



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Board of Directors Meeting

September 16, 2014

Hal Holmes Center, Ellensburg, Washington

MOTIONS

- **Motion:** Jerry Hendrickson moved to approve the June 16, 2014 draft Board meeting minutes as written. Dean Longrie seconded. The motion to approve the minutes as written carried.
- **Motion:** Dean Longrie moved to approve the August 2014 financial report as presented. John Preston seconded. The motion to approve carried.
- **Motion:** David Guenther moved that WACD further explore 2016-17 dates with the Vancouver Hilton. That if the Hilton is successful in getting the other group currently holding the dates required by WACD to move their meeting to a different time that WACD proceed with signing a contract for 2016 and 2017. Further, that the Vancouver Hilton provide us notice in writing of this not later than October 15. Dean Longrie seconded. Motion amendment: Mark Craven amended the original motion to consider other locations such as Spokane or Semiahmoo if the Vancouver Hilton is unable to swap out our needed meeting dates for 2016 and '17 with the other group currently holding those dates by October 15. David Guenther seconded the amended motion. The amended motion carried. Bill Knutsen abstained.
- **Motion:** Mark Moore moved that Dave's condensed version of the issue paper on a Request to Amend the Assessments/Rates and Charges Statute be transmitted to all CDs. Don Hatler seconded. The motion carried.

Board of Directors Present

Alan Stromberger, President
Mark Craven, Vice President
David Guenther, Past President
Wendy Pare, Secretary Treasurer
Bill Knutsen, NW Area Director
Don Hatler, NW Area Director
Jerry Hendrickson, SE Area Director

Dean Longrie, SW Area Director
David Hall, SW Area Director
John Preston, NC Area Director
Mark Moore, SC Area Director
Eddie Johnson, NE Area Director
Tom Miller, NE Area Director

Board Members Not Present

Michael Crowder, National Director (attending NACD regional meeting)
John McLean, North Central Area Director
Gail Thornton, South Central Area Director

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Approved 12/1/2014

Kathy Whalen, WADE President

Others in Attendance for All or Part of the Meeting

Mark Clark, WSCC

Roylene Rides at the Door, NRCS

Vicki Carter, Executive Director, Spokane Conservation District

Jim Armstrong, Spokane Conservation District

Robin Flem, Columbia Conservation District

Karen Bishop, WADE Vice President

WACD Staff Present

Dave Vogel, Executive Director

Deb Gregory, Administrative Coordinator

President Alan Stromberger opened the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

Bill Knutsen, NW Area Director, announced that he would not be running for another term as NW Area Director. He is retiring from the King CD Board of Supervisors this fall.

Robin Flem from Columbia CD attended the meeting as he is a candidate for an interim appointment as Southeast Area Director replacing Larry Cochran who resigned earlier in the summer.

Motion: Jerry Hendrickson moved to approve the June 16, 2014 draft Board meeting minutes as written. Dean Longrie seconded. The motion to approve the minutes as written carried.

Don Hatler asked about the notes from the Jim Huckabay session in Leavenworth on June 16 and whether or not those had been distributed to the full Board. Alan Stromberger responded that he believed they had been and would be sent out again.

August financial report

Wendy reported that WACD is a bit behind on collection of this year's dues, but payments are coming in and this should not be a problem. Based on an update, there are now 10 districts still outstanding. The updated list of dues paid by district will be sent to the Board. The Area Directors were requested to contact those districts in their area to inquire when they might be submitting payment.

Further enhancements have been made to the format of the financial reports making it easier to see and track on a monthly basis as well as an annual basis without having to try to calculate numbers. Wendy reported that WACD is on target of where we anticipated being financially. Dave Vogel is working with NRCS to finalize a contribution agreement with NRCS for \$20,000 which will provide us with an additional revenue stream. The agreement should be completed and signed by the end of September. Once done, Wendy will prepare an updated budget for review by the Board with the changes. Dave V. noted that because it is a contribution agreement with NRCS contributing \$20,000 and WACD the other \$20,000, Dave has been working with staff at the Commission office to ensure that WACD can use a portion of our current contract with the Commission as the non-federal portion match.

