

**WEST CASSIA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
DRAFT MINUTES – December 14, 2021 BOARD MEETING
Masonic Lodge, Burley, ID**

Place: Masonic Lodge
Date: December 14, 2021
Time: 11:00 AM
Presiding: Jordan Searle

Supervisors Present
Jordan Searle- Vice Chairman
Kathy Poulton- Treasurer
Ken Black- Member

Employees and Agency Representatives:
Rachelle Osterhout- Admin
Betty Carlson- Cotterell Boat Station Manager

Supervisors Not Present:
Richard Kunau- Chairman
Brent Stoker- Member

ACTION ITEMS

- I. **Called to Order by:** Jordan Searle at 11:27 AM
- II. **Changes to the Agenda:** No Changes
- III. **Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting:** – Ken Black moved to approve Minutes of previous meeting. Kathy Poulton seconded. Motion Carried.
- IV. **Treasurer's Report:** Kathy Poulton read treasurer's report. Kathy Poulton moved to approve Treasurer's Report for November. Ken Black seconded. Motion Carried.
- V. **Calendar of Events:**
 - a. **Next Board Meeting:** January 11, 2022 @ 11:00 AM- Masonic Lodge, Burley, Idaho
 - b. **Soil Health Workshop:** February 3, 2022- Burley Best Western

VI. AGENCY REPORTS

1. **NRCS Update-** David Mabey was unable to the meeting. He was participating in interviews for the Pheasants Forever partner. He sent an email to share with the District:
Eligibility deadline for EQIP contracts was last week. Next phase is planning and ranking. I am working with our programs team to fine tune the ranking questions.
We have not received notice of what the Teams EQIP allocation is yet. Number of applications are down. We anticipate being able to fund the majority of them.
Cleve Smith from Sublette will be presenting at this months Soil Health 5for5 on Dec. 17.
Do the districts want to reschedule Maureen Pepper (NRCS Water Quality Specialist) for a presentation on the National Water Quality Incentive program and to discuss a local watershed plan? (Groundwater nitrate problems and well capping)
There have been a string of training, mostly online, available for Melanie. She has been taking advantage of the opportunity to get some much needed instruction after the last 2yrs of COVID meltdown.
I will be participating in interviews for the Pheasants Forever partner this week. Hope to have someone first of next year.

Carried over from previous meetings:

COVID – our FO's are still operating at 50%. (Rupert 2 and Burley 3).
At this point, we have not received anything that suggests SWCD personnel are required to be vaccinated.
Districts can hold meetings in the FO after hours so as to not exceed the 50% occupancy rule during office hours.
If the Districts wish to hold a meeting in the FO, please contact David so we can schedule.
District personnel are allowed in the FO's and are subject to the 50% staffing rule as well as masking requirements.

December 2021

MOA's between SWCD and NRCS- Curtis would like to thank all SWCD's for their cooperation and wants to express his support and acknowledgement of the difficulties and inconveniences that COVID has caused. He is still calling for MOA's to be signed and would like to hear from districts that have concerns with the MOA

2. ISWCC Update - Carolyn Firth was unable to attend the meeting do to a training. She sent an email to share with the District:

Performance Reports are due Dec 20th

Our CREP Manager Position announcement is out and we hope to have someone hired to replace Chuck early in 2022.

Our South Idaho Engineer Position announcement is also open again. Cross your fingers that we will be able to hire the perfect person for that position.

We will be announcing our open Division 3 WQRC Position early in 2022 so we have someone hired and ready to go well before field season begins. This is the position vacated by Loretta.

A big thanks to Districts for keeping in touch with their State Representatives and Senators.

Encourage Districts to continue to stay in contact with legislators before and during the 2022 legislative session which begins Mon, Jan 10th

Suggest they be ready to respond to requests from IASCD Leadership for assistance lobbying for greater support for Conservation Districts. The Commission, IASCD, NRCS and other partners are working with the Governor's Office and State decision makers to secure funding for District implementation projects and at some point may ask Districts to weigh in with their local legislators—stay tuned. If we receive an appropriation to fund implementation projects it may be directed through our old Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA) program. Attached is a white paper that describes WQPA, which hasn't been funded since 2010.

To all District Supervisors and District Staff, a huge Thank-You for maintaining their commitment to locally-led voluntary natural resources conservation through what has been another challenging year. I wish them each a wonderful Christmas season and a happy and fulfilling New Year.

