**SAN JUAN ISLANDS CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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

**October 25, 2022**

**Location:** Online via Zoom and 530 Guard Street, Friday Harbor

**In Attendance**

**Supervisors:** Vicki Heater, Lynn Bahrych, David Bill,

Carson Sprenger

**Associates:** Deanna Eltinge (absent), Jerry Rasmussen (absent),

Linda Lyshall (absent)

**Staff:** Paul Andersson, Tony Fyrqvist

**Partners:** Jean Fike, WSCC Puget Sound Regional Manager; Alan Chapman, WACD NW Region Representative (absent); Robin Buckingham, National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Mount Vernon Field Office

**Public:** Claire Crawbuck

**MEETING SUMMARY – Final**

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

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Claire Crawbuck a Biologist with the National Park Service has expressed interest in serving on the District Board and attended the Board Meeting via zoom. She introduced herself and presented some of her background information consisting of:

* Masters Degree in Environmental Science.
* Emphasis on Smoke Ecology.
* Experience with the local Island Marble Butterfly project as well as with fisheries, soils and seed germination changes under smoky conditions.
* Long-term resident of San Juan Island.

Board members and District Manager provided her with brief introductions of themselves and of the various functions of the District.

1. **Agenda Approval:**

The following additions were made to the Agenda under 9. Idea Pot:

* Irrigation Efficiencies.
* WSCC Food Security Grants.
* LTAC Grant for YCC.
* CD Office Space

The Agenda was approved by consensus.

1. **September 27th Regular Meeting Minutes Approval:**

Lynn made a motion to approve the 9/27/22 Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by David. Minor edits were discussed.

The Minutes were approved with the changes.

1. **Financial Officers Report:**

The Financial Manager gave the following summary of the District’s financial position, continuing to confirm financial stability:

9/30/22 Balance Sheet

The 9/30/22 bank deposit balances showed a $27,630.85 decline from the previous month end.

Total deposit account balances were follows:

 8/31/22 9/30/22

* Banner Bank Operating $236,462.55 $208,831.70
* Liberty Bank Reserve Fund $100,000.00 $100,000.00

The current Banner Bank operating account deposit balance as of the Board Meeting date on 10/25/22 was $216,640.18, which represented a $15,048.15 decline from the previous Board meeting date.

The decline in balances primarily reflected the increase in accounts receivable which amounted to $70,170.04 at the time of the Board Meeting - up by $25,004.97 from the previous Board Meeting Date. As mentioned before, the receivables of the District are generally of high quality and collectable with most being with DNR, San Juan County and RCO.

A note was made to emphasize again that the District’s operating account balance fluctuates within each month as in the early part of the month the District expends a total of approximately $60,000 for:

* Payroll
* Payroll Tax
* Retirement
* Health Insurance
* Employment Security
* With a quarterly payment to L&I

This amount is recovered from invoicing throughout the month.

9/30/22 Statement of Revenue & Expense

The following significant “Ordinary Income” items were highlighted:

* All Commission grants include a 25% indirect component which are summed under Indirect Income at the end of Revenue & Expense Report. Thus, the line items shown under Ordinary income represent only 75% of the invoice amount.
* Implementation (IM) Invoice for September was $8,797.21 ($7,037.76+25%) which was below the target of $9,818.58 as staff has been invoicing other grants more efficiently on their Timesheets as requested by management.
* The DNR income of $3,829.01 was combined with ICC Income of $14,082.10 as ICC invoices were included with the DNR invoice.
* LTAC Farm Tours income of $6,505.46 reflected hours and costs expended on the farm tours.
* YCC Income of $7,637.13 does not include September hours in the amount of $2,785.69 as the BLM NCLI grant available funding needs to be reallocated to allow for invoicing.
* The District has now sent the final invoice to Commerce and that grant is fully expended.
* The major expenses included payment of the sales tax and licensing for the District van shown under Auto Repairs & Maintenance, and additional insurance paid on the vehicle. The cost of the vehicle is being reimbursed to a staff member in the following month. The District currently owns 3 vehicles.

Credit Card Detail:

The credit card detail reports for September 2022 displayed mostly standard operating and recurring charges which flow through the appropriate categories on the Statement of Revenue & Expense.

