

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Remote Connection through Zoom

April 21, 2020

Summary of Board Actions

- **Motion:** Javier Lopez moved to approve the agenda as presented with the removal of the "Operating Reserve Account Contingency" agenda item. Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Javier Lopez moved to approve the presented March Board meeting minutes as corrected. Second by Dean Longrie. Motion carried with one abstention.
- **Motion:** Javier Lopez moved to cover Executive Office budget shortfall with Wells Fargo saving account. Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Amy McKay moved to adopt the following as components of a new WACD strategic plan: Mission, Vision, Priorities, Goals, Action Plan, Scorecard. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Javier Lopez moved to designate CD Elections as a 2021 WACD Legislative Priority and direct staff to engage with the Association. Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried.

Board of Directors April Meeting Minutes

Members Remotely Present

Jeanette Dorner, President (Pierce CD)
Javier Lopez, Vice President (South Yakima CD)
Amy McKay, Secretary (Whitman CD)
Dave Fenn, Treasurer (Lewis CD)
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)
Mark Craven, Past President (Snohomish CD)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
Dean Longrie, Southwest Area Director (Clark CD)
John Keatley, Southwest Area Director (Cowlitz CD)
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Grant County CD)
Cindy Reed, South Central Area Director (North Yakima CD)
Barbara Bailey, South Central Area Director (Underwood CD)
Mike Mumford, Northeast Area Director (Pend Oreille CD)
Jeff Schibel, Northeast Area Director (Lincoln County CD)
Renee Hadley, WADE President (Walla Walla County CD)

Others Remotely Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director
Ryan Baye, WACD Legislative & Membership Lead

Jim Brown, WACD PMC Nursery Manager
Lori McLaughlin, WACD Financial Accountant & HR Administrator
Carol Smith, WSCC Executive Director
Roylene Rides at the Door, NRCS State Conservationist

Jeanette Dorner began the meeting at 9:07.

Ryan Baye conducted roll call, checked the connection of those present, and did a brief orientation for using Zoom. Jeanette Dorner welcomed the board members, staff, and partners to the meeting. She shared there were some items on the proposed agenda that she believed were extraneous.

Javier Lopez moved to approve the agenda as presented with the removal of "Operating Reserve Account Contingencies". Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried.

Covid-19 Impact on Districts

Tom Salzer shared the impact on WACD, adopting to a teleworking policy. Board members shared the impact in their areas, transitioning district operations to working from home, accessibility issues regarding internet and phone connections, and sharing outreach material among several conservation districts.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Amy McKay discussed the disseminated draft minutes. John Keatley highlighted a spelling error to be corrected. Javier Lopez moved to approve the March Board Meeting minutes with one correction. Second by Dean Longrie. Motion carried with one abstention.

Treasurer's Report

Tom Salzer led the discussion on the financial report and monthly statement of financial position, then answered questions. Tom also recapped the Finance Committee meeting and the committee's discussion on the expected FY2020 Executive Office budget shortfall. Javier Lopez moved to increase budget from saving account to cover Executive Office budget shortfall. Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried.

PMC Nursery Report

Jim Brown presented to the Board on the state of the nursery operation. He discussed the exemptions covering certain aspects of the PMC, and their new protocols on social distancing, providing PPE to employees, and regular cleaning of surfaces.

There was one issue he felt warranted attention, that of the restocking fee for cancellations after January 31st. As of the meeting, there were \$20,800 worth of fees for canceled orders. He shared that no one had questioned or hesitated to pay the fee. He also shared PMC staff was working with Palouse CD, who received plants and then had to close their office, to ensure those plants survived until district staff could plant.

Jim then looked ahead to the next planting year and the adjustments being made to prepay some taxes, updating the PMC website, and planting some edible plants like service berries and elderberries in an expansion of the current business practices.

WACD Strategic Plan Components

Tom Salzer spoke to the different components presented to include in WACD's next strategic plan and answered some initial questions. Amy McKay moved to adopt the following as components of a new WACD strategic plan: Mission, Vision, Priorities, Goals, Action Plan, Scorecard. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.

WACD Mission Statement and Values

Tom Salzer presented the Mission Statement and Values used in previous WACD documents. Some board members liked the wording currently used; others wanted to expand beyond the original language. Multiple board members requested waiting until next meeting and asking staff to work with a subgroup to create formal recommendations.

