**SAN JUAN ISLANDS CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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

**April 27, 2021**

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

**In Attendance (Via Zoom)**

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

Carson Sprenger (absent)

**Associates:** Jerry Rasmussen (absent), Henning Sehmsdorf (absent),

Linda Lyshall (absent)

**Staff:** Paul Andersson, Tony Fyrqvist, Matt Claussen

**Partners:** Jean Fike, WSCC Puget Sound Regional Manager (absent-provided report via email); Alan Chapman, WACD NW Region Representative (absent)

**Public:** None

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

**MEETING SUMMARY - Final**

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

1. **Agenda Approval:**

David made a motion to approve the Agenda, the motion was seconded by Deanna. The motion carried without discussion.

1. **March 31st Meeting Minutes Approval:**

David moved to approve the March 31st Regular Meeting Minutes and was seconded by Carson. The discussion covered fixing a small typo on page 4, and the corrected Final Meeting Minutes are to be posted on the District Website. The motion was passed.

1. **March Financial Officers Report:**

In order to improve the efficiency of the board meeting a decision was made to approve the following in a single motion:

* The financial statements
* Bank reconciliation
* Credit Card Details

Motion was made by David and seconded by Deanna.

The discussion entailed the following financial statement review by the Financial Manager:

3/31/21 Statement of Revenue and Expenses

* The 3/31/21 Statement of Revenue and Expenses showed a Surplus of $39,113.28 which was due to a great part of the CCC invoicing of $35,135.43 which included fulfilment of contracts with Land Bank and Public Works, grant from San Juan Island Community Foundation and depletion of Orcas Island Community Foundation prepaid grants.
* Year to date 2021 CCC has accounted for the largest share, or 36%, of total District Revenues. The next largest categories were VSP work at 12% and Commerce grant for 10%.
* A note was made that in March the District invoiced Ecology for the final time for $6,694.79. Throughout its tenure this grant covered 75% of expenses with the District having to pay the remaining 25%.
* There will be only 1 invoicing remaining on VSP with a balance $8,663.08
* The NRI Grant has been depleted.
* Due to changes implemented in the Fiscal Year Budget due to preparation of the 2020 Annual Report to SAO no Budget to Actual Report was available. R&R Accounting is modifying the District FYE 6/30/21 Budget.

3/31/21 Balance Sheet

* The total Deposit account balances amounted to $189,303.97. The Grant Tracking Spreadsheet shows $107,218.74 in CCC prepaid grants from Orcas Island Community Foundation and $4,456.55 from Seacology leaves $77,628.68. Of this balance $10,000 is in District reserve account at Liberty Bay Bank.
* The accounts receivable amounted to $25,454.95 some of which have been collected resulting in increasing the Banner Bank deposit balance as of the meeting date of 4/27/21 to $193,456.82

The District financial statements continue to reflect stability and sufficient liquidity to cover all short-term cash needs.

The motion was approved.

A note was made that the District is currently preparing the Annual Report to the State Auditor’s Office. Historically the District has completed this report on cash basis and there was a short conversation again about District financial statements being on accrual basis. The report demonstrates some inaccuracies in the past due to this distinction. Currently the District financials and tracking are presented on accrual basis.

The Annual Report includes a question to Board Members about review of RCW 89.08.210 (Powers and duties of supervisors) and RCW 89.08.220 (Corporate status and powers of district) since the last Annual Report – which the Financial Manager will email to each Board Member after the Meeting.

The Grant Tracking Spreadsheet has been improved to include the Grant Amount Invoiced as a %, and the amount Work Completed as a %.

The District Manager made a comment that the District has been able to secure approximately $400,000 in new grants which amounts to 40% of the annual District Budget. The District is refining the processing of onboarding, budgeting and accounting for the new grants.

The new grants also present new opportunities for collaboration between the various functions of District such as Foresters, Farm Planners, CCC, YCC and programs such as VSP. Additional opportunities include college level coursework and formalizing career training within some of the programs.

Due to the District success in securing additional grants additional grant procedures are being implemented and the importance of “Thank You” cards to our generous donors was emphasized.

1. **Old Business – Policy updates:**

The Governance Policy has gone through a secondary review and is ready for approval. David made a motion to approve the policy with a second by Carson. Within the discussion it was mentioned that creation of the formal comprehensive document was overdue. The timing of the Governance policy is also ideal with the recent elections and the onboarding of a new Supervisor. The District will implement the policy and see how it will perform in practice. The motion was approved.

The Pay Scale Chart was approved by BOS on 2/24/21. A motion was made by Deanna to add a reference of the chart in the District Operational Policy and Procedures Manual dated 12/21/16 which is given to each new employee at hiring. A second was made by David and the motion was approved.