There were several ICC related expenses reflecting the startup of the new ICC season.

Bank Reconciliation Report

The Bank Reconciliation Report was not discussed. It is prepared by R&R Accounting and is in compliance with all District and SAO guidelines.

Adjusting Journal Entries Report:

This report is prepared by R&R Accounting and any unusual entries outside of the standard payroll related tax, wage and benefit related entries would require further examination under the District’s double control of finances.

A motion was made by David to approve the financial packages for September 2022 consisting of:

* The Financial Statements
* Journal Entries
* Credit Card Detail
* Bank Reconciliation

The motion was seconded by Lynn and carried.

Grant Progress and Pipeline Reports:

There was a discussion about the Grant Pipeline Report which was provided to the Board – the District has been very active in identifying and applying for grant opportunities such as:

* Planning and implementation under Community Wildfire Defense Grant for the District. These are part of the Federal Community Wildfire total funding amounting to $150 million per year for the next 5 years.
* Additional funding for Island Marble Butterfly for the District.
* LTAC Farm Tour funding for 2023.
* Career Connect funding from ESD for ICC.
* USDA Climate Smart Funding for forestry.
* RCO No Child Left Inside funding for YCC.
* Puget Sound Partnership funding for the District.

The District has been evaluating the possibility of hiring a consulting firm to help with grant writing:

* In order to assure a solid pipeline of grant work it has been challenging for the District staff to absorb the additional time consuming task of grant writing in addition to their regular operational tasks.
* However, it was mentioned that with a grant writer the District might obtain more work than it is capable of performing.
* It was also mentioned that when a staff member writes the grant he/she has a much better understanding of the grant requirements and budgets.

Some of the other districts have been utilizing the services of a company from Eastern Washington.

Reserve Account Balance

The current balance in the Reserve Account remains at $100,000.00 + interest earned.

1. **Old Business**

Board Supervisor appointment

A brief discussion ensued regarding the employment situation of the current candidate and the requirements to be able to effectively participate on the Board.

District Pay Scale – discussion of SJICD approved Pay Scale (updated June 2022) and merit adjustment policies – reference studies on industry standards.

The district has received pay scale information from Thurston and Whidbey Island Districts. The Thurston data reflected unionized staff, while the Whidbey Island District is smaller and less complex than San Juan Island District.

In order to further evaluate and plan for pay scales the following two options were considered:

* The internal Compensation Committee could evaluate the issues involved on a localized basis, for example by looking at the San Juan County Budget Book which provides County employee salary data.
* The District could hire a compensation consulting firm to provide an analysis, which could provide the advantage of examining each position in greater detail into the responsibilities, risks, and physical exertion.
1. **New Business**

WACD NW Regional Meeting outcomes and Resolutions – discussion.

It was mentioned that in the WACD NW Regional Meeting, SJICD was recognized as the **“2022 Northwest Area District of the Year”**.

The letter from the Executive Director of the Conservation Commission stated:

*“The District in recent years has greatly increased its capacity, improved operations and built a cohesive staff with a great spirit of teamwork and dedication to mission. You excel in service to the Island community. You help private and public landowners and managers improve their stewardship, and you engage young people in conservation in ways that change lives for the better.”*

Some of the resolutions adopted in the meeting included removing the cap on Assessment rates (currently capped for SJC at $5.00 per parcel). This will be further analyzed by WACD to be sent to the Legislature for approval. Any changes to Assessment rates would then have to be adopted locally by an Ordinance passed by San Juan County Council.

The annual meeting is to be held in Wenatchee on Nov 28th,29th and 30th. Attendance is encouraged. Challenges of attending the meeting in person include the potentially inclement weather as the mountain passes and snow can be treacherous at that time of the year; and the fact that that the meeting is held right after Thanksgiving holidays which are often used by staff to travel.

District Manager – performance review and compensation – action.

Lynn made a motion to modify the District Manager pay as follows:

* Current Classification is level 12, Step 1.
* Adopt an increase from Step 1 to Step 4 (7.50%)
* The increase is to be effective as of October 1, 2022

The motion was seconded by Carson and approved.