Dean Longrie, SW Area Director from Clark CD, expressed his appreciation to Dave V. for attending their recent Board meeting. Dean noted it was very valuable having Dave attend to

discuss the various activities WACD is currently working on and to provide a forum for questions and answers.

Motion: Dean Longrie moved to approve the August 2014 financial report as presented. John Preston seconded. The motion to approve carried.

2016-2017 annual meeting locations selection

Over the course of the spring and summer, Deb Gregory and Lori McLaughlin, WACD staff, have done a number of site visits to potential hotels/locations to host the 2016 and 2017 annual meetings. The Board was presented with a side-by-side comparison of various cost elements for each location.

Dean Longrie recommended that the Board select the Hilton Hotel in Vancouver, WA for a two-year period covering 2016 and 2017. It has been a number of years since the annual meeting was held in Vancouver. Other locations included extending our current 2015 contract with the Doubletree by Hilton in Spokane to three years encompassing 2015 through 2017; Semiahmoo in Blaine, WA, which has new ownership and is undergoing a number of renovations; the Tulalip Casino in Marysville, which doesn't offer government per diem rates; and the Bellevue Grand Hyatt Hotel, which does not have WACD's required meeting dates available.

Deb went through each location and noted that while the Vancouver Hilton could certainly meet our space needs, they currently do not have our required dates available in either 2016 or 2017, but committed to staff that if the Board were to seriously consider coming to Vancouver, they would reach out to the current group holding our required dates to see if that group would be willing to swap dates with WACD.

Motion: David Guenther moved that WACD further explore 2016-17 dates with the Vancouver Hilton. That if the Hilton is successful in getting the other group currently holding the dates required by WACD to move their meeting to a different time that WACD proceed with signing a contract for 2016 and 2017. Further, that the Vancouver Hilton provide us notice in writing of this not later than October 15. Dean Longrie seconded.

David Hall would still like to see WACD consider Semiahmoo in Blaine to help move the Area Directors around the state. Mark Craven wants to see Semiahmoo remain under consideration as well. Don Hatler suggested seeing some rough estimates of how many people come to the annual meetings and how many miles are traveled as part of the total cost to the individual districts involved.

Motion amendment: Mark Craven amended the original motion to consider other locations such as Spokane or Semiahmoo if the Vancouver Hilton is unable to swap out our needed meeting dates for 2016 and '17 with the other group currently holding those dates by October 15. David Guenther seconded the amended motion. The amended motion carried. Bill Knutsen abstained.

Mark Moore suggested that for the future, consideration be given to adding a column to the meeting location comparison sheet showing some type of estimate per 100 people attending similar to what Don Hatler suggested.

There were several suggestions made for future consideration, that WACD think about doing a meeting on the west side, then going back to Suncadia as a central location for a three-year

period, and then a meeting on the east side again. That kind of rotation could help move it around the state but also focus on a central location for the majority of the meetings.

Area Directors Forum

This time on the agenda is for Area Director items that have been specifically added to the agenda in advance of the meeting for discussion and brought forward from their respective districts. This was a suggestion made during the Jim Huckabay discussion at the June 16 Board meeting in Leavenworth. Even though the intent is to bring forward items that have been submitted in advance, it does not preclude discussion of other items brought up during the meeting. The agenda item for this meeting's forum is a discussion of CD assessments/rates and charges from Spokane CD. There will likely be more discussion during the October area meetings and then again by the full membership during the Business Meeting at Suncadia in December.

Vicki Carter and Jim Armstrong were present to discuss a resolution that Spokane will be presenting during the area meetings relative to RCW 89.08.400. Section 400 of the statute deals with district assessments which are entirely optional by a CD's Board of Supervisors. The amount has remained static for many years, and Spokane, along with King and Pierce CDs believe it is time to increase the cap.

A copy of Spokane's suggested statutory revision will be provided to the Board by WACD staff. If a resolution is approved by membership at the annual meeting, it will ask that the Commission and WACD work to modify Section 400 of RCW 89.08 to increase the cap allowed under the statute to generate additional funds through the local option, as a legislative issue during the 2015 session.

There are risks involved with opening this issue up before the legislature. Many legislators may not wish to bring this item up in the current no new taxes environment, even though it is a local option determined by county legislative authorities (CLAs).

