



**Grant County Conservation District
Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2022 – 1:00 PM
In Person and Teleconference – Phase 3**

Attendance:

Supervisors – Dave Stadelman (Chair), John Preston, Richard Leitz, Glenn Burkholder

Staff - Kristina Ribellia, Ron Scerbicke, Britton Baker, Elliott DeLong (Recorder), Harold Crose, Yazmin Mejia

Agencies –Mike Baden (WSCC), Erin Kaczmarczyk(NRCS)

Guest – Susan Tao

Call to Order and Introductions:

D. Stadelman called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM.

Public Input:

No public input.

Approval of February 8, 2022 Monthly Board Meeting Minutes:

Motion by J. Preston to accept the February 8, 2022 minutes as presented, seconded by R. Leitz, motion carries.

Approval of March 8, 2022 Monthly Financial Reports:

Presented by E. DeLong – Reviewed monies owed or owing and current grants. Financial topics included; burn permits, funds received, grant funding, DOE, WSCC, EPA and NACD grant, cost share allocations, pass-through money, implementation grant, livestock funding, NRCS, RCPP, and DOE Burn Applications.

Motion by G. Burkholder to accept the March 8th, 2022 Financial report as presented, seconded by J. Preston motion carries. Grant County checks #10651-10691 totaling \$64,884.86. Payroll checks #10658-10664 totaling \$13,120.89 and #10673-10681 totaling \$13,384.40 included in the above amount.

Agency Reports:

NRCS– Erin - Ephrata NRCS office is at a 75% staffing level allowing for producers to enter our offices once thought still by appointment only. Mask mandate has been lifted for staff in federal spaces for counties that have low COVID rates. The Big Bend Team LWG meeting was held 2/25. Material was tough to review in the virtual atmosphere, but participants were able to view existing local working group fund pool resource concerns and ranking questions. The information was provided by GCCD and KCCD for inclusion in the LWG data collection tool for FY2023 regarding priority watersheds, ranking question feedback, local project priorities. 13 total applications were received for this funding and several applicants have canceled due to economic reasons. Only 7 applications were funded. Discussions have been had with Keith Griswold and Anna Lael about considering a 2nd WaterSMART sign up to spend the remaining dollars with pre-approved application costs totalling \$584,000 (\$416,000 in funds remaining). WA NRCS leadership has focused on CTA reporting from NRCS projects as well as partner project work. This has become more important in recent years and plays a major role to determine budget and staffing levels. The Ephrata NRCS office is in process of re-advertisement for the following

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Office: (509) 765-9618 | Fax: (509) 765-4127



positions: Civil Engineering Technician, Program Assistant and Resource Conservationist to fill the vacancies. The Conservation District Board members are encouraged to request civil rights training from NRCS and should coordinate with E. Kaczmarczyk if you are interested. Contact should also be made with Andy McGuire on high residue farming. Making a plan to set up an annual meeting to cover the topic of high residue farming or similar topics for a 2023 meeting maybe something to consider.

Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC)–Baden– The new executive director has started with the Commission earlier this month. Currently the Legislative session has come to a conclusion with no current changes on election reform. It can be expected that the election reform will continue to be a concern and will likely be addressed going forward, likely in the next legislative session. The DOE stock water bill will also be something that is addressed later in a legislative session when the stakeholder meeting has occurred sometime in the near future, who no exact date has been determined. Additional information has come out on the Sustainable Farms and Fields bill, for any new information and questions going forward, Allison is the commission contact, and should be able to provide the information. With election for the district being complete, it would be advisable to look into the annual plan of work and schedule 22 with are due May 31, 2022.

Old Business:

Building Update – Ribellia - The building is currently a little behind so the May date is looking more like a June or July move in date. Delays in supply chain have slowed the progress. In addition the price tag of the building has changed slightly now looking closer to \$800,000 for the CD's share, roughly 26% of the total cost. The contract between GCCD and Grant County #5 still needs reviewed. Based on research, Ribellia recommended Wyman Law for legal review.

Motion by G. Burkholder to approve the use of Wyman Law to review the building contract. Seconded by R. Leitz, motion carries.

Moses Lake Watershed Council (MLWC) – Ribellia – Monthly meetings with the MLWC continue and staff continue work on lake treatments and grant requirements. GCCD continues to improve the relationship with the City of Moses Lake as the city cited GCCD as a key member of the MLWC and supporter in the city's Shoreline Master Plan update workshop presentation done in February. GCCD's focus is council development through the USBR WaterSMART grant and outreach in partnership with the City of Moses Lake' Parks and Recreation Department. The outreach would partner with the Explorers and Mobile Recreation programs to deliver water quality education and outreach.

Additionally, a Federal funding request for lake treatment has been brought forward to address in lake issues. The appropriation request would total \$3.1 million dollars to apply a mitigation procedure to address lake issues. In order to provide some additional support to the request, having GCCD support would likely help bring additional support when presented to the MLWC.

Motion by R. Leitz to support the federal appropriations request to take to the March Moses Lake Watershed Council Meeting. Seconded by J. Preston, motion carries.



