

# **SAN JUAN ISLANDS CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

## **Regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Supervisors**

**August 26, 2020**

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

### **In Attendance (Via Zoom)**

**Supervisors:** Deanna Eltinge, Vicki Heater

David Bill, Lynn Bahrych, Carson Sprenger

**Staff:** Mike Ramsey, Tony Fyrqvist,

Matt Claussen, Cathi Winings, Bruce Gregory, Ryan Palmateer, Erin Licata

**Partners:** Jean Fike, WSCC Puget Sound Regional Manager, Alan Chapman, WACD  
NW Region Representative

**Public:** Kai Hoffman-Krull, SJICD Contractor, Bob Brunkow, Public

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

## **MEETING SUMMARY-Final**

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Vicki Heater convened the regular meeting at 10:00 am via Zoom.

### **July 22 Meeting Summary – Action Item:**

David moved to approve the July 22 Meeting Summary. Lynn moved to second. Motion passed.

### **July 30 Special Meeting Summary – Action Item:**

Deanna moved to approve the July 30 Meeting Summary with additional comments to be inserted in the introduction. The motion was seconded by David. Motion passed.

David made a comment about reinstating a specific “To-do List” in the Meeting Summary for each of the Board Members as a reminder as the Meeting Summaries are sent out for review prior to the next Board Meeting.

**July Financial Statements Review – Action Item:**

David made a motion to approve the financial statements for July 2020. Seconded by Carson. There was a brief discussion about the deficit incurred in July. Tony mentioned that this was due to the timing differential between invoicing the grants and receipt of funds. August will show a large surplus as some grants - such as the one from Orcas Island Community Foundation which is earmarked for the Orcas Island CCC projects – are funded before expenses have been incurred. Motion approved.

David made a motion to approve the credit card details, Carson seconded, and the motion passed.

**Cost Share Projects Review – Action Item:**

Matt updated the Board with particulars of the Cost Share Program 2019-2021 along with a spreadsheet with clearly highlighted status changes.

In communicating with participants, he identified pandemic related issues with labor, however, the projects will meet deadlines.

There is a verbal approval for a 6-month extension for the DOH-NEP Shellfish Initiative Grant with is due to mature on 11/30/20. Matt is working obtaining a signed approval, however due to the pandemic it has been delayed.

Projects discussed in detail included the construction of waste storage facility for Phil and Angie Shepard at Blacktail, Bass and Beef, LLC. It includes a 3000 SF covered pad with runoff systems. A motion was made by David to approve the project. Lynn seconded and the motion passed.

Matt also mentioned Cathi’s work on the Redmill Farm project emphasizing the working relationship with other agencies such as the San Juan Islands Preservation Trust for agricultural assistance.

Farms are wrapping up their seasons. Five BMPs are to be implemented for the Coffelt Farm on Orcas Island. Matt expressed concern about future cost share funding due to economic impacts from the pandemic.

Lynn complemented amount of work that has been done under the constrained conditions.

Conversation ensued regarding future funding within the next budget cycle. David mentioned that the District should be pursuing additional funding. Mike responded that the District will receive \$45,000 from Commission for shellfish cost share projects.

Jean stated that most shellfish funding has been allocated for this biennium, but all unused funds will return back to the “pot” to be allotted out again.

Dave called for clarity as to what needs to happen. Mike responded that he will have a scope of work that will be done for the \$45,000.

Matt expressed worry about the pre-loaded project costs to participants before they even know if the funding has been assured. Assessment funds cannot be used for projects. In order to evaluate the scope of work we will need to look at the number of potential projects.

Cathi asked Jean about the funding forecast for the next biennium. Jean replied that Operating funds will be tight and dependent on the legislature, however, Capital funding (which covers cost share) will be less under pressure. But it will be important to communicate with legislators.

Matt inquired if a letter from the Board would be helpful into which Jean replied that it would be very helpful. She even suggested that virtual farm tours or drone flights over projects could help. Farm plans impact “Food Security” and as locally sustainable food production systems they are highly valuable. Shellfish projects also fall into the local food production and are important to tribal members. This needs to be conveyed to legislators.

#### **Executive Director Transition – Discussion:**

David conveyed a thank you for Mike for service to the District.

Vicki made a motion to accept Mike’s resignation with gratitude and appreciation with a good ongoing future relationship. The motion was seconded by Lynn. The motion passed.

Matt stated appreciation for Mike on behalf of all staff.

Vicki made a motion to have Tony be a signer on checks, timesheets, credit card, grant invoices and purchase orders. Carson moved to second. David called for additional discussion. Tony stated that all checks currently need 2 signatures for double verification. Bruce and Deanna are already signers.

Mike stated that he also approves all leave requests.

Vicki stated that Matt and Tony should sign the timesheets and Deanna could also be a signer if needed. Motion passed.

Vicki explained her proposal of a 6-month trial without a new Executive Director while delegating responsibilities to existing staff. Discussion ensued with Carson questioning the financial picture and wished to hear from staff. As a long-term employee at the District Bruce provided input about details of the Director's tasks and involvement in various other related organizations. Matt felt that the budget should drive the hours and explained the director's work involving collaboration with partners. Tony expressed concern about grant writing in order to have a healthy long-term pipeline of grants.

Mike explained the importance of partnering with other organizations and participating in the Puget Sound CD's caucus.

Lynn commented about reallocating funds for grant writing and commented about increasing staff hours and possible pay scale, while David expressed the value of hearing input from staff members. He also emphasized the importance of establishing an organized process; he said he would like to be involved.

