

SAN JUAN ISLANDS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Special Meeting of the Board of Supervisors

October 7, 2020

Location: Zoom Meeting

In Attendance (Via Zoom)

Supervisors: Deanna Eltinge, Vicki Heater
David Bill, Lynn Bahrych, Carson Sprenger

Staff: Tony Fyrqvist, Matt Claussen

Partners: None

Location: Zoom Meeting

MEETING SUMMARY - Final

Vicki Heater convened the Special Meeting at 10:10 am via Zoom.

1. Discussion – Budget Status for Executive Director Hiring:

Matt started the conversation with discussion explaining the methodology used with the spreadsheet analysis deriving the cost of hiring an Executive Director. He mentioned that due to the variables and input fields the active spreadsheet was not sent out to members of BOS, rather, they were provided with PDF copies of relevant pages.

Tony then proceeded to demonstrate the active spreadsheet and all components on a shared Zoom screen. Prior to the specific discussion he mentioned the budgeting process is really three-fold:

- First, we are still in process of developing an overall District budget which will be measured against our financial statements and discussed in monthly Board Meetings.
- Secondly, each District grant and program has a budget.
- And specifically, and thirdly, the budgeting decision of hiring a new ED is dependent on the other budgets, such as YCC, being self-sustaining.

Then Tony informed the board that the key element of the spreadsheet was determining how much staff members spend as a percentage of their time working on the three revenue components of:

- Implementation
- Assessment
- Direct grant work

The hourly work data used was converted from Timesheets for the fiscal year 7/1/19-6/30/20. The hours were then translated to costs using Compensation Rates and analyzed in context of a modified Income Statement to determine fixed expense coverage.

The data supports hiring a full time Executive Director with approximately 40% work dedicated to direct grant work at existing pay scale, but the pay rate and hours worked can be varied to determine alternate breakeven scenarios.

Full Memorandum of process, findings, general recommendation and conclusion is provided as an attachment to these minutes, along with the PDF files provided to BOS members.

After the presentation discussion ensued with Vicki stating that the ED job description will entail a grant work requirement. Matt emphasized that work on deliverables should be addressed along with grant writing capacity, NRCS best practices and other specific qualifications.

Matt discussed the existing ED job description as being fairly accurate which could be modified to match current need. Discussion continued about costs relating to Compensation Rates and coverage of the fixed medical insurance premiums and variable retirement and other benefits.

There was also additional discussion about future grants from the Commission which have a 20-25% indirect component and other programs which are tighter with a 10% indirect.

A brief discussion ensued about YCC being able to be self-sustaining within their budget. YCC program budget also has 10% allocated for overhead expenses.

With future grants having a sufficient indirect component the District can start building a "Reserve Fund".

Vicki discussed starting to advertise for an Executive Director. There was additional conversation about pay rates and reinstating staff hours. The next step will be writing a job description. There was emphasis in focusing on writing grants as well working on grant deliverables. Matt stated the importance of staying within the scope of the

budget as presented when moving on the Executive Director hiring process. Vicki concurred that “program management” is also important.

David made a comment recognizing the importance of a full time Executive Director. However, he recommended also examining the possibility of “unbundling” the grant work from the position and making the position part time. Tony replied that the spreadsheet could accommodate this by entering a -0- into the grant work column and then changing the hours and hourly pay rate to see the impact on the bottom line.

Lynn expressed her concern about funding and restated her position as a “fiscal conservative”. She does not wish to put the District in the same financial position as last year and recommended consideration of a possible temporary position which could evolve into a full-time position – taking the process in stages. She emphasized the importance of having a highly capable grant manager, but also someone who can manage, oversee and motivate staff.

Matt explained the learning curve and the time it will take for the Director to become effective. This will carry an associated cost.

Lynn acknowledged Matt’s contribution to the District with long hours, to which Matt replied that he is not interested in going back to officially working 40 hours per week. He also discussed program management, staff development and the fact that no actual cost savings were incurred yet from the departure of the former Executive Director as the District paid accrued vacation hours in September payroll.

Matt stated that last time the Executive Director position was posted the District received 4 applications: 2 from Friday Harbor Labs and 2 from outside. His preference is to post the position with a salary range and hourly range soon to see who will apply.

Carson agreed that to post ½ time to full time would broaden the search range for qualified candidates. The skill set the candidate will bring to the position is of crucial importance.

