



Official Minutes of the March 8, 2023, Pierce Conservation District Board Meeting – *Via Zoom AND In-Person:*

Present:

Supervisors:

Jeanette Dorner, Chair
Cindy Haverkamp, Vice-Chair
John Hopkins, Auditor
Mark Mauren, Member
Amy Moreno-Sills, Member
Stu Trefry, Associate Supervisor

District Personnel:

Dana Coggon, Executive Director
Cynthia Ross, Finance Manager
Mehgan Nishiyama, Administrative Assistant
Kristine Lewis, Grants & Contracts Manager
Melissa Buckingham, Water Quality Program Director
Belinda Paterno, Water Quality Program Manager
Alison Nichols, Cover Crop Program Manager

Other Attendees:

Jean Fike, Washington State Conservation Commission
Casey Vaughn, Department of Ecology
Alan Chapman, Washington Association of Conservation Districts
Jim Grob, Citizen
Tony Paulson, Citizen

The March 8, 2023, meeting of the Pierce Conservation District was called to order at 5:07 pm. The meeting was held via Zoom video conference and in-person.

Land Acknowledgement:

“We recognize that we are gathered on the traditional and current homelands of the Coast Salish Tribes. We acknowledge their Sovereign governments that have stewarded the lands, Water, and air throughout time immemorial.”

Introductions:

All attendees introduced themselves.

Dana pointed out a change to the agenda:

- Under the elections update, the Board will be asked to vote on an elections proclamation.

Cindy voiced that she was unable to open the Tel Farm memo and that Belinda's name was incorrectly spelt on the agenda.

Cindy moved to approve the change to the agenda. John seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

N/A

Consent Agenda:

- a) Approval of February 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

Please see Exhibit A: [February 8 2023 Board meeting Minutes](#)

John moved to approve the consent agenda. Cindy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Water Quality & Habitat Stewards Team Update:

Belinda and Melissa presented the Water Quality and Habitat Stewardship Program update.

Cindy asked if efforts have been made to reengage the volunteers that worked on the Stream Team. Belinda said she has reached out to those folks and sent the opportunities that are available. Cindy also asked if Forterra is funding the Green Tacoma Partnership. Melissa clarified that they are not. The City of Tacoma has the funding and have historically contracted through Forterra, but after reassessing their priorities, have asked the District to take it on.

Jim asked what contacts, relative to habitats in Sumner, Bonney Lake, and Buckley do the District have. Melissa stated that the Water Quality team is tasked with tackling the issues in urban areas due to the water quality prioritization process that was done five years ago. She also pointed out that Glenn, from the Habitat team takes on private properties outside of their area with different funding sources and opportunities.

Jeanette suggested that staff better specify which natural resource concerns each program is prioritizing, so that this program isn't confused with the Habitat Improvement Team priorities.

Please see Exhibit B: [Water Quality & Habitat Stewards Team](#)

Treasurer's Report – February 2023:

Cynthia presented the financial activities for the month of February 2023. She provided an overview of revenues and expenses, highlighting specific items. There were no missing checks.

Items to note:

- Grant Reimbursement: Funding from City of Tacoma, Pierce County, and SCC.
- Miscellaneous Revenue: Received from WACD for Envirothon.
- Donations: Sponsorship for HPC for the Day of the Dead Event.
- Office & Operational Supplies: Ballots for the election and replacing two laptops.

- District Utilities: Puget Sound Energy had a rate increase and more staff are utilizing the office.
- Professional Services: Selena is contracted with the District and for the WCC crew.
- District Rental Expense: HPC rented space at the Puyallup Pavilion, which included a deposit that will be returned.
- Payroll Expenses: Chris Madden's vacation payout.
- Taxes/Operating Assessment: All property taxes for 2023.
- Subscriptions/Memberships: Renewal of membership to Association of WA cities.

John asked if on the office lease, the number was due to triple net expenses being higher than normal. Cynthia confirmed and said it usually does happen around the beginning of the year.

Jeanette asked if the District has filed for any property tax reductions. Dana said she will look into any reductions or exemptions. Stu mentioned that we are a state agency owning land, so there should be some legal avenue to take. Cynthia stated she spoke with the tax assessor and was told the District isn't exempt due to the properties being land and not personal properties. Cynthia volunteered to go back and explore it.

Mark brought up the interest rate that the District is receiving and that it is very low. Cynthia said the Board and Dana would have to discuss that to make a change. Mark and Dana suggested a committee be formed to look at different options to bring to the Board. Jeanette informed Dana and the Board of other tools that different Districts are taking to look at.

Please see Exhibit C: [February 2023](#)

John moved to approve the February 28th, 2023, Treasurer's Report as presented. Cindy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Farm Team Cost Share Requests:

Ali gave background on the requests, essentially allocating \$17,000 from Farm Rates to cover compost materials and funding.

Please see Exhibit D: [Memo](#)

Please see Exhibit E: [Criteria Worksheet](#)

Please see Exhibit F: [Memo](#)

Please see Exhibit G: [Criteria Worksheet](#)

Please see Exhibit H: [Memo](#)

Please see Exhibit I: [Criteria](#)

Please see Exhibit J: [Memo](#)

Please see Exhibit K: [Criteria Worksheet](#)

Please see Exhibit L: [Memo](#)

Please see Exhibit M: [Criteria Worksheet](#)

John moved to approve the cost share projects as presented. Mark seconded the motion. There was one abstention. The motion passed.

