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## **Official Minutes of the March 10, 2021, Pierce Conservation District Board Meeting – *Via Zoom*:**

### **Present:**

#### ***Supervisors:***

Jeanette Dorner, Chair  
Cindy Haverkamp, Vice Chair  
John Hopkins, Auditor  
Mark Mauren, Member  
Bill Schiller, Associate Supervisor  
Don Gourlie, Associate Supervisor  
Stu Trefry, Associate Supervisor  
Hannah Febach, Associate Supervisor  
Adam Reichenberger, Associate Supervisor

#### ***District Personnel:***

Selena Corwin, Sr. Finance & Administration Director, Acting Director  
Allan Warren, Communications & Development Director  
Mehgan Nishiyama, Administrative Assistant  
Paul Borne, KGI Watershed Farm Resource Specialist  
Madeleine Spencer, Harvest Pierce County Program Manager  
Rene' Skaggs, Farm Planning and Agricultural Assistance Program Director

#### ***Other Attendees:***

Alan Chapman, Washington Association of Conservation Districts Area Representative  
Jean Fike, Washington State Conservation Commission  
Amy Hendershot, District Conservationist at USDA, NRCS  
Anne Baxter, Department of Ecology  
Amy Moreno-Sills, Four Elements Farm

**The March 10, 2021 meeting of the Pierce Conservation District was called to order at 5:04 pm. The meeting was held via Zoom video conference.**

### **Introductions:**

All attendees introduced themselves.

**Consent Agenda:**

- a) Minutes of the February 10th board meeting
- b) Minutes of the February 24th special board meeting
- c) The Board authorizes the application to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board for \$94,500 in the 2021 grant round to support the Preliminary Design phase of the Tacoma DeMolay Sandspit Nature Preserve bulkhead removal and nearshore restoration project.
- d) Approve amendment to ILA with WSU for farm cover crop demonstrations and workshops.

**Please see Exhibit A:** <\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Approved Notes\2-10-2021 Approved Notes.pdf>

**Please see Exhibit B:** <\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Approved Notes\2-24-2021 Approved Notes.pdf>

**Please see Exhibit C:** [\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\C - 2c Memo\\_ApplicantAuthorization\\_SRFB 21-1055\\_DeMolayPrelim.pdf](\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\C - 2c Memo_ApplicantAuthorization_SRFB 21-1055_DeMolayPrelim.pdf)

**Please see Exhibit D:** [\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\D - 2c ApplicantAuthorizationResolution\\_SRFB 21-1055\\_DeMolayPrelim.pdf](\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\D - 2c ApplicantAuthorizationResolution_SRFB 21-1055_DeMolayPrelim.pdf)

**Please see Exhibit E:** [\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\E - 2d Memo\\_WSU ILA extension\\_ECY Promoting Direct Seed and Cover Crop Practices in the Puyallup.pdf](\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\E - 2d Memo_WSU ILA extension_ECY Promoting Direct Seed and Cover Crop Practices in the Puyallup.pdf)

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

**February 28, 2021 Treasurer's Report:**

Selena presented the financial activities for the month of February 2021. She provided an overview of revenues and expenses, highlighting specific items. There are no missing or voided checks.

**Items of note:**

- The difference in the Bank interest is from rolling over the CD because interest rates are so low.
- The Payroll Expense amount is attributed to Ryan Mello's Annual Leave payout up to December 31, 2020. It is a payroll item because it is taxed.
- The District Miscellaneous expense was from state sales tax for the tree sale. It was mistakenly put under this item, but was corrected to go under Tree Sale Expense.
- Training and travel expenses continue to be low due to pandemic restrictions.
- The cost for elections came in early March, so it will show up on next month's report.
- Land amount has increased under our fixed assets because of the Vines acquisition.

Please see Exhibit F: <\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Meeting Financials\2021\Mar 10.pdf>

*John moved to approve the February 28, 2021 Treasurer's Report as presented. Cindy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **2020 Year End Financial Briefing:**

Selena briefed the Board on the 2020 end of year financials pertaining to actuals vs budgeted revenues and expenditures.

