and planning session, currently scheduled for August 8th and August 15th, respectively. However, Vicki proposes combining these for an August 8th board meeting and planning session, including an amendment to the budget and training. Carter announced that she is working with a consultant firm in the coordination of a three-day comprehensive campus planning session in September and would like to have board involvement throughout this session, so the thought is to combine the August meetings to account for the addition of this subsequent planning session.

After some discussion regarding scheduling and availability, Knopp proposed that since most of the board was committed to attending the August 15th planning session, that the board meeting be moved to this date as well.

Motion from Miller/Scheele to move the August board meeting with a planning session from August 8th to August 15th. Motion Carried.

Jesseph and Brown will make the necessary legal announcement.

Chair James and Carter have discussed our growing campus and the importance of having structure in our governance, creating policies that are beneficial to all neighbors on campus. Discussions will be revisited in August to set clear expectations and guidelines to keep positive relationships with long-term tenants.

Carter expanded on the comprehensive planning session slated for September 13-15, which will help establish timelines and budgets for projects as well as provide legal counsel to protect the

future of the SCD Campus. The planning session will take place over the course of three days, in which Board members will be asked to attend certain meetings within this time frame.

Signage is needed on the campus, which will require that we name the buildings. Carter and Turntine brainstormed ideas, being mindful of our mission. Feeling that a 'Tree Theme' resonates with our property, they are proposing the Ponderosa Building for SCD, Aspen as our Partnership Building, and the Tamarack building for The Nest. This will be brought to our staff meeting for further input.

Carter received official correspondence from the WA Department of Commerce, awarding \$727,500. We do not have to pay back this grant, but there are stipulations, including a readiness survey, and a match, listing potential assets such as property value.

Last week the SCD received two additional awards; the NACD Urban Ag Grant awarded \$60K for the Scale House Market and the NRCS Food Forest Grant awarded for \$55K to implement a food forest on the campus. We are delving into the specifics of these awards but can share that they are reimbursable and require proof of match funds.

Carter would like to move forward with an application for a CERB feasibility study for an indoor conference space in the vacant 7,000 square feet in the Partnership Building. Aligning with the adage, 'if you build it, they will come,' Carter shares community feedback that a space this size is ideal as it does not exist in Spokane Valley and would be valuable to the community.

Staff Reports

Education Update Presentation from Stacey Selcho began with a Land Acknowledgment to express our gratitude and respect to the Indigenous Peoples for their care of the land since time immemorial.

Selcho shared an overview of her Environmental Education programming, including Trout in the Classroom (16 participating schools), Wheat Week (10 participating schools), In Classroom Lessons, Field Days, Rain Barrel Workshops, Backyard Conservation Stewardship Series, and Teacher Workshops.

Selcho reports that with the new programming, specifically the No Child Left Inside Grant, we were able to fund Outdoor Learning Labs for educators, create our Outdoor Explorer Pack program, and a Riverside State Park Experience for students.

An overview of House Bill 2078: Outdoor Education for All was provided. The primary emphasis for this funding is for overnight outdoor experiences and Selcho shares her concern, as Eastern Washington does not have the facilities to provide these experiences. Selcho serves on the advisory committee for HB 2078 and will continue to advocate for our students in Eastern WA.

Selcho is applying for two Outdoor Learning Grants; Experience Riverside State Park and Westwood Middle School Native Plant and Indigenous Learning Garden, which will be submitted

this week.

Ross gave an update on Water Resources activities, noting an upcoming fish passage project in the fall. The Little Hangman Creek project site is very active with construction expected to be done in September with planting continuing throughout the fall.

Ramirez shares the Forestry Team has been helping with the Riparian Propagation Project on campus and assisting the master gardeners with their area on the property. Ramirez expects the Firewise Assessment requests to pick up as the summer season continues.

Cunningham reports that in addition to his usual keeping up with campus maintenance, he's been assisting with the Greenhouse Project.

Sepulveda shared upcoming events including a Field Day and Tree School Workshop, both of which are nearly sold out. She shares that promotion of the Farm and Field symposium has begun – the event will take place November 15-16th at the CenterPlace Regional Event Center. This year the symposium will offer a two-track program targeting urban farmers as well as more advanced classes for larger producers. The Rocks to Root podcast has been successful with four more episodes to go for the year. Our website redesign is in progress with our target completion date being the first week of September.

Brown states that she has been training with Turntine and has been busy with accounts payable and receivable, learning about our programs and how to best support our staff.

Jesseph reports that the DRS audit is ongoing and that she has been busy with this and grant vouchering.

Turntine shares that she is looking forward to transitioning back to full time and greatly appreciates being able to have Zayden at the office over the last quarter. Turntine would like to schedule a loan committee meeting and requests that Knopp reach out to her with some available dates and times.

Close of Meeting

Correspondence & Announcements

none

Reading of the Motions

Brown read the motions.

Motion Shrauger/Knopp to accept the Consent Agenda, including the June Payables Report for \$487,036.23. Motion carried.

Motion from Miller/Scheele to move the August board meeting with a planning session from August 8th to August 15th. Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Brown.

Randy James, Chair

Tom Miller, Vice Chair