Tel Farm SCC RCPP Match Easement Securement and escrow Wire Transfer:

Dana presented the Board with the information regarding the Tel Farm RCPP Match project.

Please see Exhibit N: [Memo](#)

Jeanette asked for clarification that we are not buying from the WA Farmland Trust. Dana said the District is just the liaison between the trust and landowner.

Mark moved to approve a wire transfer to not exceed the amount of \$375,000 to secure the easement on the Tel Farm. I further move to approve and authorize Executive Director Dana Coggon to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with WA Farmland Trust to perform services related to the Tel farm easement securement for conservation purposes. The maximum payment to WA Farmland Trust for all reimbursable expenses shall not exceed \$50,000. Amy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2023 Elections Update:

Kristine updated the Board on the 2023 Elections. Voters called stating they received returned ballots. The forwarding mail service the accounting firm the District used to tabulate ballots expired. They rectified that issue immediately. Kristine spoke to the Commission and they asked that PCD approve the proclamation of election emergency and extend the deadline for voters. Voters that have reached out to the District have been contacted and explained the situation and the options for turning in their ballots.

Cindy said she wanted to make sure all outreach material pertaining to the election is the same. Kristine pointed out that the in person voting date does not change, but she will make sure all other outreach material will say that the mail in ballot date has changed and the District will make efforts to make it known to the public.

Stu brought up the fact that elections have been an issue for the past two years for the District at no fault to staff. Jeanette said she would prefer there be a way to do elections without having staff having to burden themselves with that role but also not cost the District the funding for employees in order to run elections.

Dana mentioned sending out postcards to all voters. Kristine said she will send out an email to all the voters on the mailing list. John and Jeanette voiced their support to inform voters. John also mentioned that the cost should be put on the firm the District is using since it was no fault to the District.

Please see Exhibit O: [Proclamation Memo](#)

Please see Exhibit P: [Proclamation](#)

Mark moved to approve the Proclamation of Election Emergency as presented. Amy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Legislative Update:

Dana informed the Board of the policy related bills.

Sustainable Farms and Fields Funding:

Rene' brought more information, as requested, from the Board about the criteria for sustainable farms and fields.

Please see Exhibit Q: [Board memo](#)

Please see Exhibit R: [Appendix A SFF memo](#)

Please see Exhibit S: [Appendix B SFF support memo](#)

Associate Board Member Discussion:

Dana mentioned that the recruitment and appointment of new associate members is new to her and will work with Board members to solidify the process in place.

Cindy stated that there is a policy in place for when new associates can join and to refer to that policy that was approved by the Board. The Board is grateful to have Jim attending meetings and take his input, moving forward.

Please see Exhibit T: [Jim Grob](#)

Department of Ecology:

Casey briefed the Board on the Monthly Nonpoint Summary.

Please see Exhibit U: [monthly nonpoint summary](#)

SCC Update:

Jean informed the Board that the Commission will be meeting next week in Snohomish. Also, if there is commission funding that you won't be able to use, there's still time to let the SCC know so it can be used elsewhere.

WACD Update:

Alan briefed the Board on the WACD Board meeting last week.

Chair's Report:

Jeanette posed the question to Board members to meet in person at the office, quarterly, for Board meetings. Jeanette and Dana will follow up offline to find out when those meetings will be.

Executive Director's Report:

- Retreat for Board and Dana in June or July; to include Equity training.
- The Annual Report is out and live. Hard copies are also available.
Please see Exhibit V: [LIVE](#)
- Annual Celebration – 120 people registered.
Please see Exhibit W: [registration](#)
- Conservation Month
Please see Exhibit X: [State Commission Page](#)
- Thurston Conservation District Letter of Supervisors expressing concern over the recent actions of the WSCC.
Please see Exhibit Y: [Letter from The Thurston Conservation District Board](#)

Board Member Comments:

Amy had a neighbor mention the amount of paper included in the election materials and the irony that it came from a conservation organization. She also commented that it was hard to decide on which candidate to vote for, due to the limited information given. Jeanette reminded everyone that the Board decides on what information they require candidates to provide, so after this election, it may warrant another review.

John suggested the retreat be in person and less than six hours. He also recommended topics be chosen beforehand to utilize the time efficiently.

Stu said the urban community committee he was a member of at the NACD level is going to be dissolved.

There being no further business, the Pierce Conservation District Board Meeting was adjourned at 7:59 PM

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS:

1. *Cindy moved to approve the change to the agenda. John seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*
2. *John moved to approve the consent agenda. Cindy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*
3. *John moved to approve the February 28th, 2023, Treasurer's Report as presented. Cindy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*
4. *John moved to approve the cost share projects as presented. Mark seconded the motion. There was one abstention. The motion passed.*
5. *Mark moved to approve a wire transfer to not exceed the amount of \$375,000 to secure the easement on the Tel Farm. I further move to approve and authorize Executive Director Dana Coggon to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with WA Farmland Trust to perform services related to the Tel farm easement securement for conservation purposes. The maximum payment to WA Farmland Trust for all reimbursable expenses shall not exceed \$50,000. Amy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*
6. *Mark moved to approve the Proclamation of Election Emergency as presented. Amy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,
Mehgan Nishiyama, Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,
Dana Coggon, Executive Director

Accepted:  Chairperson.