



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
December 4, 2014**

Supervisors Present: William Caster
Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
Jerry Melaragno
Richard Shovelin
Dan Williams

Absentees: LeRoy Candelaria
Brian Greene

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Robin Beatty
Katheryn Taylor, district volunteer

CALL TO ORDER:

The Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District (CPSWCD) regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors was called to order by Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman at the Natural Resource Conservation Center Conference Room located at 1206 South HWY 55 in Mountainair, NM at 8:10 a.m.

Welcome Attendees:

The Chairman welcomed those present and thanked them for taking the time to attend. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The board reviewed the agenda. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to approve the agenda. Dan Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING:

Minutes of the regular meeting from November 7, 2014 were reviewed. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to approve the minutes as amended. Jerry Melaragno seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous. On the top of page 1 under Others Present, change "Robyn" to "Robin." On page 6 under Friends of Claunch-Pinto SWCD Organization, change "Robyn to Robin." On page 7 change the signature line from "Richard Shovelin, Sec. – Treas." to "Jerry Melaragno, Sec. – Treas."

TREASURER'S REPORT AND APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of November with accounts payable for December. **ACTION TAKEN:** Dan Williams moved to accept the report and pay the accounts payable. William Caster seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous. As the board secretary -- treasurer, Jerry Melaragno presented an unofficial summary of the treasurer's report, drawing attention to the summary of the district's expenses and revenue. A discussion occurred on the repairs on the chippers and why they were needed.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The district manager reported that the exit report with the auditor took place, and the audit was sent on time to the state auditor for approval. The audit was a good audit with no exceptions. A single federal audit had to be completed this year.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA):

Jim Wanstall's written report is included in board member's packets.

NRCS Field Office Report:

Kenneth Lujan presented the NRCS report. He said that Chad Dunnahoo will serve as the acting district conservationist for approximately six months. Mr. Lujan will submit a written report at future board meetings. He said that he has been working on paying cooperators who had renewal contracts. He asked that any questions be referred to him. Funds are available to make the payments but may be disbursed somewhat slowly. There have been two quality review spot checks on CSP contracts to insure that they are being administered correctly and that cooperators are fulfilling their contract obligations. Those spot checks were passed without any issues. Vegetative and engineering spot checks on EQIP projects will also be conducted. Cultural clearances are almost complete. Mr. Lujan and April Luna are working again on EQIP contracts.

District Manager's Report:

The district manager's report is included in board member's packets.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Correspondence is included in the board packets. An email from Preston Stone urging comments and a resolution on the Cibola National Forest Plan Revision and Potential Wilderness is included. Mr. Shovelin asked for a resolution to be placed on the January agenda regarding the forest plan. He mentioned a television special on channel 212, Blaze TV, regarding wilderness lands. A discussion followed on organizations that are effective in presenting their views and on the importance of attending meetings and of submitting comments, especially by people who may likely be affected by the plan. In addition, a copy of the letter requesting cooperating status for the district with the Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands for the Cibola Forest Plan Revision is included in correspondence.

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

The district manager's report on grants listed below includes meetings attended, progress on projects, status of proposals to funding agencies, and RFPs issued by funding agencies. The written report is included in the board packets.

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Estancia Basin Watershed Health and Restoration Monitoring (EBWHRM) Project – Water Trust Board (WTB) and State Forestry Grants (NFL,) and Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance (GRGWA):

The district manager prepared nine reimbursements for the Water Trust Board grants and one reimbursement for the State Forestry grant.

The district has been notified by the Water Trust Board that the GRGWA and the EBWHRM pre-proposals have been approved, and work can now be started on the phase II proposal. The phase II proposal has to be submitted by April 13, 2015.

The district manager met with an Edgewood SWCD landowner to pay him for his project.

The district manager prepared three contracts for approved contractors for the GRGWA projects.

Central New Mexico Cooperative Weed Management Area:

No report.

Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP):

Ojo Peak Restoration:

The district is still giving load tags for the wood.

Romero Wood, LLC:

District personnel have met with Pablo Romero concerning the 23 acres the district is responsible for thinning. The project is mapped and should be ready to start in the next couple of weeks.

Forest Service Partnership Agreement:

No report.

Agreement with the New Mexico State Parks:

Work is progressing on the thinning project. The district issues wood permits every weekend. A concern was raised that State Forestry may do a prescribed burn of the slash from the project rather than chip it. The burn could endanger the watershed because of very dry conditions. This watershed is the only one which has not burned.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

The full RCPP project proposal was submitted on October 2, 2014. NRCS has extended the project review deadline to December 15th before making an official announcement concerning the projects that will be approved for funding. The district manager reported that the original proposal was for 2.6 million dollars a year for five years. The award is for 2.3 million dollars instead of 2.6 million, and she has been informed that NRCS will take \$694,000 in technical fees from that amount. In addition, instead of a five year funding period, a new proposal will have to be submitted each year in a competitive process. Discussion followed on the appropriateness of changing the process after proposals were submitted and whether the technical fees can possibly be used on NRCS employees' salaries. The amount of money that will now be available to go on the ground is 1.4 or 1.5 million dollars.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Building – Capital Outlay:

At the last board meeting, priorities for projects were established to include the following projects for improvements to the district's property:

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- lighting at the gate
- lighting for the sign at the gate
- gravel for the driveway
- signage
- a water catchment system
- a ventilator

ACTION TAKEN: William Caster moved to go forward on getting bids to implement the projects. Richard Shovelin seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

Report on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Lawsuit with Chavez SWCD:

The Chavez SWCD has delayed filing its suit. The district manager said that Aubrey Dunn will be moving into the Claunch-Pinto SWCD. He may be attending some of the district's board meeting.

