

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

January 2025 Board meeting

Summary of Motions

Motion: Mary Collins moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Second by Alan Chapman. Mike Mumford offered a friendly amendment to allow the President to take agenda items out of order if necessary, accepted by the maker of the motion. Motion carried.

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

Motion: Mark Craven moved to approve the November and December board meeting minutes as written. Second by John McLean. Motion carried.

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Remote Connection through Zoom

January 27, 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)
Bruce McDonald, Southwest Area Director (Lewis CD)
Heather Smith, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor 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)
Chevelle Yeckel, WADE President (Okanogan 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
Casey Lowder, Pine Creek CD District Manager

Jennifer Boie, Palouse CD Director
Renee Hadley, Walla Walla County CD District Manager
Kris Neely, Spokane CD Associate Supervisor

President McKay called the meeting to order at 6 PM. Ryan Baye conducted a roll call to confirm a quorum was present. Mary Collins moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Second by Alan Chapman. Mike Mumford offered a friendly amendment to allow the President to take agenda items out of order if necessary, accepted by the maker of the motion. Motion carried.

Public Comment

No one from the public wished to speak during the public comment period.

Southeast Area Focus

Casey Lowder from Pine Creek CD shared details with the board about their district's programs, including new precision agriculture upgrades, local cooperators interest in cover cropping and reduced tillage best management practices, and being able to offer Wheat Week to the district's local schools for the first time. Casey also thanked the board for funding the legal retainer for CD use, that Pine Creek CD needed legal review when purchasing a woodchipper in conjunction with local municipalities.

Jennifer Boie shared a presentation on the work done by Palouse CD, highlighting the turnover among their supervisors, that the district's budget reached \$3.7 million in 2024, and how the district had 3700 event participants the previous year. She answered questions about board member recruitment, their district's containerized plant propagation program, and the use of citizen-scientists.

Renee Hadley spoke to the changes at Walla Walla County CD, especially on how their budget had quadrupled for the current fiscal year. She also offered thanks to WACD staff for all their hard work and to the WACD board for funding the recommendations from the Shared Resources Work Group.

Partner Reports

Chevelle Yeckel presented an update on behalf of the Washington Association of District Employees, including the creation of three new committees and the progress on the 2025 WADE Conference.

Doug Rushton presented an update on behalf of the National Association of Conservation Districts, covering his work on WACD's resolutions being heard at the NACD 2025 Annual Meeting, the participation of Washington CDs at the NACD 2025 Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, and information about NACD grants.

Treasurer's Report

Mark Craven presented the Treasurer's report on the November and December financial statements. He noted changes made to the financial statements as per the recommendations from the recent audit such as the addition of a line item titled "in-kind contributions" to accurately capture the difference between the commercial value of the land rental for the Plant Materials Center compared to WACD's agreement with Skagit CD. Mark also highlighted the performance of

the investment account over the past few months, the year to date costs and revenue of the Executive Office and the PMC, as well as comparing PMC sales over the previous three years. Mike Mumford moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Second by Jeff Schibel. Motion carried.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Barbara Bailey presented the minutes from the November and December meetings, written by staff and reviewed by her. Mark Craven moved to approve the November and December board meeting minutes as written. Second by John McLean. Motion carried.

WACD Operations

Heather Wendt spoke with the board regarding logistical options for a board strategic retreat in 2025, with the choice between a dedicated event in September or adding a day to the scheduled June board meeting. The conversation amongst the board covered the cost of both options, the potential location for a meeting in September, who else would be invited to participate, and the potential use of a virtual meeting.

Amy McKay brought forward for discussion the option of revisiting the 2025 board meeting schedule for potential reevaluation of the frequency of meetings. Several board members stated that continuing the regular meeting schedule with a meeting once a month (except for the summer recess) was their preference.

Jim Brown discussed the ongoing harvest at the Plant Materials Center, though the recent freeze had paused operations. He spoke to recent plant purchases by new clients and some of the guidance sought by WACD staff regarding changes to immigration rules. He answered questions about his predictions regarding the future cost of labor during planting and harvest periods.

Ryan Baye covered the survey results from attendees of the 2024 Annual Conference, how it was received as an overall positive with some areas for improvement. He outlined the potential qualifications WACD staff were seeking in potential 2026 venues: located in SW Washington or along the coast or along the Gorge, able to accommodate 175 guests in 100 rooms at the state per diem rate, and during the traditional post-thanksgiving time frame.

Heather Wendt presented the first draft of the next Annual Plan of work for review and comment by the board.

Legislative Update

Brynn Brady, WACD's lobbyist, presented the early highlights from the 2025 legislative session: the impact of new Governor Bob Ferguson's policy goals, the procedural changes being made by the new legislature, and her predictions regarding the FY25-27 biennium operating and capital budgets. She answered questions about certain bills and the initial takeaways of new Public Lands Commission Dave Upthegrove.

Heather Wendt updated the board on the progress of the rates and charges bill, HB 1488/SB 5510. She also spoke to the preparations for WACD's 2025 Legislative Day.

Ryan Baye submitted a draft 2025 legislative policy and budget priorities one pager for consideration by the board.

Personnel

The Board of Directors entered into an executive session as allowed under RCW 42.30.110 (g) to review the performance of an employee, to return at 8:45. At 8:45, President Amy McKay returned to the public meeting to announce the executive session was extended until 8:55. At 8:55, President Amy McKay returned to the public meeting to announce the executive session was extended until 9:05. The public meeting resumed at 9:05.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:06.