1. **Staff and Program Reports**

The updated Staff and Program Reports are included in the Board package. The discussion covered a summary of each item with the following additional discussion points:

* VSP statewide funding of $3 million for additional cost share projects that qualify.
* VSP survey of BMPs before and after 2011, participation in the survey is incentivized with a chance to win one of 21 prizes which include a water meter, soil testing or a pasture stick.
* Status checks are being conducted on ongoing Cost Share projects.
* Cost share projects are being evaluated as to:
	+ Chronological order of receipt
	+ Scale
	+ Possible engineering requirements
* YCC is currently engaged in grant writing.
* ICC was recently engaged in WAFAC Regional Conference.
* Staff is actively participating in Agricultural Resources Committee meetings.
* San Juan County Clean Water Advisory Committee is experiencing some leadership retirements. However, District staff members are actively participating in the Committee and providing riparian expertise.
1. **Subcommittee Reports**

No discussion.

1. **Upcoming Trainings/Webinars/Events**

The District is developing a Staff Training Database which will be placed on Sharepoint for staff access. The objective is to provide a dynamic listing of training opportunities with searches available:

* By provider
* By topic
1. **Idea Pot**

Irrigation Efficiencies

The failing infrastructure at Mountain Lake on Orcas Island was discussed in depth with the following considerations:

* Availability of possible irrigation efficiency funding from Commission, and including SJICD as a participating district.
* Small amount of infrastructure funding can produce a long-lasting benefit to irrigation, farming, fish and recreation.
* Is the water from Mountain Lake used for irrigation or any other other consumptive use.
* Irrigation efficiencies can also be addressed by NRCS.

WSCC Food Security Grants

Discussion covered:

* A documentary film on farming and food systems in San Juan County will be produced by Zev Robinson during June - September 2023. Mr. Robinson is a Scottish/Canadian filmmaker who will be displaying his work at San Juan Islands Museum of Art during the same time period.
* The District recently received a $5,000 Food Security grant in 2022 which was used to create banners emphasizing local food production in public outreach, education and marketing programs.

LTAC Grant for YCC

The application deadline for LTAC grants is November 6. YCC may want to consider applying for LTAC funding.

CD Office Space

The current 5-year lease term for the District Office space at 530 Guard St. in Friday Harbor ends on 6/30/23. The monthly rental amount is $1,750.00.

The District will commence evaluation of possible alternative leased locations which will accommodate:

* Future growth.
* Parking
* Storage of tools, equipment and No-Till Drill
* Convenient access for visitors and staff logistics
* Possible short-term housing option
* A complete list of priorities for a physical location of the District office will be developed.

The longer-term plan for the District is to acquire real estate which might involve a dedicated fundraising effort. However, in order to conduct an effective fundraising campaign a definite vision of the final product would need to be developed.

1. **Partner Reports**

Robin Buckingham, from NRCS, provided updates on:

* Total of 104 Applications for CSPs (Conservation Stewardship Programs) of which:
	+ 49 were in Mount Vernon
	+ 10 in San Juan County
* Agricultural easement programs available through NRCS.

Jean Fike from WSCC stated:

* There have been some recent changes in the Public Records Act of Washington and encouraged watching the updated training video.
* Encouraged participation in the Roundtable conversation between Commission and District to be held on 11/10/22 at 9:00am.
* Salmon Recovery funding is being put to good use on diverse projects, but still has funds available under the $10 million budget allocation.
* WSCC is recommending to adopt the month of March as “Conservation Month” in an effort to raise awareness of conservation districts and their staff. The recommendation includes holding supervisor elections during the month of March.
* The makeup of the WACD meeting will be composed of District Supervisors and some District Managers. The content might not be relevant for most District staff members as the focus is on policy development.

A conversation ensued about the availability of the summary of appropriations requested by the Conservation Commission for programs. This led into a further conversation about the State Legislature’s desire for documentation of actual needs at each District and the challenge of documenting the conservation technical assistance related needs. The 2023 Budget Request for Conservation Technical Assistance is $10 million.

1. **Public Comments**

None

1. **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned by Vicki Heater at 12:10PM.

**Next Regular Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, November 22, 2022, 10:00 am to 12:00 noon.**