



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

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING February 7, 2020

Supervisors Present: Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
LeRoy Candelaria
David Cain
Robin Dunn
Jack Lockridge
Dan Williams

Absentees: Larry Gomez

Others Present: Steven Ferguson, NRCS
Ernie Taylor, USFS
Jim Wanstall, NMDA

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 8:05 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.

SUPERVISOR OATH OF OFFICE:

Discussion centered on choosing a new supervisor. Chairman Lovato suggested that Jack Lockridge be asked to fill the vacant position as a representative of the Deer Canyon Preserve, one of a number of subdivisions in the area. Dan Williams supported the suggestion. He also suggested that board members should try to think of candidates to represent the Corona area who could replace him on the board, as he has served for ten years. He thinks that the board needs someone who is currently in tune with the area since he has moved to a new community. The district manager said that it has been difficult over the past 20 years to find someone from the Corona area who is interested in serving on the board. She and Dan Williams mentioned several issues facing the community. Mr. Candelaria supported the idea that the board members represent different areas of the district.

ACTION TAKEN: David Cain moved to submit Mr. Lockridge's name to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission as an appointed supervisor. Dan Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The district manager, as a notary public, administered the oath of office to Dan Williams.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The board reviewed the agenda. **ACTION TAKEN:** LeRoy Candelaria moved to approve the agenda. Robin Dunn seconded the motion. Motion carried.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION TAKEN: David Cain moved to approve the minutes of January 10, 2020 as amended. Dan Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried. The minutes were amended on page 5 under **ADJOURN:** replace “David Cain” with “LeRoy Candelaria.”

TREASURER’S REPORT:

The board reviewed the treasurer’s report for the month of January, 2020 with accounts payable for February, 2020.

ACTION TAKEN: Dan Williams moved to approve the treasurer’s report for January, 2020 and pay the accounts payable for February, 2020. LeRoy Candelaria seconded the motion. Motion carried.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS: DFA Quarterly Financial Report:

The district manager reviewed the DFA Quarterly Financial Report and pointed out mil levy revenues received at this time. She said that the forest contractor inspector will inspect the Deer Canyon project, and then the district will be paid another \$15,000 for work done there. At this point about 32% of the revenue budgeted has come in. The budget is on schedule for expenditures – about 24%. She then reported on revenue from contracts funded by grants. The district manager has submitted the quarterly financial report, and it has been approved.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture:

Jim Wanstall’s written report is included in the board packets. Mr. Wanstall indicated that the annual mil levy rate resolution must be passed and submitted to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission in April. He commented on the 2020 Water Quality and Conservation Grant. He said that the USDA SW climate Hub is offering GIS training to NM Soil and Water Conservation Districts at no cost and referred to item number 4 in his report. Next he pointed out item number 6; it describes a new process for NMDA livestock scale inspections. Item numbers eight through twelve announce various conferences. Item number 13, the 2020 Rio Grande Water Fund RFP is another opportunity for funding as well as item 17 NMED’s section 319 grant program applications. Mr. Wanstall said that the noxious weed list and booklet are being updated and that new additions should be submitted to the NMDA.

NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:

Steven Ferguson referred the board to the NRCS written report, for February, 2020, included in the board packets. He said that he participated in a training regarding the farm bill roll out. Deadlines for CSP and EQIP are still up in the air. He announced that April Luna’s position will be filled March 30 by Joanne (Jodie) Cornwall from Washington state.

District Manager’s Report:

The district manager referred board members to her written report included in the board packets. She also said that LeRoy Candelaria met with the secretary of transportation and George Dodge, Jr., the director of local government relations for the Department of Transportation. She sent Mr. Dodge a list of our meeting dates. She hopes that the district can improve highway rights-of-way. She also heard from Joan Bybee, who owns a ranch west of Mountainair. Ms. Bybee told the district manager that she received an email from the healthy soil working group. She has been invited to participate in the soil health champions network. She is seeking an informal endorsement from the district to participate in this group. She will have a limited number of responsibilities. Mr. Wanstall said that he had heard from a contact who said that Ms. Bybee was interested in participating in this group. The mayor asked the district to plant three trees for earth day. She and Anita will meet with the mayor following today’s board meeting in the afternoon to determine the town’s intentions. **ACTION TAKEN:** Mr. Candelaria moved to authorize the district manager to participate in the town’s tree project at her discretion. Mr. Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried. The district manager went over a number of projects involving the town and the county, which have been neglected. The district manager participated in Ag Fest and she thanked Robin and Aubrey Dunn for attending and for helping. Several other districts helped out as well.

She has been asked to participate in a collaborative group in Fort Collins, Colorado in March. She will be gone from Monday through Friday. A board consensus indicated that she should attend.

CORRESPONDANCE:

The district manager disseminated a flyer announcing a meeting concerning raising cattle and said she would see that area ranchers received the information.

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):

The district manager still has to draw down \$55,0000 in WTB 2018 funds. Two inspections are being conducted today and two more will be done on Monday. When the inspections are complete, she will expend most of the funds. She has also been spending 2019 funds.

For the Estancia Basin grant, East Torraine has submitted its contracts, and the district manager has signed contracts with landowners.

She has completed the readiness items for the 2020 WTB proposals. She should find out in May whether the proposals were funded. She described the process that she has to follow because the grants are reimbursable grants.

The three Greater Rio Grande projects are larger, and have provided some challenges.

She then described problems that have occurred on Jordan Pareo's project with the Alamo Navajo crew. For instance, the crew started cutting in an area that is not part of the project.

