

**WEST CASSIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
DRAFT MINUTES –January 9, 2024 BOARD MEETING**

Place: NRCS Office, Burley, Idaho
Date: January 9, 2024
Time: 11:00 am
Presiding: Richard Kunau

Supervisors Present
Richard Kunau – Chairman
Jordan Searle – Vice-Chairman
Ken Black - Treasurer
Chad Searle- Member

Employees, Guests, and Agency Representatives:

Doreen McMurray, I&E Specialist
Rachelle Osterhout, Admin
Betty Carlson, Inspection Station Manager
David Mabey, NRCS
Carolyn Firth, ISWCC

- I. **Meeting called to Order by:** Chairman Richard Kunau at 11:02 a.m.
- II. **Changes to Agenda:** Add Betty Carlson to employee reviews, add Know Your Government (KYG) donation
- III. **Minutes for previous meeting:** December, 2023 Minutes – Ken Black moved to approve the Minutes of the previous meeting. Chad Searle seconded. Motion Carried.
- IV. **Treasurer’s Report:** Ken Black moved to approve Treasurer’s Report as written. Jordan Searle seconded. Motion Carried.
- V. **Calendar of Events:**
 1. **Next Board Meeting: February 26, 2024** (Following County Commissioner’s Meeting)
 2. **Legislative Social: January 15, 2024** Crystal Ballroom Historic Hoff Building- Boise, Idaho
 3. **Town Hall Information Session: January 30, 2024** 11:00-12:30 pm McGregor Building- Rupert, Idaho
 4. **Moisture Monitoring Project Opening Forum & Luncheon: February 12, 2024** 11:00 am
 5. **Request for Funding- Cassia County Commissioners: February 26, 2024** 11:00 am. Chad Searle will present West Cassia SWCD’s request. The board requested information to be presented to be emailed to them prior to meeting.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. **Participants for Moisture Monitoring Project:** Doreen McMurray shared the project flyer with the board. Chad Searle will be signing up, West Cassia SWCD needs 3 more cooperators. At the opening forum there will be a project overview, participants will receive training on the electronic monitoring system, complete paperwork and pick up equipment. All information pertaining to project is available on our website: minicassiaswcd.com. Office staff will continue to research possible funding to continue the project.
2. **LSO Registry Compliant for 2023 Registry Year:** Rachelle Osterhout share the email from the State Controller’s Office that informed West Cassia SWCD is compliant for the LSO report for the 2023 registry year.
3. **Cotterell Boat Station MOU, Insurance:** The district has not received the December amended MOU from the Idaho State Department of Labor (ISDA). Rachelle Osterhout sent an email to Nic and Madi and has not received an update. Rachelle continues to work on finding answers for the possibility of offering employees health benefits and retirement. The board suggested contacting Idaho Department of Labor.
4. **Other**
 - **Close Final Zions Account:** Rachelle Osterhout reminded the board they needed to close out the final Zions checking account. The board will coordinate a time to meet at the February 2024 meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. **4-H Animal Sale:** Kolter Mabey canceled due to weather.
2. **Employee Review:** Jordan Searle made the motion to enter Executive Session at 1:00 pm. Chad Searle seconded the motion. Motion Carried. *The Board may hold an executive session to discuss legal and personnel matters pursuant to Idaho Code § 74-206(1) (A)(B)*
Roll Call: Richard Kunau, Jordan Searle, Ken Black, Chad Searle
Jordan Searle made the motion to end the Executive Session at 1:17 pm.
Roll Call: Richard Kunau, Jordan Searle, Ken Black, Chad Searle

Ken Black made the motion for the following payroll increases:

Doreen McMurray \$28.00 per hour and 20 hours paid personal leave per year

Rachelle Osterhout \$22.50 per hour and 20 hours paid personal leave per year

These changes will start on the February 1, 2024 payroll. Jordan Searle seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