Report on BLM – CO2 Pipeline:

The district manager said that there is no new information on the Environmental Impact Report (EIS). She sent the conservation plan for the Abó watershed to the company that is preparing the EIS, as requested.

Cibola National Forest – Forest Plan Revision Resource Assessment Wilderness Inventory:

The discussion was reported under Correspondence in these minutes.

Friends of Claunch-Pinto SWCD Organization:

Robin Beatty disseminated a draft mission statement for a Friends of Claunch-Pinto SWCD Organization. She described the steps that she thinks are needed to establish the group. She stressed the requirement that the funds raised by the organization have to be spent in support of the district's mission statement. She talked about the research that she did on IRS and New Mexico requirements. She requested help in identifying a potential membership. A business plan will have to be created and submitted. Also, a potential list of activities will have to be developed. Incorporation as a 501c3 organization will be needed. A discussion followed on who might be interested in becoming a member and incentives and disincentives for becoming a member. Mr. Melaragno said that it is important to identify how this group will make it possible for the district to implement programs or activities that it is not able to do now. Ms. Beatty will meet with the district manager to develop a list of activities that the friends organization might do.

NEW BUSINESS:

Supervisor Elections:

The election will be held at a location in Corona and in the conference room in the district's building. Felipe Lovato, William Caster and LeRoy Candelaria are up for re-election. The positions have to be advertised and poll officials have to be identified.

Reimbursement of Tenant Improvement and Building Specific Security from NRCS:

NRCS will pay a lump sum of \$86,445.47 for tenant improvements for the NRCS office space and for building specific security costs requested by NRCS. In January 2015, lease payments will go down to \$2856 per month, a reduction of about \$600 due to the lump sum payment. The national office has approved the payment. A discussion followed on operational costs which will be re-evaluated in June, 2015. The district manager wants to hire Mike Valdez on an on call basis to take care of possible repairs that arise. Discussion followed. The Board asked the district manager to talk to Mr. Valdez to see if he would be amenable this type of contract. **ACTION TAKEN:** Dan Williams moved to approve

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the signing of addendum no. 5 to the lease agreement with NRCS. William Caster seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

Review Mileage and Per Diem Policy:

The district manager reviewed the IRS Mileage and Per Diem Policy. She said that the rate increased from 55.5 cents per business mile to 56 per mile in January of 2014 and the rate was increased to 23.5 cents per mile for medical or moving mileage and increased to 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations. Each year the board must approve the IRS mileage rate.

ACTION TAKEN: Dan Williams moved to adopt the new IRS mileage of 56 cents per mile. William Caster seconded the motion.

Chief Procurement Officer Registration:

The district manager said that she is registered as the district's chief procurement officer. She explained the state's new certification process. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to approve the funds to pay for the registration and expenses incurred in the certification process for the district manager. William Caster seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts (NMCCD):

A meeting of the NMCCD will be held next week where Carole Glade, the new interim executive director will be introduced. David King wants to hold an annual meeting, perhaps in January.

South Central Mountain RC&D:

The district manager said that the next meeting is scheduled for December 18 in Ruidoso.

Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee (EBWPC):

The district manager said that a meeting was held in October. Mr. Shovelin asked about the prospective water pipeline. The district manager says that the project is proposed to be built to show beneficial use of the water in the basin to keep the water in the basin. The project is still in the planning stages.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

OTHER:

The district manager said that the district is required to submit an asset management plan as a part of Water Trust Board proposals. The first step is to pass a resolution regarding the intent to write a plan. Other proposals for funding may also require an asset management plan. A grant is available from the New Mexico Finance Authority to pay an organization to write an Asset Management Plan. Mr. Williams asked that this subject be placed on the agenda of the next meeting.

The district manager reported on the Arizona water settlement agreement. She related the history of the agreement. She said that the Interstate Streams Commission has discarded previous watershed proposals. The new state engineer proposes to dam up the Gila River, the last wild river in New Mexico. A meeting will be held in Albuquerque tonight concerning this project. Mr. Williams said that the proposal to dam up the river is intended to use the water to sell to Arizona and to use for private interests. Discussion followed on various possible effects of the proposal to dam the river and other ways to control New Mexico water. The district manager will keep the board informed.

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Mr. Lovato wrote a letter to Javier Martinez of the Department of Transportation requesting the rules for signage on state highways. No response has been received. Mr. Shovelin and Mr. Williams suggested several follow-up actions.

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, January 9, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. at the Natural Resource Conservation Center, 1206 South Highway 55, Mountainair, NM.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the board, the regular meeting of the Claunch-Pinto Board **ACTION TAKEN:** Mr. Shovelin moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 a.m. Dan Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

JERRY MELARAGNO, SEC. – TREAS.