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MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING August 2, 2019

Supervisors Present: Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
David Cain
LeRoy Candelaria
Larry Gomez
Dan Williams

Absentees: Jim Groom, Associate Supervisor
William Caster
Richard Shovelin

Others Present: Kenneth Lujan, NRCS
Katheryn Taylor, 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.

Public Discussion on the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Program (ICIP):

The ICIP prioritizes district needs for FY 2021 – 2025.

The funding request for the shop building, the number one priority for 2020 is noted as completed since the district manager has received a notice to proceed. She will advertise an RFP during August to finish the shop building.

The district manager placed 4-wheel drive vehicle as number one priority for 2020 based on the discussion that took place on July 12. A discussion took place on whether to request funds to buy a new versus a used truck for the district crew because of the type of wear and damage that takes place. The district manager mentioned the other vehicles that are listed for 2022 and 2024.

It was suggested that frequent, regularly scheduled inspections and maintenance of the equipment should take place.

The district manager suggested moving a vehicle from another year to 2021.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The board reviewed the agenda. **ACTION TAKEN:** LeRoy Candelaria moved to approve the agenda. Dan Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Claunch-Pinto SWCD

August 2, 2019

Regular Meeting

ACTION TAKEN: Dan Williams moved to ratify all decisions made in the committee meeting of July 12 including approving the minutes of July 12, 2019. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. It passed by unanimous consent.

The district manager said that a conference call may be necessary to approve of resolutions passed on July 12 if the Department of Finance does not accept the actions from that committee meeting and ratified at this board meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of July, 2019 with accounts payable for August, 2019.

ACTION TAKEN: Larry Gomez moved to approve the treasurer's report for July, 2019 and pay the accounts payable for August, 2019. LeRoy Candelaria seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

None.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture:

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

Mr. Candelaria asked to be updated on the up-coming elections detailed in Mr. Wanstall's report. The district manager said that in the case where there were no candidates for a supervisor's position, the board could appoint someone. In addition, she announced that the New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts (NMCCD) will hold its annual meeting on August 15 at the Edgewood office. A representative from the secretary of state's office and a number of attendees from county clerk's offices will be present. There will be a round table discussion of the elections. The district manager will forward an email from Lincoln County containing information about the elections.

At an executive committee meeting of the NMCCD, she learned about efforts to encourage environmental groups, organic farmers and others to get elected to conservation districts' boards. A discussion followed on the possible changes to dynamics of boards these members could bring about, especially the possible effects on representation by agriculture.

The district manager mentioned that Senate bill 454 is being carried by Senator McQueen. The bill concerns funding for NGOs and conservation districts.

Field Office Report:

The NRCS written report dated August 2, 2019 is included in the board packets. Mr. Lujan reported that the livestock judging team from Estancia had a very successful trip to Scotland, placing third in approximately 40 teams. The team will make a report to the board at its next meeting.

Mr. Lujan commented on the elections and what the possible results might mean to representation for agriculture producers.

He reported that his team spent 4.8 million dollars in EQIP funds, a significant portion of the 20 million dollars allocated to the 11 teams in New Mexico. The Mountainair office spent 1.8 million, 1.6 was spent in Santa Rosa, \$700,000 was spent in Fort Sumner and \$700,000 was spent in Estancia. He reported on the sources for the 3.8 million dollars above the million that was allocated to the team. He praised April Luna and Steven Ferguson for their hard work. Then he mentioned many changes in staffing due to retirements and transfers and described his tentative plan to respond to the changes.

He suggested, too, that the district could benefit from adding a skid steer to the list of equipment included in the ICIP and explained his reasoning.

Regarding CSP, there are no changes for 2019, but in 2020 it will be a new program that will be much more producer friendly.

Funds for 140 staff members for New Mexico compared to current funding for 117 employees has been allotted by the administration in Washington D.C. Some positions have already been advertised. The increases are still short of previous staffing levels.

Mr. Lujan then described a computer program that can instantly show staffing levels and other data from every NRCS office across the United States. Team five is shown to be fully staffed and considered to be adequate for the work load in the various offices.

He also reported on the county commissioners decision to assign money from the new wind turbines to various school districts without consulting the school districts.