3. Other:

- **Know Your Government:** It costs each participant \$225.00 to attend the event. The extension office has received 2 applications to attend. Jordan Searle made the motion to make a \$300.00 donation to the Cassia County University of Idaho 4-H Extension Office to assist students attend the 2024 event. Chad Searle seconded the motion. Motion Carried
- **Retiring from West Cassia SWCD Board:** Brent Stoker a Board Member and Kyle Bowers an Associate Board Member have retired from serving on the West Cassia Soil & Water Conservation District Board.
- **Social Media & Website:** Doreen McMurray encouraged the board members to like and shared posts from our social media pages. Doreen has been very busy updating the districts website, including updated forms for the 2024 tree sale, information for the moisture monitoring project and many activities the board participates in.

VIII. AGENCY REPORTS/ REQUESTS

1. **NRCS Update:** David Mabey updated the board he was able to hire a new Soil Conservationist. His name is John Erickson and will be starting February 20, 2024. He is searching for a house to rent or buy. NRCS will be advertising for a Soil Conservationist for Rupert, Senior Planner for Burley and possibly an Admin Assistant.
Town Hall Information Session on January 30, 2023 in Rupert from 11:00 to 12:30. David asked the board what information would they like to see? The commented they would like to see programs highlighted and how to apply. They would also like to meet the staff. FSA will have staff present to discuss their programs as well.
Funding for EQIP is \$438,000.00 and will be used for Water Quantity priority projects. Funding for Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is \$438,000.00 and will go towards Water Quality and Soil Health/ soil Erosion projects. ACT NOW deviates from the standard contracting timeline by allowing application to be taken on a continual basis this spring and placing priority on completing the contracting process in 75 days. This is only available for select suite of practices focusing on Climate Smart Ag.
NRCS is working with the University of Idaho to present at the Potato Conference on January 18, 2024. The topic will be Soil Water Holding and Moisture Estimation.
2. **ISWCC Update:** Carolyn Firth shared Delwyne Trefz January 2024 report. The Commission hired Sarah Quideon as the new NRC who will be taking over for Joe in Division III.
She encouraged board members to attend the upcoming Legislative Social the evening of January 15th in Boise. She requested they talk about the WQPA funding. After the Legislative Social, the IASCD Directors and ISWCC Commissioners are meeting for dinner.
Commissioner Board meeting is January 16, 2024 at 9:00 am.
They will present their FY2025 budget request before the Joint Finance Committee of the legislature the morning of January 17th. It is anticipated JFAC will set their budget on January 19th.
All staff meeting will be via Zoom on January 22nd.
Carolyn shared the Commission is optimistic the WQPA will receive funding. Chad Searle and Richard Kunau have possible projects. Carolyn will be contacting Cordell Searle with a project on his dairy.
3. **Cotterell Inspection Station Update:** Betty Carlson updated the board on the 2023 season. The station was open from March 6, 2023 to December 31, 2023. Cotterell inspected 5,503 water craft, estimated 1,861 by passed the station, law enforcement returned 442, 368 were from infested waters and they hot washed 215. From November 1st to December 3rd, they inspected 145 water craft and had 35 bypass the station. From December 4th to December 31st, they inspected 84 water craft and had 31 bypasses.
Rachelle Osterhout informed the board she has submitted the final 2023 reports to the state. We are waiting to signed the December MOU and close out the 2023 season. The state is considering running the Cotterell Inspection Station year around from January 1 to December 31.
Jordan Searle made the motion once the December 2023 MOU is signed and the 2023 season is finalized and closed 33% of the admin fees will be split equally between Betty Carlson and Rachelle Osterhout in bonuses. Chad Searle seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

January 2024

- Bear River is the longest river that does not go to the ocean.
- Idaho has the most river miles in the nation.

Adjourn: 1:32

The Meeting Adjourned at 9:56 a.m. with a motion from Jordan Searle. Respectfully submitted by Doreen McMurray.