David further agrees that it is important to “cast a wider net” in the search for an applicant. He expressed concerned about some staff members working long hours currently on administrative functions while questioning if there will be enough grant work. Matt replied that while there may not be substantial grant work at the moment there will be in the future.

Matt also stated that the 3 important issues the Executive Director has to address are:

- Budgeting
- Personnel

- Accountability

While the focus needs to be on understanding the budget and personnel issues, the accountability includes working on the District's image and representation in the local community. Understanding the District's budget would also include understanding and working on grants.

Deanna pressed for the next step in the process of hiring the Executive Director. Vicki replied that the job will be advertised, and we will see who will apply. The advertising will be somewhat open ended from 20hrs/wk to full time and the rate of pay will be decided on the basis of the criteria emphasized by the District.

There was general discussion about Kai being a qualified grant writer, however, at the moment he is tapped out with his projects.

Matt directed the conversation back to the topic of hiring an Executive Director. The district has complex finances and operational guidelines and needs someone to fill the role of representing the District.

Vicki made a motion to designate Matt as the Interim Director. Seconded by Lynn. The discussion entailed number of hours per week which Vicki stated initially at 30, while Lynn recommended 40 to fully compensate Matt for all the work he is doing for the District. However, Matt stated his preference for 30 hours per week. Matt stated that he will provide a list of his current projects; and mentioned that Bruce has also helped with running the District filling in functions of the Executive Director. The rate of pay was approved at \$32-\$35/hr. The motion passed.

2. Discussion – Update on CCC Program:

It was mentioned that the Board had resolved in the Regular Meeting of September 23, 2020 to hire Kai for 20 hours per week at \$30/hr. However, this was a broad motion as the exact job description, or timing of hiring, have not been developed yet.

Also, Matt stated that Kai's contract with the District has expired and the District has not yet received the employment documentation from him. The Crew Lead hired also does not have a job description yet. The CCC Program has not followed normal procedures as the District has already received funding from Orcas Island Community Foundation, it has incurred expenses, and hired staff.

Discussion then veered to the potential liability for the District and insurance coverage. Jean Fike has stated that this hiring process not a normal situation. As a resolution it was suggested that Kai either 1 - Formally accept the job offer, or 2 - The contract the

District has with him would be extended for 2 months, or 3 - The whole CCC program could be put on hold.

Carson questioned what is holding Kai back from accepting the position.

Vicki stated that the CCC program was under way with housing contracts and other committed relationships. Kai's time commitments are probably more substantial than originally anticipated. The District definitely has a need for a skilled grant writer, however, Kai's relationship with Western Washington University has solidified further with him being offered an Assistant Professorship to do coursework.

Carson again emphasized need for a detailed job description for Kai. The current status could result in liability risk for the district, but Kai is committed. He would be subject to the regular 6-month probationary period.

Matt stated that to safeguard the District a timeline needs to be established. The job offer needs to be fast tracked with information to the District; or alternatively the contract needs to be written right away. Vicki answered that if we revise the contract Kai needs to obtain his own liability insurance. Deanna stated that the District need to operate in a professional manner and not have any loose ends. She is worried about the potential liability.

Lynn mentioned that Kai operating as an independent contractor places the liability on him personally and on his company Forage. The District is not liable for the operations of an independent contractor. There may have been an "Equitable Contract" or an oral contract. For everyone's protection she recommended that the paperwork needs to be completed, but was not worried about the District's exposure.

David said that the CCC program is moving along. It is a great program and relationship for the district. He recommended expediting the paperwork to resolve the situation.

Carson also stated that as the program was already under way it should not be slowed down. Completion of the paperwork just needs to be made a priority. Deanna confirmed her agreement that paperwork needs to be completed.

Matt confirmed that the District wishes for the CCC program to be a success. To resolve the issue he will call Kai with a deadline of completing all of the appropriate documentation.

Dave reiterated that all hires at the District are "At Will Employees" per Jean Fike.

Final question by Dave was regarding the time frame of advertising for the Executive Director Position. Vicki replied that the job description will be completed and the local advertising will start next week.

Matt made a comment that after the Director Decision has been made the Board can go back to having regular Board Meetings. Lynn replied positively to being able to return to making policy and having creative new ideas for the District.

Public Comments: None.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:50 am.

Next Regular Monthly Meeting via Zoom: Wednesday, October 21, 2020 from 10:00am – 12:00pm