Next he described information on meetings he has attended on the cultivation of hemp in the area. At present, no CSP or EQIP funding can be provided to support growing hemp. Changes to this policy have not been signed off on yet. Discussion followed on issues involved in growing hemp and on providing oversight.

Final discussion took place on the value of the RCPP funds to the producers represented by the offices in Team 5. Mr. Candelaria suggested that a report needs to be developed and publicized on how much money the district and NRCS bring into the area that supports local communities.

The district manager announced that the local work group meeting will be held on Thursday, August 27 at the Encino City Hall building.

District Manager's Report:

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

She attended the annual meeting of the Estancia, Moriarty, Willard and Torrance County water group. She said that the land grants do not want to be included in the pipeline being discussed. She talked about re-activating water rights not being used but which might be used to grow hemp and the future sale of water rights if farms fail.

She announced that the district will sponsor a workshop on September 7 on building a Johnson SU composting bioreactor presented by Dr. David Johnson, a molecular biologist at New Mexico State University. The district will pay for materials and Dr. Johnson's travel. The district manager hopes that the district will build 10 composting reactors to sell. Mr. Williams said that they can be effective for backyard gardens but may not be useful in increasing farming and ranching productivity and profitability. Mr. Candelaria said that it could be useful for improving production in the district greenhouse and can be a demonstration project for the community to benefit from seeing.

CORRESPONDANCE:

None.

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.

Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board (WTB):

On August 11, the district manager will attend a workshop on the new WTB 2020 applications. She is working on the readiness items for the 2019 grants. She has over \$700,000 in projects for the Estancia Basin grant. Thinning projects are being finished. Edgewood still has some funds that need to be contracted.

The State Forestry Grant:

At the last meeting, the district manager reported that the 2019 NFL grant was funded for \$285,000, but she was asked to give this funding to the Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District. The request was tabled until today. In the meantime, the chairman wrote a letter to the state forester explaining the district didn't want to damage the relationship with State Forestry either on the district level or the state level or with the Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District. She reviewed the rest of the letter's content. A reply was subsequently received stating that the funding would stay intact.

The district manager and Vern Kohler met with Deer Canyon HOA board members the previous Friday to discuss a defensible space project on Deer Canyon Trail, the main road through the development.

The concern of the members concerned the appearance of the road after it is thinned. Vern showed them an area along the road near the Preserve Center and explained how he selected the trees to remove.

The district manager has also been working with Bill Ferranti and the Ramah Navajo crew. They won't be able to work on David Cain's project until October. The crew will camp at the district office. It may be possible to work on all of the 200 acres planned for the project.

Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance (GRGWA) aka Upper Rio Grande Salt Cedar Project:

The district manager attended a meeting of the GRGWA the Tuesday previous to the board meeting. There are more than \$700,000 in projects for this grant. There may be only enough money to work on about half of the projects. She may be able to move some of the projects to RCPP. She has been invited to Seboyeta to a land grant meeting next Thursday to discuss thinning projects.

BNSF Railroad Project:

The district manager said that Vern Kohler has inspected the area to fix some silt fencing damaged due to heavy rains in the area. He and other district employees will plant the grass plugs that have been bought to stabilize the soil after the county fair is over.

Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP)

Corona CFRP:

The district manager said that the Corona CFRP project is finishing up. SWCA has submitted almost all of the final documents to the Forest Service. Then a categorical exclusion will be completed.

Chupadera CFRP:

The Rocky Mountain Ecological Company has not started work nor have they contacted David Cain or the district manager to keep them informed on plans for the work.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

The district manager explained that work will begin after the contracts are obligated. Mr. Lujan said that some of his NRCS staff can do some of the work on projects. He talked about why the costs are so high because of finding many very small cultural sites. He suggested that the district could buy GPS units that producers could rent to make work more efficient.

There is about \$500,000 in the technical assistance budget to complete cultural resource surveys. SWCA will subcontract the cultural resource surveys if it is necessary to stay within budget. Mr. Lujan discussed why he disagreed with the way SWCA wants to charge for their work.

The district manager has applied for some additional funding. She prepared a budget and a work plan that have been submitted.

New Mexico State Park Project:

No report.