#### Revenues:

- Environmental Education was low due to COVID. The Children's Water Fest had to be cancelled.
- Habitat had a big difference as well. The reasons behind it were the RCO acquisition of the Stubbs property did not happen but is expected to happen in 2021. We had leftover funds from South Puget Sound Enhancement Group on a grant at South Prairie Creek. They have rolled over their grant into a new one for 2021 and we are working on that. Our WCC crew is included in this number and their work was shut down for a time, due to COVID.
- HPC did not have any events that brought in revenue such as Fruit Tree Series. Sponsorships were also down.
- WQ revenue increased in large part due to City Forest Credits and the Floodplains by Design #4.
- Admin funds are indirect or overhead costs. That time is billed to grants for the administrative team to use.

#### Expenditures:

- Every program, except Admin, is under the budgeted amount. That difference is the result of the purchase of a new vehicle as well as the vehicle that was stolen and recovered. It took a cost to get the stolen vehicle back to working condition. All programs had a decrease in training, travel, and workshops due to the pandemic.

#### Actual Revenue by Type:

- Miscellaneous Revenue is made up of refunds for training that staff registered for in 2020 but were cancelled.

John asked about the stolen vehicle income from the insurance company and where that shows up on the report. Selena clarified that it is attached to the admin revenue and that we received approximately \$15,000 from the insurance company. It covered the cost of repairs to get the vehicle functioning for staff use and broke even on it.

Jeanette asked Selena how she felt about her overall take on our 2020 budget, noting there was a drop in revenue, but also a drop in expenditures. Selena pointed out items such as the \$124,000 salary savings caused by not hiring a GSI coordinator for the Water Quality Program. Also, not replacing the Knotweed Program Manager. The District also received money from Puget Sound Energy for the Energy Efficiency Program which was not budgeted at all because it was

unexpected. There were rates and charges savings from training budgets as well. Most of the savings came from salary and COVID restrictions. Selena is impressed with the rates consultant and the work they have done.

John asked that Selena bring the bottom-line surplus number to the Board and if there are any plans with it. Selena acknowledged John's request and said it would come sometime this summer.

**Please see Exhibit G:** <\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\G - 4 2020 Budget Analysis for Board.pdf>

### **Work from Home Reimbursement Policy:**

- Selena presented the Board with an update on the work from home reimbursement policy. She showed the Board the Accountable Plan Worksheet and Reimbursement spreadsheet to calculate reimbursement amounts, provided by the CPA at Stapp Financial, that the auditor approved. She mentioned that it can be done quarterly or monthly, but the District proposes it be completed monthly. She also noted that the cell phone charge would only apply to those not using a District paid phone. The budget for this item was approved in the 2021 budget, which was \$35,778 and that came from the 1.5% merit. Calculations and time hired to the District were computed since some employees were hired in late 2020 or early 2021. The amount per month would have to not exceed \$100 per employee, per month. There were 23 employees from the time the office had to shut down, to a year later (March 11, 2020-March 11, 2021) that would qualify for the whole 12 months and would amount to \$27,600. One employee is eligible for nine months, another for eight months, and the last is eligible for four months. In total, to date, it would amount to \$29,700. Going forward it would be 26 employees which would be \$2,600 per month for this reimbursement, which could only continue for roughly 2.3 months. The policy is currently being looked at by Enduris and the employment attorney also must review it. Highlights in the policy include the definition of district business which ties into a federal law that deems what business is, proof of work from home costs (i.e., rent/mortgage statements), when/how requests are submitted, any other possible expense(s), etc.
- Selena asked Jean and Stu for their opinion on this and both agreed that if the auditor is satisfied with it, they are too.
- Mark pointed out that in the policy, it should be stated that if they are working home due to convenience versus when it is directed for them to work from home. Selena clarified that this policy, once approved, is strictly due to the pandemic and COVID/emergency restrictions. This policy would only be in place until it is deemed safe to resume normal working operations. She stated that this is separate from the telecommute policy because our staff has to work from home with COVID restrictions still be harsh, but they plan to make it clear in the policy to staff. Allan reiterated that after COVID, working from home would be a choice and any expenses that come to light will be that staff members to incur. Mark mentioned that other organizations are going to have more staff working from home in the future, which will cut down on costs. Selena let Mark know that the District is locked into a 25-year lease with that building. John echoed those remarks saying the District is working with fixed expenses and we may save some dollars on heating and lights, but those savings are minimal. If it is a mandatory call for staff, the reimbursement is necessary. When it becomes voluntary, that's a

completely separate matter. Hannah spoke on the language of the policy to be tied to the Corona Virus, or the Governor's emergency order, or the declared federal public health emergency.