Dave V. prepared a WACD Issue Paper addressing the background, general and specific considerations and the risks associated with bringing this issue forward now. He also included a specific set of recommended actions that WACD leadership should consider in advance of members' considerations of any resolutions proposed during the area meetings or at the annual meeting. Alan S. noted that it will be essential that WACD work with its legislative consultant Jim Jesernig on this issue to determine any timing for introducing such legislation.

Jim Armstrong stated that for those districts that are interested in seeking an assessment through their local county legislative authorities, that a combined team of the Commission and WACD assist them with developing and advancing the messaging needed to their CLA.

Dave V. emphasized that the main WACD priority for 2015 will be to successfully get the Commission's biennial budget passed and to get the 15% cut added back.

A condensed version of Dave V's white paper will be provided to all districts laying out the pros and cons of addressing this issue during the 2015 session, so that members at the area meetings and again at the annual meeting have full and fair discussions prior to making any decisions.

Motion: Mark Moore moved that Dave's condensed version of the issue paper be transmitted to all CDs. Don Hatler seconded. The motion carried.

Partner Reports

NRCS – Roylene Rides at the Door

- It's been a busy year at NRCS. Roylene has been completing work on their budget submittal. In the meantime, they were allotted an additional \$2 million that they've been allocating out.
- RCPP was a success. WA State was second only to California in number of proposals submitted. Roylene thanked the CDs along with their other partners in the field for their help in getting it done.
- Wildfires – The WA State NRCS team has spent a lot of time in the field helping determine after-fire risks and providing assistance to those affected across the state.
- Secretary Vilsack recently announced that USDA would fund \$328 million in wetland and ag land easements through the new Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. In our state, that equates to about \$1.8 million for local restoration and protection of lands projects.

WSCC – Mark Clark, Executive Director

- The Commission has been supporting Okanogan and others with fire recovery efforts. After Hurricane Sandy, FEMA has changed how it steps in following disasters, so local response is even more important.
- Elections Proviso Report – Several districts' responses came in late, but Commission staff has now collected everything. Mark will be sending an email to the districts next week to stimulate discussion at the area meetings to help determine where we go next so there can be consensus.
- VSP – Progress has been slower than preferred in the two participating counties to date.
- Mark thanked WACD, WADE and Jim Jesernig for their work on the Commission's budget team. Mark is very pleased with the result. The budget team included an additional \$2M in operating under unmet needs. If successful, this amount would carry forward in future biennia.
- Mark complimented WACD for the letter to the Governor in support of the Commission's budget submittal. Mark would like to see similar letters to the Governor from each of the 45 CDs. It was suggested that the districts could use WACD's letter as a template and then personalize it for their specific district.

WADE – Karen Bishop, Vice President

- Karen and Kathy Whalen, WADE President, will be doing more sharing of duties throughout this coming year as Kathy winds down as President and Karen becomes President at next year's WADE training.
- Karen and a team will be working on updates to WADE's Bylaws. The last update was 14 years ago.
- Work is underway in preparing tracks for the 2015 training. There will be some new track leaders added.
- Karen and Kathy are working with Dave V. on the WADE breakfast for the annual meeting. Topic for discussion will focus on disaster preparedness for the districts in response to the Okanogan fires and the Oso mudslide.

Dave V. complimented Kathy Whalen and WADE for the role they played in helping to develop the new budget format for the Commission's biennial budget submittal.

President Stromberger turned the floor over to David Guenther, who expressed his and WACD's appreciation to Bill Knutsen for all of his great work not only in King CD, but for all CDs around the state. David G. noted that Bill will be missed by the Board and wished him well. The group gave Bill a standing round of applause.

Mark Clark of WSCC expressed his thanks and those of the Conservation Commission. Mark noted that Bill has always been very involved in creating pathways forward that worked for everybody. Bill is a great role model for other supervisors to follow.

