



PO Box 129, Mountainair, NM 87036 Ph: 505-847-2243 Fax: 505-847-0615

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING February 5, 2016

Supervisors Present: William Caster
LeRoy Candelaria
Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
Larry Gomez
Jerry Melaragno
Dan Williams

Absentees: Richard Shovelin

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Brandon Bishop, Natural Resource Conservation Service
George Long, Mountainair Ranger District
Cody Stropki, SWCA

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:** Jerry Melaragno moved to approve the agenda as amended. Dan Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING:

Minutes of the regular meeting from January 8,, 2016 were reviewed. **ACTION TAKEN:** William Caster moved to approve the minutes as read. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of January, 2015 with accounts payable for February, 2016. The district manager explained that some reimbursements weren't included in this report. **ACTION TAKEN:** William Caster moved to accept the report for December, 2015 and pay the accounts payable for January, 2016. Dan Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

Jerry Melaragno distributed his summary budget report His report provides a summary of the treasurer's report, giving board members a look at the bigger financial picture. He pointed out grant spending and expressed his concern about the amount of spending from the capital outlay funds.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The district manager said that she sent the final audit, approved by the state, to board members. A hard copy was included in the board members' packets. The audit has been posted to the district's web site.

Mr. Caster asked about the significance of bill HB 143. The district manager explained that she received an email from the New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts regarding HB 143, which would change elections for various entities including the soil and water conservation districts. The district manager read the email which included consequences of the change on the mil levy, long term loans, district property and employees. The district manager requested that board members call members of the judiciary committee to express concerns. She mentioned the possible expenses that could be incurred by a district for elections. No mention was made in the bill of how the elections would be paid for. The district manager explained the rationale for the bill and support from the county clerks for it.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA):

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

Field Office Report:

Brandon Bishop's report was emailed to board members.

District Manager's Report:

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

Correspondence is included in the board packet.

New Mexico First – Resilience in New Mexico Agriculture –Regional Meetings.

The district manager said that April Luna attended the meeting in Albuquerque and a report will be sent to board members. The district manager will register for the meeting to be held in Tucumcari.

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.

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 said that most of the funding for the GRGWA has been contracted. Weather problems have affected progress on EBWHRW projects. Proposals submitted in November have been rated number one and two. The district manager explained how money is being spent on current projects. At the request of the chairman, she explained the issues involved in asking for waivers from the Water Trust Board, so plans are being made to spend the money in a timely manner.

Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP):

No fuel work is being done due to the snow. The district manager is working with the Forest Service on two CFRP proposals, one in the Corona area and another in Priest Canyon. She is working with Game and Fish on three areas in Priest and Sand Canyons regarding big horn sheep habitat. The two CFRP planning grants will be submitted by January 25th. The project on the Zuni is on hold due to snow.

Romero Wood, LLC:

The district manager explained that only 108 acres, including the 23 acres thinned by the district have been completed, so she will meet with Romero Wood to facilitate more progress. Two

planning proposals have been submitted. The district manager described the location of the projects and what they are intended to protect.

George Long expressed his appreciation for all the work that the district manager has done. He talked about the focus of the Forest Service and the emphasis that it plans for the Gallinas and the importance of the projects and the positive response of the permittees to them.

New Proposals:

No report.

Forest Service Participating Agreement:

No report.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

The district manager said that contracts are in place with SWCA to complete the cultural resource clearances for the RCPP projects. Cultural clearances will be carried out so that conservation work can commence.

Agreement with the New Mexico State Parks:

The district manager said that this project is on hold.

Grants with the New Mexico Association of Counties:

The district manager explained that a purpose of one of the grants is to update Claunch-Pinto and Torrance County Wildfire Protection Plan which has to be finished by the end of June. She explained that Corona will be included in the plan. The district has an educational grant through the Association of Counties which will provide a traveling workshop on defensible space, hazardous fuels reduction and wildfire.