- Jeanette asked Selena to repeat what was previously approved in December as far as funds that will go to staff and if there is a difference in what staff will receive. Selena said she took what the 1.5% amount was and equated to all employees. Also, it was available in the 2021 year and the Board has the option of making it retroactive depending on the plan that will be decided.
- Mark asked if this plan will be equitable across all staff. Selena reminded the Board that the not to exceed amount would be \$100/person. Allan said he believes this process to be equitable for staff and also offered the chance for staff to complete the spreadsheet before the next Board meeting.

**Please see Exhibit H:** <\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\H - Reimbursement Expenses 2020 Sample.xlsx>

### **Farm Cost Share Program Round 1 Allocations: Kramer-Alatorre Cost Share Agreement:**

Paul presented the Cost Share Program allocations for the Kramer-Alatorre property. This project was reviewed by the Board's Financial Assistance Program Committee and is recommended for approval.

- Hannah asked if this was vetted by the committee and if they had any comments about this project. Cindy and Bill, who are part of the committee, reassured the Board that this project should be fully supported as it was a project that the Board approved in the past, but did not go forward due to sale of the property.
- Jeanette asked Paul for the width of the buffer. Paul explained that the minimum width is 35 feet (average width is about 44 ft) and it is an oddly shaped property. 35 feet fits into the requirements for the funding from the Department of Health, seeing as it's not a fish bearing stream. Jeanette pointed out that there is a lot of discussion between the state and tribes about width of buffers and wants to make sure the District is cognizant of that.
- Mark asked what does science drive us to require for a buffer? Paul explained that the Department of Health has certain guidelines to follow and those measurements range from 35-100 ft. According to their Ag BMP guideline they have worked with Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, and possibly the tribes to determine their regulations. Paul offered to send the Board the DOH outline of the buffer widths. Jeanette accepted Paul's offer saying that it's a good idea to continue to monitor this and something to think about since it has been a priority topic.

**Please see Exhibit I:** [\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\I - 6 Kramer-Alatorre CS Request Memo to Board\\_March 2021.pdf](\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\I - 6 Kramer-Alatorre CS Request Memo to Board_March 2021.pdf)

**Please see Exhibit J:** <\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\J - 6 Kramer-Alatorre Criteria Worksheet.pdf>

**Please see Exhibit K:** <\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\Farm Financial Assistance Program Background Docs\Farm Focused Waterhed.pptx>

*Mark moved to approve the Kramer-Alatorre Cost Share Agreement as presented. John seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Floodplains by Design #4 Contract with SWM:**

Allan presented the Floodplains by Design Round 4 Agricultural Support Contract (\$624,240). More updates will come in April.

**Please see Exhibit L:** <\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\L - 7 Floodplains by Design 4 Contract.pdf>

**Farm Foundations / Investment Fund Request:**

Madeleine and Allan presented the Farm Foundations Program which started in 2018. Amy also gave more context as a farmer and shed light on the demand of the program.

John stated that this is the first project that he feels can be fully funded by the investment fund and would have a long-term benefit. Allan pointed out that the initial request was to come from rates and charges and then use the investment fund. John clarified that the funding should come from the investment fund and the rates and charges fund should be used for other purposes.

Mark asked if the participants pay a fee or if it is a free program. Madeleine clarified that it would not be a free program, there would be a sub-lease payment for those program participants and the plots they use. Mark asked if the fee the district collects would go back to the investment fund for use in the future, to build that fund after using it for this program. Jeanette mentioned that this has been a discussion and thought when it comes to the investment fund and asking the staff to look at that possibility for the money that is charged. Allan said that the immediate goal is to acquire the long-term lease with WSU and then farmers would not be working on the Goss Farm until next season. There is time to develop a policy around the reinvestments. Cindy offered her knowledge and experience with the investment fund and said that Mark may not have enough information on it. Allan will follow up with Mark on more information regarding the investment fund.

**Please see Exhibit M:** <\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\M - 8 Farm Foundations Memo.pdf>

*John moved to approve a not to exceed amount of \$80,000 from the Investment Fund to be allocated to the Farm Foundations program for infrastructure improvements at the Goss Farm, contingent upon the approval of a long-term lease with WSU. Cindy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Executive Search Firm RFP:**

Jeanette presented the Board with the Requests for Proposals to hire a new Executive Director.

Hannah wanted clarification on timelines as well as having the option to move to a different agency at the end of the contract.