2015 Legislative Session preparation

- WACD sent the Governor a letter in support of the Commission's budget. The letter lays out WACD's legislative strategy for the 15% cut and buy backs. As expressed earlier, the letter can be used as a tool for other CDs to use. Personalizing the 15% cut will be especially important to convey to the Governor and OFM.
- March 25, 2015 is the date of WACD's annual legislative day in Olympia. WACD will be hosting a legislative reception for legislators and staff in the Legislative Building that day between 12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. WACD will be seeking a sponsor to help defray the costs of the reception.
- DOE Ag & Water Quality Steering Committee – The group has met four times to date. Preceding each meeting, a coalition of ag groups meet to build a uniform ag position for each meeting. Dave V. attends these. A list of who sits on the Ag & Water Quality Advisory Committee will be sent to Board members. (This was shared with all districts prior to the first committee meeting.)

Area Director Roles & Responsibilities

How can WACD make the Board more effective and have the Area Directors provide more service to their districts? Important:

1. Communications to/from the Area Directors
2. Time – How does WACD maximize the best use of Area Directors' time?

Dave V. noted that when staff (Dave V. and Deb Gregory) sends the Area Directors information that requires an action or a response, staff often does not receive any response back. What can staff do to more effectively communicate with the Area Directors?

Don Hatler wants knowledge of what the Executive Committee is doing. A number of things were suggested during the Jim Huckabay sessions at the June 16 Board meeting in Leavenworth. What happened to those? Were those notes from the meeting sent to the Area Directors? Yes, they were, but will be re-sent. *[Notation: meeting notes as prepared at the time (9/16), Officers and staff believed that these notes had been distributed to the full board. This was later found to not be true – that the Officers had received the notes as part of an Executive Director report, but Area Directors had not. And the notes were not included in the resulting Notice to Area Directors distributed 8/18. By way of follow-up, Huckabay session notes were sent to Area Directors 9/22.]*

Don Hatler and David Hall suggested a summary of what the Executive Committee discussed be provided to the Area Directors following each Thursday's conference call. Dave V. will

develop a summary report following each week's Executive Committee conference call for transmittal to the Area Directors.

Tom Miller suggested a governance model could be developed for how the Board functions and communicates with itself and with staff.

It was also suggested that staff attach descriptive subject lines to email messages requiring action. (Staff already does this.)

The Board discussed how to improve communication between Area Directors and district chairs. More work is needed to address this issue.

Annual meeting update

Dave V. provided an update on how plans are progressing for the annual meeting program. The theme for this year's conference is: "Giving Conservation Partnership a New Meaning". We have traditionally thought of our partnership as WACD, WSCC and NRCS, but there are many other groups that we partner with such as commodity groups like the Cattlemen's, Wheat Growers, Potato Commission, non-profits and others.

We have confirmed that Ann Mills, USDA Under Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources from Washington, D. C. will be our keynote speaker on Tuesday. Dave V. will also be extending an invitation to Will Steele, West Region Administrator for NOAA to speak at the Special Luncheon on Wednesday. It was hoped to get several members of our state's congressional delegation to attend and speak to our group, but there will be some important votes taken at that time preventing them from being able to attend. We will have a video greeting from Congresswoman Suzan DelBene to show at the opening general session before Ann Mills takes the stage.

With Jim Jesernig's help, we're also trying to get several members of the state legislature to come and speak, but that may be difficult in that committee organization following the November election will be taking place during that same time.

Depending on congressional schedules, we may be able to secure attendance of the newly elected Congressional member from the 4th congressional district representing central Washington replacing Doc Hastings.

There will be a working session of WACD's Tribal Outreach Task Force and a session on emergency management and preparedness for the districts as a result of the fire and mudslide. We're also looking at hosting a Past Presidents dinner with the Board of Directors for Monday evening, December 1. There will be more to come on that.

WACD re-did the sponsorship package this year. Dave V. handed out copies of the package and asked if Board members could try to obtain one sponsorship each to help support the costs of putting on the annual meeting. Last, but not least, Dave encouraged all members of the Board to plan to attend this year's conference.

Area Meeting Schedule for 2014

The schedule was included in the Board's packets. Dave V. encouraged Board members to attend their respective area meetings and is encouraging Vice President Mark Craven to attend

one or two sessions in Eastern Washington so that members can begin recognizing him and becoming familiar.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for Monday, December 1, 2014 at the Suncadia Lodge in Cle Elum at the annual meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deb Gregory
Administrative Coordinator