

# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

## Summary of November Board Actions

**Motion:** Doug Rushton moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Second by Jeff Schibel. Motion carried.

**Motion:** Amy McKay to approve the previous meeting minutes from September and October. Second by Jerry Kolke. Motion carried.

**Motion:** Alan Chapman moved to accept the treasurer's report. Second by John Preston. Motion carried.

**Motion:** Amy McKay moved to approve the 2024 meeting schedule. Second by Jerry Kolke. Motion carried.

**Motion:** Amy McKay moved to approve replacing the old medical stipend policy language with the new language at a rate of \$500 a month for each employee who declines to participate in the Association's health insurance program, conditional to medical insurance coverage being provided elsewhere). The stipend shall be prorated based on the percentage of full-time employment. Second by Jeff Schibel. Alan Chapman offered a friendly amendment to insert "subject to any legal requirements as identified by general counsel" that was accepted. Motion carried with abstention by Cindy Pierce and Doug Rushton.

**Motion:** Barbara Bailey moved to write off the outstanding balance from JM Planting and Western Native Plants in the amount of approximately \$6,300. Alan Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

**Motion:** Cindy Pierce moved to modify the existing budget to cover a \$1,000 increase for additional building/property and equipment insurance coverage. Second by Alan Chapman. Motion carried with an abstention by Jeantte Dorner.

**Motion:** Amy McKay moved for staff to prepare proposals for a Ron Shultz memorial scholarship and present options at the January meeting. Second by Cindy Pierce. Motion carried with an abstention by Lisa Zaborac.

**Motion:** Doug Rushton moved to change the date of the November board retreat to Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup> from 9 AM– 12 PM. Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried.

# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Remote Connection through Zoom

November 20, 2023

Board Meeting Minutes

## Members Remotely Present

Mike Mumford, President (Pend Oreille CD)  
Amy McKay, Vice President (Whitman CD)  
Barbara Bailey, Secretary (Underwood CD)  
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)  
Jeanette Dorner, Past President (Pierce CD)  
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)  
Lisa Zaborac, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor CD)  
Jerry Kolke, Southwest Area Director (Clark CD)  
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Columbia Basin CD)  
Jack Clark, South Central Area Director (Benton CD)  
Cindy Reed, South Central Area Director (North Yakima CD)  
Jeff Schibel, Northeast Area Director (Lincoln County CD)  
John Floyd, Northeast Area Director (Pend Oreille CD)  
Mary Collins, Southeast Area Director (Palouse CD)  
Cindy Pierce, WADE President (Skagit CD)

## Others Remotely Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director  
Ryan Baye, WACD Legislative & Membership Director  
Heather Wendt, WACD Director of Development & Engagement  
Jim Brown, WACD Director of Nursery Operations  
Sarah Grothe, WSCC Interim Executive Director  
Renee Hadley, Walla Walla County CD District Manager  
Zorah Oppenheimer, Clark CD Executive Director  
Sarah Moorehead, Thurston CD Executive Director

President Mumford called the meeting to order at 6 PM. Ryan Baye conducted a roll call to confirm a quorum was present. Doug Rushton moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Second by Jeff Schibel. Motion carried.

## **Southwest Area Focus**

Zorah Oppenheimer, Executive Director of Clark CD, spoke to the WACD Board about the growth of the district and “getting over the hump” where the district is more financially stable. She also discussed the two RCPPs the district is a part of, directed at small forest landowners and water quality inspections.

Sarah Moorehead, Executive Director at Thurston CD, presented on the 2024 annual budget for Thurston CD and the challenges of moving their office location.

### **Partner Reports**

Doug Rushton reported on the progress reviewing active NACD resolutions and was challenging the sunset of six he felt were still applicable. He also discussed the NACD Conference in San Diego in February.

Sarah Grothe reported two new Conservation Commission staff started on November 15<sup>th</sup>, that a third staff member was on maternity leave, and a new Executive Director was to be selected at the Commission's November meeting.

Cindy Pierce, WADE President, was glad to announce she would be attending the WACD Conference.

### **Meeting Minutes**

Barbara Bailey presented the October and September meeting minutes. Amy McKay to approve the previous meeting minutes. Second by Jerry Kolke. Motion carried.

### **Financial Report**

Tom spoke to the October financial report and the progress of income and expenses 33% through the financial year. He mentioned some of Dave Fenn's remaining goals for the next Treasurer, including his interest in seeing a more simplified financial report for the membership.

Alan Chapman moved to accept the treasurer's report. Second by John Preston. Motion carried.

### **Area Meeting Review**

Mike Mumford reflected after attending four of the six area meetings and invited the board members to do the same. WACD staff gave additional insights.

### **Officer Vacancies**

Ryan Baye spoke to the Central Area Commission Election, Wade Troutman's candidate, and the election process. He also spoke to the three Officer positions up for election: Treasurer; Secretary; and National Director.

### **2024 Schedule**

Heather Wendt presented a 2024 draft board meeting schedule, based on the same model as was held in 2023. She noted the in-person meeting dates and the adjustments in January and February to accommodate the federal holidays on the third Monday of the month. Amy McKay moved to approve the 2024 meeting schedule. Second by Jerry Kolke. Motion carried.