VSP – Ribellia – B. Baker, H. Crose, and D. Elliott continue to work on Adams County VSP with the first Adams County VSP plan being presented to Bar U Ranch on March 4th. VSP plans continue to be developed with the newest coming from a meeting that occurred the first week of March. Brown Farms will be the next plan developed to address the farms up in the Smyrna Bench area.

OGWRP Update – Ribellia – The PL-566 application has been approved and is one of twenty during this round to be approved by NRCS nationwide. East Columbia Basin Irrigation District is working with GCCD to get the program going in full. The completion of the PL-566 could bring in excess of \$300 million dollars into the OGWRP. GCCD is also working on an RCPP application for the OGWRP. In order to provide additional competitive support for the project, developing a contract between GCCD and Farmers Conservation Alliance would be beneficial. The contract would provide GCCD with additional professional support.

Motion by J. Preston to approve the contract with FCA to complete the RCPP proposal for completion no later than April 12, 2022. Seconded by G. Burkholder, motion carries.

Quincy Well Sampling – Ribellia – The sampling took place in 2020-2021 to detect Dacthyl in the Quincy area. Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) are looking to present the findings with GCCD's assistance as well as expand the sampling to other areas. GCCD continues to work with DOH and WSDA for outreach to the Quincy community.

Elections – Ribellia – Elections closed March 3rd and ballots will be counted March 11, 2022 at 8 AM. Applications for the appointed position are due March 31st, 2022.

New Business:

New Hires - Ribellia – Two new staff members have been hired since the February Board meeting. Yazmin Mejia was hired as an outreach coordinator and administrative assistant. Y. Mejia has experience working with children as well as brings a bilingual capacity that the conservation district has not previously had. With D. Gadberry moving to the district, the NACD NRCS TA position needed to be filled so the second staff member was hired to take that position. Sebastian Saliwanchik will be joining the district in late March or early April once housing has been secured.

Motion by G. Burkholder to approve the two new hires brought for March 2022. Seconded by R. Leitz, motion carries.

Drone Purchase – Baker – The current Parrot Bluegrass drone has had some issues as the batteries are damaged and replacements are not available. With the need to increase monitoring and district resources, purchase of a new drone would be beneficial. The current option recommended is a Phantom 4 multispectral drone by DGI. The company we have made contact with about the purchase is DSLR Pro from California. Currently funds exist in both VSP grants to cover the cost once approved by the board and again by the Conservation Commission.

Motion by R. Leitz to approve the purchase of a replacement drone through DSLR Pro. Seconded by G. Burkholder, motion carries.



RCPP – Ribellia – The contract originally developed with FCA was to compete the PIFR for the OGWRP in order to submit the PL-566. With PL-566 awarded there is still a need to renewing a contract with FCA. This contract would not exceed \$10,000 and only be for completion of the necessary documents to submit the NRCS RCPP due in April.

Motion by R. Leitz to approve the \$10,000 maximum contract with FCA to complete the RCPP proposal. Seconded by J. Preston, motion carries.

Credit Card - Ribellia – The current credit card is listed under the last Manager of the Upper Grant Conservation District, Dale Wentworth. Until recently the cards were in district employees' names, neither of which are currently with the district. Without direction, no new cards can be issued to the current credit line. Contact with D. Wentworth has shown that he does not wish to continue having any connection to the credit line for GCCD. The options are to cancel the existing line and start a new credit line or transfer the pre-existing line from D. Wentworth to another supervisor.

Motion by R. Leitz to cancel the existing credit line and open a new line under the Current conservation District name. Seconded by J. Preston, motion carries.

Benefits update - Ribellia – The current policy of GCCD has been discussed in the past and with changes in recent years, the policy is out of date and not competitive. The evaluations conducted by Kittitas Conservation District in 2021 has shown that GCCD is below what is offered by most other conservation districts and as such an update would be recommended. The current recommendation would be 100% coverage of all GCCD staff enrolled and a 50% coverage of all GCCD dependent's enrolled for medical, vision, and dental. The policy should be reevaluated for future sustainability going forward either on a biannual basis to make sure the process is financially sustainable.

Motion by R. Leitz to update district policy to cover 100% for employees and 50% for dependents for medical, dental and vision, and to be open for review in the future as presented. Second by J. Preston, motion carries.

Name Change - Ribellia – With a new building under construction and an office move in the near future, a change to the district name may be of benefit. Other conservation districts have changed names in the past and the process would require approval by both the Washington State Conservation Commission and the Washington Secretary of State's Office. Currently the name, Grant County Conservation District, does not include the portion of Adams County that is part of the district. The name recommended by conservation district staff would be the Columbia Basin Conservation District. If approved by the GCCD board, conversation with adjoining conservation districts would be initiated to determine any conflict or concerns. All the required information would be compiled and ready for a resolution to be presented to the GCCD board for the April 12, 2022 board meeting.

Motion by R. Leitz to begin the process of changing the conservation district's name to Columbia Basin Conservation District. Seconded by J. Preston, motion carries.



Adjournment-

Motion by J. Preston to adjourn. Seconded by R. Leitz, motion carries. The meeting adjourned at 3:11 PM.

Chair Approval

Recorder Signature

Date

Date

Summary of Motions:

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