The district manager attended an Local Emergency Preparedness Committee (LEPC) meeting in Torrance County where she learned about grant proposals, so she will submit a notice of intent to submit a proposal for a \$100,000 grant to create defensible space and reduce hazardous fuels across Torrance County that can be a part of the EBWHRM project. Work can take place on private and state land. She thanked Brent Racher for giving her a heads up on the meeting and proposal process. If the proposal is funded, the money will be administered by Claunch-Pinto and will be divided among three districts. Mr. Candelaria said that the meeting was very positive and said that attendees were not previously aware of how many entities the district works with.

The district manager has also met with the State Land Office, which has about \$90,000 to fund work on state land in the Claunch-Pinto district. The plan is to work on state land that borders on Deer Canyon Preserve in order to protect the preserve from wildfire. The plan is also intended to improve the watershed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay -- shop building:

The chairman reported on a visit to Santa Fe with the district manager. They talked with five legislators about the district's needs for capital outlay. A request for \$50,000 was submitted to Senator Barela and to Representative Salazar and McQueen. The previous day the New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts' members delivered bags to the legislators' offices and were present at AgFest, where long lines waited for materials that the Coalition was giving away.

The district manager will return to Santa Fe next week to meet with Angela Quintana at the New Mexico Finance Authority.

The district manager reported that to date \$50,000 has been spent on the shop building, and \$8,000 still needs to be spent. The district manager explained where the funds would come from. Mr. Candelaria spoke to Senator Barela asking him to direct money towards Claunch-Pinto if possible because he doesn't expect Torrance County to need it. He said that Mr. Barela is very helpful to the district. Mr. Melaragno said that he understood that finishing projects was a higher priority with the legislature than new projects. The chairman said that the concrete has been poured, the red iron was going up today and the insulation needs to be installed as soon as possible. Mr. Candelaria said that

the board affirmed spending the funds needed to complete work in progress at a previous board meeting.

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

The district manager said that a meeting was held on January 6 to complete an analysis of the wilderness inventory. She and Dan Williams attended a point of contact meeting followed in the afternoon by a NEPA meeting. She said that she understood from a representative from the regional office that most of the wilderness on the inventory should have dropped off anyway. Mr. Long said that she was correct.

The district manager said that a three day workshop will be held in March on how to collaborate. Mr. Long added that the expanding roles of the landscape teams concerned with other aspects of the Forest Plan Revision – everything done in the national forests will also be a focus. Lines of communication will be enhanced as the forest plan is implemented, and the landscape teams won't go away but will continue to be involved.

The district manager has been invited to a meeting of the Lincoln County Commission on February 16 to present an update on the forest plan revision. She also said that there will be a new acting ranger as of Monday, who will need to get up to speed on the plan. Mr. Candelaria said that the Forest Service is on the county commission's agenda on a continuing basis in case that a representative of the Forest Service wants to present an update. Also on the agenda on an ongoing basis are any boards that want to make a brief presentation. A discussion occurred on MOUs that should be submitted and followed by everyone, including land grants.

Annual Meeting Plans, 75th anniversary of CPSWCD – September 2016:

The chairman asked the board members for ideas for the 2016 annual meeting.

Americorp/Vista Program:

The district manager is still working on this program.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts (NMCCD):

The district manager said that a forest listening group will meet on February 22. She said that the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts (NMACD) initially did not notify non-member districts about the meeting. The National Association of Conservation Districts has received a grant from the Forest Service to convene meetings to establish how to work with the Forest Service. The NMCCD has sent two letters to the national association saying that the New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts is not being recognized and asking that it be recognized as an association in New Mexico, and it should be included as a contact.

South Central Mountain RC&D and the Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee (EBWPC):

Meeting Dates in 2016:

February 25

March 24

April 28

May 26

June 30

The district manager asked that any board member who wants to attend the February 25th meeting should let her know. The chairman said that he would try to go.

EBWPC:

No report.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

OTHER:

The chairman thanked Cody Stropki on the behalf of the board for his work with high school students. He hopes that this work will generate interest among young people in the work of the CPSWCD. The district manager told George Long how much she has enjoyed working with him during the last five months. The chairman concurred. Mr. Long said that he has applied for the permanent position of district ranger.

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, March 4, 2016 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:** Jerry Melaragno moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 a.m. LeRoy Candelaria seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

JERRY MELARAGNO, SEC. – TREAS.