### **Dependent Health Coverage Update**

Tom Salzer reported the previously reported unresponsiveness of the insurance broker to obtain quotes was partially on WACD staff, that the broker was responding to a particular staff person other than Tom. He resolved the issue too close to the meeting to bring a comprehensive report, but wanted to say the communications gap has been fixed.

### **Travel Reimbursement Policy**

Tom Salzer reminded the board of the WACD policy regarding travel reimbursement and the use of per diem reimbursements for meals versus sending in receipts, ahead of the WACD annual conference.

### **Medical Stipend Policy**

Tom Salzer and Heather Wendt explained to the Board a gap in policy around medical stipends and presented a draft policy to provide a \$500 monthly stipend for those who decline coverage. Board members discussed their potential concerns with adopting the new policy. Amy McKay moved to approve replacing the old medical stipend policy language with the new language at a rate of \$500 a month for each employee who declines to participate in the Association's health insurance program, conditional to medical insurance coverage being provided elsewhere). The stipend shall be prorated based on the percentage of full-time employment. Second by Jeff Schibel.

Renee Hadley offered a public comment with the situation at Walla Walla County CD, that the district has a requirement from their insurance carrier that staff can only reject coverage if they are covered elsewhere. There was additional discussion about the appropriateness of paying people who've declined coverage and the potential legal concerns at play. Alan Chapman offered a friendly amendment to insert "subject to any legal requirements as identified by general counsel" that was accepted. Motion carried with abstention by Cindy Pierce and Doug Rushton.

### **PMC Report**

Jim Brown covered nursery operations, noting the large PMC account receivables amount, based on deposits for 2024. He reported two customers from 2023's harvest have not paid and have been contacted several times and he was seeking permission to write them off as bad debt. Barbara Bailey moved to write off the outstanding balance from JM Planting and Western Native Plants in the amount of approximately \$6,300. Alan Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

Jim also updated the board on the riparian plant propagation program through the Commission, that the PMC secured grant for plant procurement for 2025 and 2026 totaling approximately \$13,000. WSCC cannot pay deposits like normal customers, but they can do payment as work is accomplished. The nursery also had an insurance policy review conducted and the auditor found the building/property and equipment coverage were light, Jim wanted permission to increase insurance limit there. Cindy Pierce moved to modify the existing budget to cover a \$1,000 increase for additional building/property and equipment insurance coverage. Second by Alan Chapman. Motion carried with an abstention by Jeantte Dorner.

### **Phone System Change**

Tom Salzer reported to the board he had changed phone carriers to save some money, while adding an office line for Heather and a toll-free line.

### **Legislative Day**

Ryan Baye reported WACD's target Legislative Day was Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup> based on the feedback received from a couple CDs. WACD Staff will be finding a group discount rate at a local hotel. Ryan also informed the board members he will be in Costa Rica on his AgForestry international trip at the time.

### **Budget Modification**

Tom Salzer discussed the idea of memorializing Ron Shultz in some way, suggesting that a scholarship might be appropriate. Amy McKay moved for staff to prepare proposals for a Ron Shultz memorial scholarship and present options at the January meeting. Second by Cindy Pierce. Renee Hadley offered a public comment about the need for funding for an endowment for an ongoing scholarship. Motion carried. With an abstention by Lisa Zaborac.

### **WACD Annual Conference Update**

Heather Wendt spoke to the phenomenal schedule organized by WACD staff, that there were 27 sponsors totaling \$13,000 plus \$2000 in merchandise, and how excited for the conference she was.

### **Resolutions**

Ryan Baye reported on the resolutions being reviewed by Legislative, Bylaws, and District Policies Committee as well as the Natural Resources Policy Committee. He recommended board members read the resolutions before the conference.

### **Bylaw Proposal**

Ryan Baye presented the proposal to reduce the number of area directors and explained the role of the Board in bylaw amendments. Renee Hadley spoke to the inspiration for the resolution by Walla Walla County CD, citing efficiency and the unwieldiness of a nineteen-member board. There was discussion about the burden of one volunteer area director covering up to eleven conservation districts. Mike Mumford made three calls for a motion to approve the proposal, without success.

### **Board Retreat**

Ryan Baye recapped the discussion at the October Work Session, that board members seemed to prefer a Monday meeting rather than Wednesday meeting for the Board of Directors' meeting that happens during the Annual Conference. Doug Rushton moved to change the date of the November board retreat to Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup> from 9 AM– 12 PM. Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried.

### **2024 Annual Conference**

Ryan Baye presented the two conference venues that submitted bids for WACD's 2024 and 2025 Annual Conference, the Northern Quest Casino and the Centennial Hotel in Spokane. He discussed the prerequisites required and the potential cost difference for doing a weekend versus a weekday conference. Lisa Zaborac moved to hold the 2024 and 2025 Annual Conference at Northern Quest Casino on the Monday – Wednesday after Thanksgiving. Second by Amy McKay. There was discussion on the difference between the two venues around extra fees like parking costs, the survey results from the membership around conference timing, and the possibility of working to include the Kalispell and other tribes by going to the Northern Quest. Motion carried with an abstention by Jeanette Dorner and Barbara Bailey.

### **Announcements**

Ryan Baye congratulated Columbia Basin CD for securing \$40 million in RCPP grant funding for the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52.