



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
September 10, 2021**

Supervisors Present: Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
Leroy Candelaria
Robin Dunn
Jack Lockridge
Dale Rose

Absentees: David Cain
Larry Gomez

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Roy Gibson
Kenneth Lujan, NRCS
Ernest Taylor, Mountainair Ranger District
Katheryn Taylor, CPSWCD, volunteer
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, both in person and via Zoom at 8:05 a.m.

Welcome Attendees:

The chairman welcomed those present and thanked them for joining the meeting. 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:** Jack Lockridge moved to approve the agenda. LeRoy Candelaria seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Jack Lockridge.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION TAKEN: Dale Rose moved to approve the minutes of August 6, 2021 as read. Leroy Candelaria seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote with one abstention: Felipe Lovato, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Robin Dunn.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of August, 2021 with accounts payable for September. The district manager reported that the district's bank has not yet rebated some of past charges, and fees are still being charged. Mr. Lockridge will attend to the matter.

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve the treasurer's report for August, 2021 and pay the accounts payable for September, 2021. Robin Dunn seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice

vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The district manager reported on extensive repairs needed on one of the district's trucks, and she explained how she planned to pay for the repairs. She expressed confidence in the mechanic and listed some of the repairs and parts that were needed including removing the lifts from the truck. Robin Dunn raised the possibility of making a new vehicle a higher priority on the ICIP. She also said that buying new trucks instead of used ones would be in the best interests of the district. The district manager said that she would ask the mechanic to check out the condition of the trucks on a quarterly basis to try to avoid large, expensive repairs. Discussion followed.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture:

The Department of Agriculture's written report is included in the board packets. Mr. Wanstall commented on his duties concerning the wolf program and reimbursing ranchers for depredation on livestock. He reported on the NMDA's efforts to build up the agricultural workforce by offering incentives to hire interns – paying up to 50% of the cost of hiring interns to work in ag businesses. There are currently 11 applications.

Next Mr. Wanstall reported on the healthy soil program. He said there may be an additional billion dollars infused into the program in the next legislative session. He encouraged the Claunch-Pinto district to apply for a grant.

He then asked about the district's readiness for the 2021 elections for supervisors. The district manager reported that David Cain's name will appear on the ballot unopposed. Mr. Gomez' name will not appear on the ballot for position 4. His term runs until the end of the year. An appointment for the position can be made in January.

The district manager asked Mr. Wanstall whether the webinar about the connection between soil health and water conservation will be recorded. He will find out and let her know.

NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:

The written report is included in board member's packets. Mr. Lujan thanked those who attended the 2021 local Work Group for FY 2022. He thought it was productive and went really well. He told participants that CSP went really well with about \$5 million dollars going to producers. EQIP turned out better than he expected. He requested and got over a million additional dollars

Some producers from the Claunch-Pinto District expressed concern that small producers can't compete for EQIP funds, so Mr. Lujan will address these concerns in his recommendation to the state office to start a small acre initiative. He suggested that a cost share program in the Claunch-Pinto District would be helpful to small producers. He mentioned that all federal employees may be required to get COVID vaccinations; however, a final decision has not been made yet.

Mr. Lujan reported that there are a few producers who will receive a little additional money from COVID relief funds for pipelines only. He explained the conditions that need to be met and that he is working on it. Anyone with questions or concerns can contact Kenneth Lujan.

District Manager's Report:

Report on 1400 chipper:

The district manager reported that the mechanic needs to fix a small problem on the 1400 chipper, and then it will be ready to go.

CORRESPONDANCE:

No report.

UPDATE ON GRANTS – the District Manager's Report to the Board: September 10, 2021:

Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board (WTB):

Claunch-Pinto SWCD

September 10, 2021

Regular Meeting

The WTB has sent out its solicitations for proposals. The district manager has to consult with the pertinent committees to find out if the members want to submit proposals. She has prepared all of the paper work and has submitted a notice of interest. In addition, the resolutions to submit the WTB Submission of Application for EBWHRM and WTB Submission of Application for GRGWA are on the agenda under new business. However, the GRGWA and the EBWHRM still need to agree to submit proposals. There is a substantial amount of money still unspent due to the complications and limitations of the pandemic.

2019 GRGWA Projects:

We have completed all the current projects. We have a contract with NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute for monitoring with a balance of \$18,578.02. The institute has submitted its final invoices. We will be mailing the check in the next few days. We have approximately \$27,000.00 to be used for re-sprout treatments on completed projects. The re-sprout treatments are working well if the re-sprouts can be treated for 3 - 5 years. We have not been able to get the remaining re-sprout treatments completed for various equipment problems and the weather. Hopefully, we will be able to work on some of these treatments in the spring.

The district manager is working with two contractors. She conducted a pre-work site visit yesterday around Abiquiu. The contractor, Larry Taylor from Grants, should begin work around September 22. His hand crew will also work on projects in the Glorieta area.

The district manager has a contract out for signature with Restoration Solutions to work on their projects starting soon.

2019 WTB Funds – EBWHRM Projects:

East Torrance SWCD has completed three projects. Edgewood SWCD has contracted most of their portion of the funding. They have one project completed and ready for inspection. Claunch-Pinto SWCD has the Cain State Land Project which has been completed, Deer Canyon Gate Project and a couple of small projects that are contracted. We have contracted with SWCA Environmental Consultants to continue the monitoring project.