FEMA Grant Proposal:

The district manager said that a draft NEPA has been submitted to Homeland Security for review and approval. Then there will be a conference call during which FEMA will go over what they want changed in the NEPA and then there will be a public review. Then the implementation stage will be ready to proceed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay, Shop Building - Report:

The district Manager reported that she has received a notice to proceed and will issue an RFP

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

The draft plan of the EIS is available for review. The plan can be found on-line or the district manager will email it to board members. She will meet with the Lincoln county representative who has been participating in the collaborative team. They will organize a meeting of all of the permittees so that they can review the draft and provide comments to be submitted separately.

Beautification – Partnership with the town of Mountainair – Elm Trees in Town Right of Ways:

The Central New Mexico Co-Op has not topped any of the trees yet.

Lincoln, Torrance and Socorro Transmission Line SunZia Transmission Line:

SunZia may build its line along side of the Western Spirit line. Nothing has been submitted to the PRC yet. There was a meeting in Estancia of land owners whose land the Western Spirit line will cross.

Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:

Corona Wind Companies:

The district manager said that there will be a delay in the project that will feed into the SunZia line.

Western Spirit Transmission Line:

The district manager will meet again on August 12 with the committee whose task it is to develop a 501 c3 application so that local entities can apply to a Pattern foundation for grants. A facilitator will be brought in to guide the meetings

Supervisor Elections:

The district manager reported on this item previously.

Request from the Manzano Spring and Ditch Association:

The district manager reviewed the request from the Manzano Spring and Ditch Association to support the association in the in-kind amount of \$8,717.82, the Manzano Acequia portion of the costs for the Manzano Spring and Ditch project, \$174,356.38. The NMACD RCCP contribution was \$87,178.19. The State ISC portion was \$78,460.37. The district manager explained that the project was complete, but except for one meeting with the Acequia and NMACD, she was never involved with the project. She said that she should have been involved on an on-going basis, especially since the district is now being asked to contribute funds to the project which are not in the district's budget. Discussion followed on how extensive this first phase of work was and the number of users and number of acres that could be irrigated. The association asked the ISC to allow it to make monthly payments, but Orlando Lopez, president of the association, has recently informed the district manager that he could not work out a payment plan. Pros and cons of providing some money to the association followed.

ACTION TAKEN: LeRoy Candelaria moved to send a letter telling the Association that the district can provide a small amount of money that the district could afford.

After further discussion, Mr. Candelaria withdrew his motion.

ACTION TAKEN: Larry Gomez moved to deny the request as it is not in the district's budget and to ask the Association to involve the district in future projects from the outset so that any needed funds can be budgeted. LeRoy Candelaria seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution No. 04 – Adopting the 2020 – FY2021 – 2025 Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan:

The district manager explained the resolution.

ACTION TAKEN: Mr. Williams moved to adopt the resolution. LeRoy Candelaria seconded the motion.

The motion carried by voice vote: Mr. Williams; aye; Mr. Candelaria, aye; Mr. Cain, aye; Mr. Gomez, aye; Mr. Lovato, aye.

REPORTS:

Jason Padilla – Mountainair FFA – 3rd place in State – Homesite – short presentation:

No report.

New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts (NMCCD):

The annual meeting will be held on August 15 at the Edgewood SWCD office.

The district manager reported on a letter from NMCCD regarding a letter received from the vice-president of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) asking for a meeting between

the NACD, NMACD and NMCCD. She explained that the intent of the meeting was to bring the two associations back together. The executive committee has indicated that NMCCD is not interested in re-joining NMACD but wishes to be recognized as an equal member of the NACD. The national association is currently holding its meeting in Santa Fe to which the tribal governments have been invited on the last day of the meeting. The district manager hopes to attend that session. In addition, the district manager reported that another \$75,000 grant has been received from the Healy Foundation, which will allow NMCCD to hire a lobbyist to monitor legislative discussions and actions.

South Central Mountain RC&D:

No report.

EBWPC:

A meeting was canceled.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

OTHER:

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN for NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, September 13, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. at the Natural Resource Conservation Center, 1206 South Highway 55 in Mountainair, NM.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the board, the regular meeting of the Claunch-Pinto Board:

ACTION TAKEN:

Mr. Candelaria moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 am. Mr. Gomez seconded the motion, which carried.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

RICHARD J. SHOVELIN, SEC. – TREAS.