3. TA 2020- Melanie was unable to attend the meeting do to a 3-day mandatory CD/CART training.

She sent an email to update the District: I have been in the office helping finish up the CRP sign ups. Making calls, copies, and signatures. Helping finish GCI. Taking pictures, calls, notes. Lots of trainings. Programs trainings (NRCS programs), RCPP Training, ARC GIS Training (map making) and this week is the 3-day CD/CART Training. I have been working on EQIP eligibility for both the Burley and Rupert offices. Sending out the eligibility letters and follow up calls. Working on my new High Tunnel signups. The office had spot checks last month. I had a High Tunnel looked at and reviewed and things looked great.

3. Cotterell Boat Station- Betty Carlson shared information about the US 93 boat station near Jackpot. It is located 4 miles from Jackpot. It is about 90 miles from the Burley office to the station. The station typically runs from 6:00 AM to Midnight, 2 people per shift. The water would have to be hauled in weekly. Both County and ISP are present at the station. Last year they checked 2260 boats compared to the Cotterell station which checked 6000 boats.

Betty is interested in running both stations. She asked the board if they would consider her managing both stations and not working any shifts? There was discussion about what are the options for hiring employees. Rachelle is going to check with Nic about the Idaho Conservation Corps to find employees. West Cassia is very interested in taking on the US 93 station. They would like more information before moving forward. They would like Nic to either join a meeting via Zoom are in person so they can discuss details with him.

Betty brought up where the wage rate caps are right now in the MOA. Currently they are set at: Manager- \$18.00 per hour, Supervisor- \$15.50 per hour, Inspector- \$14.50 per hour. Beet dump employee rates for a new employee started out at \$16.00 and working at McDonalds starts at \$14.00. They discussed they needed to stay competitive to retain their current employees. They would like to drop the supervisor

position and then up the cap for the Manager to \$25.00 per hour and Inspector to \$18.00 per hour. Rachelle will email Nic the suggestions from the board.

ACTION ITEMS

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Performance Report-** Rachelle Osterhout submitted the Performance Report on November 18th, 2021 to Loretta Strickland. Loretta responded and said it looks great.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Admin Report:

- a. **Review LSO Report-** Rachelle Osterhout presented the information that was submitted for the LSO report. The board reviewed the information. Ken Black made a motion to approve the report, FY2022 Budget and FY2021 Audit. Kathy Poulton Seconded. Motion Carried
- b. **Know Your Government Scholarship-** Rosie Davids emailed the District about the 4-H KYG Conference. It is being planned for February and youth will be able to actually attend the conference in Boise. The registration cost is \$195.00 plus each youth will need to take additional money to pay for two meals. They are thinking they may have 4 possibly 5 interested in attending. The board approved to send \$300.00 to provide scholarships for KYG as approved in the budget.
- c. **Mail-** The district received a thank-you card from Clate Poulton for purchasing his steer at the Cassia County Fair. They also received a thank-you letter from American Falls FFA Chapter saying Thank you for helping with the State Land and Soils Evaluation event. The 6th Annual IASCD Legislative Appreciation Social will be held on January 17th in Boise. January 18th will be the Annual Business Meeting and Conservation Display Day at the Capital. Rachelle is checking with Doreen to see about setting up a table to represent our District.

2. Supervisor's Report:

- a. **Audit Review:** Jeff Poulsen presented the audit for FY2021 to the board. He pointed out on page 5 the general fund. He explained the district received a payment right before the end of the fiscal year. That money is deferred to the next fiscal year. He also explained they look at the bank statements and run tests on random transactions to make sure they match up. He said everything looks great. He also said after completing the audit he has a better understanding of how the district works. Jordan Searle asked the question about the final page of the audit where it states "lack of segregation of duties". Jeff told him this is quite common and explained we do have mitigation controls in place. The admin does not sign checks and the bank statements, payroll and other transactions are reviewed by the treasurer and are presented at the monthly meetings.
- b. **LWG Review:** Kathy Poulton shared information from the LWG meeting. Priorities were focused on Water and Soil. David is working on getting the information together. Facilitator joined via zoom. The top five priority resource concerns; Water Quality, Insufficient Water, Soil Quality Degradation, Soil Erosion, Degraded Plant Condition.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:46pm by Ken Black. Seconded by Kathy Poulton.
Respectfully submitted by Rachelle Osterhout