



Grant Soil and Water Conservation District
721 S. Canyon Blvd. - John Day, OR 97845 - Phone (541) 575-0135

**MINUTES OF GRANT SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S
July 2nd, 2020 MEETING**

Attendance

Directors Attending:

Pat Voigt - Director
Phil St. Clair – Director
Rick Henslee – Director

Roger Ediger – Director
Joanne Keerins - Director

Staff Attending:

Kyle Sullivan - District Manager

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant

Visitors:

Aaron Roth – Natural Resources Conservation Service – via telephone

ADMINISTRATION

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat Voigt called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – **Phil moved to approve the June 4th, 2020 meeting minutes. Joanne gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**
3. Introduction of Visitors – There were no visitors attending in person or by telephone.
4. Public Input – There was no public input.

REPORTS

5. NRCS – Aaron gave an update on the John Day field office's activities due to the Covid 19 situation. NRCS will be entering into different phases in two-week increments. The John Day office is currently in Phase II; landowners must make an appointment to come into the office to meet with staff. The Pendleton office had a confirmed case with an employee and is now shut down. The work environment has been challenging as no leeway has been given in NRCS program deadlines. The staff is continuing to work on ranking CSP Classic applications and RCPP contracts. All activities are taking much longer with the current health environment. Plans are to begin working on the RCPP contract with the South Fork Watershed Council. Casey Lathrop is the new Basin Resource Conservationist. Aaron reported he experimented treating Sweet Briar Rose with Prono Pellets with minimal success.
6. OSU Ext. - A representative was unable to attend.
7. BOR – A representative was unable to attend.
8. John Day Basin Trust - A representative was unable to attend.
9. ODFW Wildlife – A representative was unable to attend.
10. ODFW Fisheries – A representative was unable to attend.
11. ODFW Fish Habitat – A representative was unable to attend.
12. CTWSR of OR – A representative was unable to attend.
13. ODA – A representative was unable to attend.
14. Malheur National Forest – A representative was unable to attend.
15. Freshwater Trust - A representative was unable to attend.
16. USFWS Partners Program – A representative was unable to attend.

17. North Fork John Day Watershed Council – A representative was unable to attend.
18. Upper South Fork Watershed Council – Joanne stated the Council is looking forward to the upcoming meeting with NRCS regarding the South Fork John Day Watershed Restoration RCPP project.
19. Monument SWCD – A representative was unable to attend.
20. OWEB – A representative was unable to attend.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

21. ODA SIA Update – Pat stated he felt positive about Monument SWCD and the North Fork Watershed Council also seeking answers concerning ODA’s Strategic Implementation Area process. Kyle handed out a draft copy of ODA’s SIA evaluation methods and protocols. Kyle stated ODA has offered to give a demonstration to the District and other interested parties on how properties are remotely evaluated. Kyle hopes the protocols, in conjunction with the remote evaluation demonstration, will help the District obtain answers to its questions. Roger said he has contacted Representative Mark Owens and Senator Lynn Findley, both by telephone and letter, regarding his concerns with the SIA process. Both expressed an interest in the issue and would like to meet with the District to hear more of our concerns. Roger stated he is proud of the actions the District has taken to elevate the level of awareness of the issue to the landowners in Grant County.
22. ODA Annual 2020 – 2021 Workplan – Kyle presented the 2020-21 Annual Workplan to the Directors. **Joanne moved to approve the Grant Soil & Water Conservation District Annual Work Plan July 2020 – June 2021. Phil gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**
23. Pat Voigt announced the meeting would take a five-minute break.
24. Employee Salary Adjustment Request – Kyle stated he sees this as two issues; the value of a licensed engineer and future District programs. The Directors agreed. Discussion followed on different scenarios without a licensed engineer on staff as well as the positive aspects of having an in-house licensed engineer. Pat asked the Directors if they felt the District should retain a licensed engineer and CWRE. Roger replied he believes the District would be remiss to not do all we can to keep our current staff. Rick said it is the one thing that has set our District apart from other District and Councils. Joanne agreed; it gives the District more options. Phil also agreed. Kyle stated the basis of the funding for our engineering program is the Bureau of Reclamation contract, which expires December 31, 2020. Kyle said initial conversations with BOR have pointed to a desire to renew a five-year agreement with the District. The District is currently putting together a list of projects, including habitat and water quality, that will be implemented in the next 5 years. Kyle reviewed with the Directors the current base salary and proposed increases for the District’s licensed engineer. He proposed providing the salary increase in two phases, with Phase I beginning immediately and being retroactive to May 1, 2020. Phase II would begin upon the renewal of the BOR contract. **Roger moved to approve the Phase I increase to the District engineer position. Joanne gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.** The Directors agreed by consensus to provide a Phase II salary increase as proposed at a later date.

Roger stated he appreciates Rick’s insistence on a cost benefit analysis regarding the engineer salary and Kyle for the questions and answers provided on the subject. Rick and Roger both agreed the information provided cleared up the issue for them.

Pat brought up the matter of equity with the District Manager salary. He stated the Directors first priority is to ensure the District retains financial solvency. Rick said he feels we now have a District Manager that can take the District into the future with many options. Joanne suggested phasing in an increase in the District Manager’s salary or providing it in a year end stipend. Roger stated an increase in pay can bring about many issues. Phil replied he is confident Kyle can work through those. The District needs to take the first step with the District engineer and then proceed from there. The Directors agreed by consensus to address the District Manager salary at the December 2020 meeting.

25. Other - Kyle reported Governor Brown announced wearing masks indoors will be mandatory state wide effective Wednesday, July 1st. Kyle has reviewed in detail the guidance provided by the Governor’s office. He feels the District does not fall within the required guidance but do have public entering the building. Kyle recommended staff wear masks when interacting with the public, but does not feel masks need to be required at any other time. The Directors agreed by consensus.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

26. Weed Control – Kyle provided Matt’s report in his absence. The 2020 Noxious Weed 50% Cost-Share program received 17 applications with treatment to start soon. Treatment has already begun on the 25% Cost-Share program as well as the 2020 ODA Grant County Top Five Priority Weeds grant. Staff spent 11 days providing noxious weed treatment along the lower John Day River. Matt is beginning to make initial plans for test plots for cheatgrass control in conjunction with the Bayer pilot program.
27. District Programs – Kyle reviewed the written report with the Directors. The Blue Mts. Vegetative Health Initiative – Dads Creek Unit and the Ritter Fish Habitat Assessment, OWEB grants have been approved. The new pipeline on the Ballance Creek project is complete and the system is fully operational. Discussion followed on future District programs.

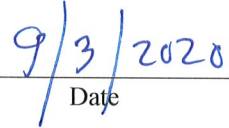
FINANCIAL BUSINESS

- 28. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of June 2020 were reviewed.
- 29. Approve Bills – Roger moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the month of June, 2020. Joanne gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.



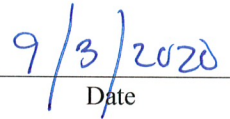
Board Chair



Date



District Manager



Date