Don asked if in the proposal format they wanted information about the project lead/team and the references of the projects they/company have done. Also, possibly adding in specific deliverables and deadlines (i.e., job description update date, due date of the list of candidates).

Jeanette stated that there was a discussion about having a specific timeline of hiring and to see how these different firms could organize their proposal. John highlighted that the purpose behind this action is to receive request proposals from search firms, not necessarily look at details for qualifications of an executive director. Bill agreed and restated that this is for the purpose of vetting the best search firm and not on the purpose of searching for a replacement, as of now.

Mark felt the Evaluation Criteria should be listed by order of importance.

Adam mentioned the statement of cost being a driver may need to be removed. Jeanette clarified that the language is explicit to show that the District is not bound by the cost considerations only. Allan gave more context in explaining that this is legal language.

Requested amendments were made to the existing RFP as requested and agreed upon.

**Please see Exhibit N:** [\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\N - 9 2021 ED Search Firm RFP\\_Mar3 Draft - PCD.pdf](\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\N - 9 2021 ED Search Firm RFP_Mar3 Draft - PCD.pdf)

*John moved to approve the RFP for an Executive Search Firm as amended. Mark seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Legislative Sessions Update:**

Allan briefed the Board on the 2021 State Legislative Priorities and the upcoming scheduled meetings.

Mark asked about the approach to starting the Zoom sessions. Allan told the Board that Ryan Mello will be introducing everyone on the call and then the Board members would be deferred to as a way of communication to legislators. Allan will be there to note any follow up necessary. Jeanette will be attending and participating in all meetings. Jeanette also mentioned that she will be presenting an additional piece to their meeting with Senator Darnielle for her support in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion conversations moving forward. Mark agreed with Jeanette as DEI is part of the District's mission.

Bill asked if the Board was going to receive suggested form letters to send to local legislators this year as have been sent in the past. Allan said he would send a draft letter with the comparison document that the WACD provided. He will also look for a formal letter to send. Allan also clarified that this year, as opposed to previous years, they are meeting with budget writers.

Mark suggested engaging in residents that have participated in the District programs as a bigger voice, to speak to legislators, other than the Board members.

**2021 Board Elections Update:**

Allan briefed the Board on the updates from the Board Elections. All paid promotions are live but financially will not show until the next meeting. 1,098 ballots were mailed, which is over 200 more from the previous year. The deadline to request a ballot was March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Chair's Report:**

Jeanette informed the Board that the WACD's next Board meeting is Monday night, but will be a work session, not a decision-making session. The meetings used to happen quarterly but are now monthly.

WACD is looking at the statewide committee, to look at conservation district elections and how the community recommends the elections process be more transparent and accessible.

The association is also working to create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee in response to the resolutions that were passed in December.

**Update from NRCS:**

Amy introduced herself to the Board and gave background on NRCS. This year, so far, they have received \$200,000 in financial requests from growers and agricultural producers in Pierce County. Statewide, the request was \$56 million, which is the highest request received. The NRCS has hired a new employee, Annie, and are also looking to hire another position in the Puyallup office.

**Update from Department of Ecology:**

Ann updated the Board on the work the Department of Ecology is doing in Ohop Creek with landowners.

**WA State Conservation Commission Update:**

Jean told the Board that there are some fire related trainings coming up and the first is in April. The conservation association is looking into the Conservation and Accountability Program with each District, which is normal operations for this time of year.

**Executive Director's Report:****A. Grant/New Revenues Report**

Please see Exhibit O: <\\SERVER1\Shared Folders\Company\Board of Supervisors\Board Notes\2021\Attachments\3-March\O - 14a March 2021 Grant Report.pdf>

**There being no further business, the Pierce Conservation District Board Meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.**

**SUMMARY OF MOTIONS:**

1. *John moved to approve the consent agenda and Cindy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*
2. *John moved to approve the February 28, 2021 Treasurer's Report as presented. Cindy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*
3. *Mark moved to approve the Kramer-Alatorre Cost Share Agreement as presented. John seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*
4. *John moved to approve a not to exceed amount of \$80,000 from the Investment Fund to be allocated to the Farm Foundations program for infrastructure improvements at the Goss Farm, contingent upon the approval of a long-term lease with WSU. Cindy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*
5. *John moved to approve the RFP for an Executive Search Firm as amended. Mark seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Mehgan Nishiyama, Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,  
Selena Corwin, Senior Director of Finance & Administration, Acting Director

Accepted: *Jeanette Dorner* Chairperson.