WACD Purpose

Tom Salzer presented the Purpose of WACD used in previous documents. There were suggestions to add financial component to purpose, both for the association and its member-districts and to prepare formal recommendation for June. Alan Chapman, John Keatley, and Doug Rushton volunteered to help draft new language.

There was a break from 11:10 to 11:20.

All-District Meeting Recap

Tom Salzer and Carol Smith recapped the meeting from the previous week held by WACD and WSCC on the topic of 2021 Legislative Session and decision package development. They discussed the bleak state budget outlook in the next biennium, the potential for a special session to cut current spending, and the likely changeover in legislators. They highlighted narrowing down the number of decision packages, driven by urgency, importance, and sufficient supporting data.

They answered questions about what potential cuts to the Commission's budget would materialize, the differences in impacts between capital and operating budget reductions, and some of the increased costs to districts engaging in food security activities.

2021 Legislative Priorities

Ryan Baye spoke to the proposal to bypass the Association's traditional pathway in asking the board to designate CD elections as a 2021 Legislative priority, highlighting the need to continue discussion between and inside member-districts ahead of the next legislative session. Javier Lopez moved to designate CD Elections as a 2021 WACD Legislative Priority and direct staff to engage with the Association. Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried.

There was a break for lunch from 12:26 to 1:01 PM

Partner Reports

Carol Smith reported for the Washington State Conservation Commission. Among other topics she spoke to the Commission's response to COVID-19, the additional funds now available after the legislative session and answered questions.

Roylene Comes at Night reported for the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Among other topics, she reported all NRCS offices were closed to the public and most of their staff were teleworking. She also reported on CRP sign-ups and task orders, then answered questions.

Renee Hadley reported for the Washington Association of District Employees. She announced their traditional yearly conference was canceled but would still be held virtually, then shared additional conference details.

Dough Rushton reported for the Washington Conservation Society and the National Association of Conservation Districts. He encouraged those present to join the Society and referred folks to his written NACD report.

Area Director Reports

The South Central Area Directors reported most CDs got through their plant sales before closing their district offices, the lack of Conservation Corp crews would impact their conservation projects for the year, and at least two districts made the decision to furlough some staff.

The North Central Area Director reported their districts were going strong.

The Southwest Area Directors reported on each area districts' operations.

The Northwest Area Director reported many of their members were adjusting to teleworking and flexible schedules. They also reported on Puget Sound Caucus activities and multiple districts with rates and charges levies were seeing reduction on expected income.

Amy McKay reported for the Southeast Area, was able to speak briefly to the four districts in Whitman County.

The Northeast Area Directors reported an early drought in part of their area, concerns about summer fire fighting being affected by COVID-19, the implementation of new technology by using SmartSheet, and the issue of internet accessibility in Pend Oreille and Stevens Counties.

2020 Annual Conference

Tom Salzer addressed the board on the topic of the 2020 Annual Conference being jeopardized by the coronavirus. He outlined a number of different options, and how to see this as an opportunity.

Javier Lopez moved to cancel 2020 contract with the Hotel Murano. Seconded by Barbara Bailey. Board members shared their preference to delegate authority to gather more information then

make a decision, as well as concern about when conferences with large groups of people would be regularly attended again. Multiple board members wanted to survey the membership and gather opinions and answer questions about the logistics of a change. Motion failed with two abstentions. Jeanette Dorner presented what she believed was the general will of the board to send out a survey to the association, confirm financial and insurance information, and direct staff to prepare for a special meeting before June.

Fiscal Year 2021 Budget

Ryan Baye shared WACD's Finance Committee would soon meet to prepare budget, asking for any initial input from board members. Several suggested assuming a near-normal year, that it was too early to guess the economic impact. Ryan then spoke of the lack of direction around the Leadership Development fund and asked for input to help develop new policy.

2020 Officer and Director Check-in

Jeanette Dorner and Tom Salzer wanted to get feedback from the board on his early performance. Several board members complimented him on his attitude, positive direction, and communication. They appreciated his weekly emails, the Conservation Community Calls, and his plans to visit as many districts as possible in his first year.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20.