Work on the Greater Rio Grande projects is finishing up. The three smaller projects are complete. The district manager reported on progress on several projects.

The State Forestry Grant:

The district manager said that she still doesn't have a work plan for the 2019 funding from State Forestry. Funding for 2017 and 2018 is finishing up. Most of the 2018 money will go to the state land project on Mr. Cain's lease. Care is being taken that the Ramah crew is not working in the mud so that damage to the land isn't taking place. The district manager thinks that the crew has cut well over 100 acres. The slash is being chipped and spread in accordance with EBWHRM guidelines. The project is intended to provide fire protection for the Deer Canyon Preserve.

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

The district manager said that she writes contracts for 12 soil and water conservation districts for this grant.

BNSF Railroad Project:

Vern Kohler has conducted inspections on the railroad project. Hopefully, next month grass plugs will be planted. Then the grass will be watered on a regular basis.

Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP)

Chupadera CFRP:

The district manager has received a draft report on the biological assessment. She will submit it to the State Land Office and BLM for approval. She described the locations of the projects and will provide a map to Mr. Taylor.

New 2019 CFRP Proposal – Watershed Restoration and Fuel Reduction in Bartolo Canyon in the Manzano Mountains:

The district manager said that the proposal has been reviewed and everything is in order. The proposal will need to be reviewed by the CFRP Technical Advisory Committee and they will make the recommendations to the Forest Service on the projects to be funded.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

2018 RCPP Funding:

The district manager said that an archaeologist has begun the required surveys of the project areas

When she has a schedule of work, she will go over it with Steven Ferguson and Kenneth Lujan.

Additional RCPP Funding:

An additional 2.3 million dollars will be available. A short proposal was submitted to ask for the funding. Even though the funds have been approved, a proposal is still required.

New Mexico State Park Project:

State Forestry may not put money into the project because of the hand work that is required. The district manager explained the issue of an injunction against the Forest Service because of the Spotted Owl preventing contractors from working. A working group is trying to fund projects in unaffected areas to put contractors to work. Mr. Taylor explained the issues surrounding the court case regarding the Spotted Owl.

FEMA Grant Proposal:

The district manager submitted two proposals. The district manager heard from her project manager who told her that she should plan on a conference call of at least an hour. The project is moving from phase one to phase two so that on-the-ground work can begin.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay, Shop Building - Report:

The district manager has submitted advertising for another contractor. If no one applies by February 24, she can hire a contractor of the district's choosing.

Cibola National Forest – Forest Plan Revision:

Ernie Taylor said that the Forest Service is in the process of doing its comment analysis for the Forest Plan revision. He explained the process that follows comment analysis.

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

No progress is being made.

Lincoln, Torrance and Socorro Transmission Line, SunZia Transmission Line:

The district manager says that she has heard that work is being done on the line.

Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:

Corona Wind Companies, Western Spirit Transmission Line:

Pattern Energy has hired two individuals as employees who used to have their own consulting firm to help respond to the Valencia County Commission, which is supposed to be submitting a letter to the governor opposing the Western Spirit Transmission Line. She explained the basis of the opposition. She said that work is progressing on the 501c3 application for the Corona group. The village of Duran now wants to participate in the discussions for a separate 501c3.

Mr. Lockridge reported there is a group in the Socorro area formed of many different organizations that has been working on the transmission line issue. This group has an appointment to meet with the governor's office next week. Now the effort is to try to get an underground line from the beginning of the flood plain under the river to the end of the flood plain. This is a major flyway area for the water fowl that migrate for the winter. In an article in the Washington Post, a proposal is put forth that would not permit fines or punishments for the unintentional killing of birds. Sandhill cranes are specifically mentioned. Mr. Williams said that the same issues were discussed at the county commission with attention to the Western Spirit line. Opposition was expressed to above ground lines. Under ground lines will be quite expensive and environmentally sensitive because of going under the river. Further discussion occurred regarding Pattern Energy's lessening interest in cooperating with communities and in its changing organization. The district manager said that Pattern has filed a new application with

the Public Utilities Commission mainly to change the route of the Western Sprit line. The district's law firm will notify the district manager when the whole application is filed.

NMDA – Healthy Soils Program Proposal – Rodney Garcia and Janis Pauliks:

The district manager will contact Mr. Garcia and Mr. Pauliks next week.

Personnel Policy – Absenteeism and Tardiness:

No report yet.

Capital Outlay Requests:

The district manager submitted a request for \$125,000 to buy two work trucks, a one-ton truck and a three-quarter ton truck.

NMDA – Healthy Soils Program Proposal – Education – Robin Dunn:

A proposal was submitted to get support to send Felipe Lovato and Robin Dunn to a healthy range land workshop in Cimarron in June.

NEW BUSINESS:

Re-organization of the board

Mr. Candelaria volunteered to serve as the vice chairman. A new secretary/treasurer will be selected at the March meeting. There will be a resolution at the next board meeting to change the signatures on the bank cards.

ACTION TAKEN: Mr. Williams moved to nominate LeRoy Candelaria as vice chairman of the Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District. Robin Dunn seconded the motion. The motion carried.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts:

No report.

South Central Mountain RC&D:

A meeting was held, which Felipe Lovato was unable to attend.

Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee:

A meeting will be held in February. The committee voted to have Torrance County as its fiscal agent.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

OTHER:

Mr. Lovato pointed out that the district manager uses her car as though it is a district vehicle.

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN for NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, March 6, 2020 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:

LeRoy Candelaria moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 am. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Claunch-Pinto SWCD

February 7, 2020

Regular Meeting

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

SEC. – TREAS.