There was discussion about employee benefits offered to full time and part time staff members but it was generally agreed that this will be reviewed in the future as the benefits are built into the Composite Rates.

There was also discussion about new board member onboarding procedures and the development of checklists for procedures across the organization. The conversation included specific “off boarding” procedures due to deal with board member access to District information, email addresses and signing authorities with the District, the Conservation Commission - as well as possibly being signers on the District bank account.

The policies regarding the Line of credit and reserve account are being developed within existing templates. It was generally agreed that the policy needs to be simple. Conversation evolved into the District having also having an investment policy as the funding continues to grow. However, a comment was made to keep this simple too as within the current extremely low interest rate environment the staff expense to manage the funds could easily surpass the interest earnings.

1. **New Business**

The discussion centered around populating the Annual Work Plan with the new projects including funding sources, objectives and grant deliverables. The draft will be completed in 1-2 weeks and the target completion date is by end of May. The due date to SCC is 5/30/21. The plan should be visionary and emphasize the mission of the District, which led into a conversation about finalizing the “Mission Statement”. A need for a special meeting was expressed to discuss the draft of the Annual Work Plan.

In their May 20th Meeting the Commission will process new Supervisor appointments.

1. **District Managers Report**

The District Manager reported that currently the District has achieved grant commitments for 40% of the annual operating budget.

The District is developing an hourly budget for staff assignment of grant funds.

The use of “Thank You Cards” to local foundations and community groups was emphasized - with a possible partnering with a local sketch artist to develop a District specific personalized card.

1. **Subcommittee Updates**

* Forest Health Subcommittee meetings notes were presented. Important safety concerns for the District were outlined - as followed within the private industry – particularly with controlled “conservation burns” including:
  + Safety training.
  + Personal protective gear.
  + First aid kits – availability, application and training
  + Fire protective clothing.
  + General Fire safety protocols with controlled burns.
  + Burn plans.
  + Partnering with Fire Districts.
  + Emergency communication capacity.
  + L&I can be source of additional information.
* There will be no more burns this season.
* Discussed District participation in the Terrestrial Managers Group.
* Discussed potential funding from DNR and development of a list of “shovel ready” projects.
* Extensive discussion of fire preparedness particularly on Shaw Island covering exit routes, strategies and fire breaks. Many of the community comprehensive fire protection plans are well defined but tend to be dated and not well maintained. A suggestion of an “online forum” possibly hosted by the District website was introduced.
* Discussed the number of Firewise Communities in San Juan County. As an example of fire planning and spacing between buildings the recent Okanagan fire was quoted as having a high rate of structure survival.

1. **Staff and Program Reports.**

The District has discussed VSP Adaptive Management strategies with Erika Shook and Mike Thomas from the County. The County Council was also briefed on VSP. The District is working on developing an updated monitoring plan and new Scope of Work and budget for the next VSP contract.The timing of signing the next VSP contract will be important for implementation of VSP.

1. **Upcoming Training/Webinar Opportunities**

The District is working on developing an “Events Calendar” on the Website.

It was mentioned that a Totem Pole will be available for viewing on San Juan Island on its way to be presented to President Biden in DC.

Washington State Conservation Commission website has multiple opportunities for training.

San Juan County Economic Development Council also has a “State of the County” economic presentation by County Auditor Milene Henley on 4/28/21 along with a nationally known economist Yoram Bauman.

1. **Idea Pot**

The conversation centered around Biochar and potential new applications with livestock feed. In the European Union, biochar is carefully defined and approved for use in agriculture particularly with poultry production. The district will examine funding for biochar related collaboration and possible research grants, and if the if the European Certificate Standard can be utilized here. Other factors in biochar usage will include possible FDA approval, liability, insurability and other risks.

Another topic of conversation revolved around work on farms plans on properties currently under litigation. As public public funds are expended with cost share, while generally discouraged each case warrants an individual examination as to potential liens on the property and the nature of the litigation. The policy committee will conduct further discussion and will resume at the next board meeting.

1. **Partner Report**

Jean Fike provided statewide budget information via email as she was unable to attend the meeting: “VSP is funded as expected, the good – though not as good as hoped - news is that $2 million statewide of the requested $5 million CTA request is in the compromise budget. Implementation funds / Orca are *likely* remain about the same with perhaps some additional flexibility on Orca (both points I believe will be up to the Commission governing body).  There are some finer points around proviso language and reappropriations that don’t look great to me but I will wait for the experts to interpret.  We didn’t do as well as hoped in NRI and Shellfish but it’s similar to historical levels.”

1. **Public Comments**

None.

1. **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 12:00.

**Next General Meeting via Zoom: Tuesday, May 25, 2021.**

**From 10:00AM to 12:00NOON**