Ryan initiated conversation about reallocating and awarding staff additional hours. Cathi stated that she currently has 10 hours but is involved in other tasks and is not sure if she can absorb additional hours. Matt stated the importance of analyzing the potential cost savings and utilization of assessment/implementation funds outside of grant funding.

In response to the multiple comments Vicki proposed a "Work Session" with staff to configure an interim 6-month plan. Deanne agreed and expressed concern about the 6-month time frame.

Carson emphasized the important role played by the Executive Director and was concerned about overburdening the staff. He also explained the essential functions played by the Executive Director in networking, inspiring staff and establishing the culture within the organization. He also expressed interest in examining all options for an Executive Director within inside and outside of the District.

Lynn reiterated the importance of finding new grant sources.

Matt - having been an Interim Director - explained the importance of having a point person to answer day to day questions and facilitating external and internal communication.

Deanna was concerned with the 6-month time frame which could stretch out to be much longer as it could take several months just to find a new Executive Director.

Kai explained the current difficult climate to identify grant opportunities. The challenges are predicted to continue within the 2-year grant operating cycle.

Vicki recommended a meeting time for Thursday September 3<sup>rd</sup> from 10:00am to 12:00 noon via Zoom for a workshop regarding the Executive Director.

Conversation ensued about the necessity and cost of having all staff attend. David mentioned that 2 hours of staff time would be costly. Lynn stated that this would be an opportunity for the staff to express any concerns.

Vicki recommended that a meeting between herself, Matt and David would be beneficial in finding the most efficient resolution on how to continue the conversation about the Executive Director.

A motion was made by Carson for the board members to convene on Thursday September 3<sup>rd</sup> from 10:00am to 12:00 noon via Zoom to further discuss the Executive Director position. David moved to second with a comment that staff is welcome to attend.

Discussion continued with Lynn recommending the importance of canvassing staff. Vicki stated that at the meeting a plan of action will be established.

In the continuing discussion Vicki asked the staff to provide written comments via email by Monday 8/31/20 regarding the delegation of responsibilities of the Executive Director, specifying how many additional hours and functions the staff member could take on.

Matt questioned the total hourly commitment amount available and continued discussion about the additional hours. Lynn responded about the need for the staff to be appropriately compensated and recommended completion of the Salary Survey.

Mike stated that he is working a list of his duties and tasks which will be completed by Friday 8/28/20.

**Budget Development Schedule – Discussion:**

Budget development was briefly discussed in conjunction with the financial statements. The initial new monthly budget report will be available for the September Board Meeting. It will break out monthly income as well as expense figures for the Fiscal Year ending 6/30/21. The final objective is to have an 18 month budget encompassing also the calendar year.

**WACD Dues – Action Item:**

Mike explained that a check for \$3,888.89 for the annual WACD dues has been written but not sent out yet as this represents a substantial increase from \$2,160 paid in 2019. The reason for the large increase was the fact that dues were formerly assessed by the size of the District but a decision was made to assess dues on a flat rate basis.

Alan Chapman responded that the fees are decided at the WACD Annual Meeting and each district can weigh in with their opinions. At the Northwest Area WACD meeting there are two way to address the dues: 1) Hardship status of the District and 2) Value received from WACD for the dues.

At this point Carson made a motion that the District pay the dues. David made a motion to second.

Continuing discussion included a statement by Ryan that he has heard that Jefferson CD will not pay the increased dues as small districts are negatively impacted by the large increase during the pandemic. If the increase was caused by covering costs of the Annual Meeting there should be a reduction in the cost as it will be conducted virtually this year.

Tony - as a new employee - questioned the necessity of an 80% increase in dues during a time when the District has reduced staffing hours with tight finances due to the pandemic.

Lynn echoed that the virtual meeting expenses should be smaller, however, she also stated that lobbying is more important today than ever.

Bruce made a comment that the flat rate should be considered in light of the District resources. Lynn replied concern about the impact on small counties.

Alan reiterated that the decisions are made at the Annual Meeting and he had not heard that the Jefferson would delay their payment. He recommended participation in the Area Meeting.

Lynn stated that the District should wait on payment until more information is available.

Vicki said that the motion should be tabled, and the District should attend the Area Meeting. Further discussion will be held at the September Board Meeting. There was an agreement to table the motion.

Alan stated that the District should provide informational materials for the Area Meeting by 9/25/20. There will be a work session on 10/7/20 and the virtual Area Meeting will be held on 10/21/20. The District can only vote if the dues have been paid prior to the meeting.

**Orca Recovery Day Planning – Discussion:**

Mike made a recommendation that Kelsey Kittleson be the lead for Orca Recovery Day. It would fit in with the LTAC Grant for funding.

**Partner Reports:**

Jean Fike from WSCC stated that the current budget picture has lots of unknowns. The fall general elections will also have an impact as to the decisions when legislature goes back into session. There is legislative pressure to continue reducing the budget. The operating budget will be reduced by 15%, however, the capital budget should not see much of a reduction.

Alan Chapman, the WACD NW Area Representative, discussed the Annual Meeting being virtual this year. The dates of the Annual Meeting are 11/30/20 to 12/3/20. There will be several opportunities to express District concerns within “Chat Groups”. The meeting will be organized into 2-3 hour informational blocks.

**Public Comments:** None.

**Meeting Adjourned at 12:05 PM.**

**Next Special Meeting via Zoom: Thursday, September 3, 2020.**

Executive Session from 10:00am – 12:00 noon.

**Next Regular Monthly Meeting via Zoom: Wednesday September 23, 2020.**

From 10:00am – 12:00 noon.