

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

February 2025 Board meeting

Summary of Motions

Motion: Barbara Bailey moved adoption of the draft board meeting agenda. Second by Mary Collins. Motion carried.

Motion: Alan Chapman moved adoption of the January meeting minutes. Second by Mary Collins. Motion carried.

Motion: Jeff Schibel moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Remote Connection through Zoom

February 24, 2025

Board Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Amy McKay, President (Whitman CD)
Jeff Schibel, Vice President (Lincoln County CD)
Barbara Bailey, Secretary (Underwood CD)
Mark Craven, Treasurer (Snohomish CD)
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)
Mike Mumford, Past President (Pend Oreille CD)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Columbia Basin CD)
John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)
Cindy Reed, South Central Area Director (North Yakima CD)
John W. Floyd, Northeast Area Director (Pend Oreille CD)
Sara Schlake, Northeast Area Director (Spokane CD)
Mary Collins, Southeast Area Director (Palouse 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
Craig Nelson, Okanogan CD Executive Director
Vicki Carter, Spokane CD Executive Director
Dave Hedrick, Ferry CD District Manager
Elsa Bowen, Lincoln County CD District Manager
Mary Malone, Pend Oreille CD Executive Director

Dean Hellie, Stevens County CD District Manager
Kris Neely, Spokane CD Associate Supervisor

President Amy McKay called the meeting to order at 6 PM. Ryan Baye conducted a roll call of the members present to confirm a quorum was present. Barbara Bailey moved to adopt the draft board meeting agenda. Second by Mary Collins. Motion carried.

Area Focus

Elsa Bowen presented Lincoln County CD's 2024 Ballot and some corresponding information. Lincoln CD had also picked up one of the laid-off probationary NRCS government employees as well as a hiring a Firewise Coordinator position. She shared there were 24 projects on the district's NRI waitlist, but expected additional projects with recent flooding in the county.

Dave Hedrick presented on behalf of Ferry CD. He shared the district had a competitive Supervisor election. The district had a 10 million grant in forestry funding suspended from US Forest Service and was waiting for updates. Their district greenhouse was being expanded and had bought a tractor for the 58 acres in hay/forage field testing. He was happy to announce that the TV program Washington Grown was coming to Ferry County, to do a program on the district's bee hives.

Vicki Carter began her presentation on Spokane CD by noting the district had started their Vets on the Farm program ten years ago and would soon open their Quarry Farmers market. Vicki echoed Elsa's concern about flooding in their area. The district had also recently put on their Regenerative Ag Conference. The district was also dealing with the freeze in federal grant funding, and the district had decided to continue funding their Spokane Community College partnership on their own.

Mary Malone presented for Pend Oreille CD, sharing that the district had a three-year NRCS grant frozen. They had recently undergone the district's three year state audit with no findings or recommendations. Mary also showcased district projects and their riparian plant propagation partnership with the Kalispell Tribe of Indians.

Dean Hellie spoke for Stevens County CD. The district was worried about state forest health grant funding, especially with federal grants being paused. The main issue in Stevens County at the moment was not wolves, but elk are tearing up farms in the valleys during the winter months.

January Meeting Minutes

Secretary Barbara Bailey presented the January board meeting minutes for approval. Alan Chapman moved adoption of the January meeting minutes. Second by Mary Collins. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Mark Craven reported on the January monthly financial report to the Board, including the month's profit and loss and comparisons to previous years. Jeff Schibel moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried. Ryan Baye asked for a postponement of the presentation of the 2024 Financials for the Annual Conference.

WACD Operations

Jim Brown reported that the plant nursery was in the midst of a three week delay in harvesting due to the ground freezing but hoped to meet delivery deadlines for customers having plant sales in the spring. He also reported that the PMC was slightly above sales levels from the previous years.

Heather Wendt spoke on the draft work plan for WACD and would leave it open for another month for the board to consider and provide comments.

Heather Wendt also provided a report on an updated policy manual, highlighting the new cell phone policy and leave policy. She asked the board to review the manual for potential action at next month's meeting.

Heather Wendt additionally covered the initial conversations around planning for a Spring Legislative Workshop, following the resolution adopted by the membership two years ago to have this regular meeting. It would be done in coordination with the Commission to be more cost-effective rather than holding two separate meetings like the previous years.

Tom Salzer led a discussion on the concept of holding a joint board meeting with Oregon's association of conservation districts.

NACD Meeting Report

Doug Rushton reported on the participation and the outcomes from the NACD Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, with 26 Washingtonians there and three resolutions adopted. He also spoke to the reports by NACD Staff and Officers on federal issues.

WACD Advocacy

Heather Wendt reported on WACD's 2025 Legislative Day, with the success of using the Columbia Room and how this was the most attended Legislative Day in recent memory.

Ryan Baye reported on the progress of HB 1488, WACD's rates and charges bill in the legislature. He also discussed other bills that WACD had interest in this session and the timeline for draft budget's being released by the House and Senate. There was a conversation about WACD's position on the freeze on federal grants and contracts, as well as the announced layoff of federal agency staff.

WACD Committee

Heather Wendt shared with the board members that WACD staff had received a request from the Center for Technical Development to present at a future board meeting.

Ryan Baye sought input from the board on developing language for the board to consider to provide guidance to the new committees created by the membership.

WACD Personnel

Amy McKay informed the board that after last month's performance review that Tom Salzer had declined a proposed salary increase. She answered questions about the results of the evaluation and recent CD wage studies, and a conversation about how the board should be determining employee salaries and benefits.

WACD Announcements

Ryan Baye announced he would be attending the Eastern Klickitat Conservation District this week, and that long-time Lewis CD manager Bob Amrine was retiring at the end of the month.

Sara Schlake announce she would be resigning her role as NE Area Director, that she didn't have enough time to commit to the role.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28.