2020 WTB Grants:

We have been funded for both the Estancia Basin Watershed Health Restoration and Monitoring Project and the Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance project. Both proposals were for \$600,000/ea. Both grants closed on December 18, 2020. East Torrance SWCD has started planning their portion of this EBWHRM grant. Edgewood and Claunch-Pinto SWCD will be working on a defensible space project in Chilili. The district manager advertised a request for proposals for the Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance. There are nine projects for a total of 283 acres. The technical committee has reviewed the proposals. The field coordinator and the district manager have met with two of the proponents during the week of May 10th to review their proposal and the project site. The technical committee has finalized their recommendations for the GRGWA. The GRGWA met on July 20th by ZOOM. The technical committee recommendations for the approved projects were approved. The district manager will be writing contracts during the first couple of weeks in August 2021.

2021 WTB Proposals:

The EBWHRM and GRGWA proposals were both funded. The district manager is working on the readiness items so that the NM Finance Authority's lawyer can draw the paperwork for signatures on both grants.

NM State Forestry Grants:

2018 and 2019 NFL Funding:

The district manager is in the process of drawing down the 2018 funds. She has money for 2019 and 2020. There is a little over \$600,000 for projects on the ground. There are some projects that are in the works.

The work plan for this project has been signed by the district and State Forestry. The district has received a notice to proceed on this funding. The district has met with NM Department of Transportation to design a thinning project on the highway right of way on NM HWY 42 on the north side of Cedarvale. This project will be approximately 56.5 acres. The slash will be chipped, and the wood will be stacked on the right of way for

locals to pick up. The district has three applications at this time we can use this funding for.

2020 NFL Funding:

The district manager has received a draft work plan for this funding to review. She will get the work plan reviewed and back to State Forestry before the end of August.

Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) Funding:

The district has been funded for the Box Canyon Project in the amount of \$375,000.00. The district has completed the 3 acres plus 2 acres of hand thinning on arch. sites to completing the district's portion of the work on Box Canyon. We have a contract with New Mexico Forest Industry Association, which has a contract with Restoration Solutions. Their crew will go to Box Canyon next week. NM Forest Industry also has a contract to work on about 85 acres in the Gallinas, Corona area. Perhaps the district can apply for a CFRP implementation proposal to do more work in that area. All of the NEPA work has been done there.

BNSF Railroad Project:

The district will continue to monitor the area for any erosion issues.

Collaborative Forest Restoration Projects:

The district manager distributed pictures of the old Ojo Peak project after the fire. The "before" picture taken in 2014 shows the devastation caused by the fire. The "after" picture was taken recently and shows the recovery that has taken place since the fire. The district manager said that this area is supposed to be the driest in the Manzanos; yet now there are willows, cotton woods and water pools. She said that more pictures will be taken and a poster board created to use in presentations. The pictures will also be put on the district's website. She sent the pictures to Ian Fox, the CFRP coordinator at the time and to Karen Lissard, the district ranger at the time. Areas below and above the project area have not made the same recovery. She will get pictures taken of these areas.

Chupadera CFRP:

The grant ended on August 31. Not all of the cultural resource surveys have been completed, but the district manager will submit the surveys she has as well as other required documentation and deliverables on the grant, to the State Land Office. Some money will be deducted from the project as well as some of the contractor's pay. The contracting office will determine how much the contractor will be paid. WTB funds will make up for the deficit in funding after it is determined how much CFRP will pay. The district manager explained the difficulties associated with completing this project, including the lack of cooperation of the contractors.

New 2019 CFRP Proposal:

The project is known as Watershed Restoration and Fuel Reduction in Bartolo Canyon of the Manzano Mountains. The district manager will have a pre-work meeting with Aaron Johnson from the Forest Service and Pablo Romero of Romero Firewood, LLC, the contractor, next week. There is a little over 300 acres to cut, skid, and deck. The district manager and Mr. Johnson already expect to have to go into a fourth year because of delays that may be caused by the presence of goshawk and Mexican spotted owl habitats.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

The district manager has submitted all of her reports and has submitted an invoice, so when the money is received, SWCA can be paid.

2017 RCPP Funding:

We have one outstanding report that needs to be reviewed and approved by a tribal cultural resource department before we can pay SWCA on their final invoice.

2018 RCPP Funding:

All of the cultural resource survey reports for Mountainair have been approved by SHPO. The EZGrants.gov portal for Claunch-Pinto SWCD was set up incorrectly as Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conversation District. Therefore, the district manager has to submit all of her financial and written reports to the NRCS RCPP project coordinator, who makes sure the reports are added to the portal so that the district doesn't show past due.

Additional RCPP Funding:

The district manager is working on the additional funding of about 2.3 million dollars, which was 2015 RCPP funding. The supplemental agreement has been completed and has been reviewed in Washington D.C., so now the district manager can meet with the project coordinator to sign the agreement. Following the meeting, the district manager can begin the process of advertising an RFP.

A renewal proposal has been submitted on the 2017 funds -- \$967,000. The district manager explained how she handled the matching funds.

New Mexico State Park Project:

The wood from the project is being sold to the land grant heirs from Tejique, Torreon, and Manzano. The chairperson of the Torreon land grant sent her son to pay for the wood, pick it up and deliver it to the buyers. Forty cords of wood is designated for each land grant, one per family.

FEMA Grant Proposal: Grant No. FEMA-4197-DR-NM-11-01:

The grant is complete. The district manager had to turn some of the money back because it wasn't possible to finish some of the on-the-ground work. The district manager will use some State Forestry money to finish the number of acres that were promised to the land owner.

Hazard Mitigation Project - Sub-grant Application HMGP – 5281:

The district manager expects that a little over \$500,000 will be forthcoming from Homeland Security. It may be possible to address some of the arroyo concerns presented at the local work group meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay:

New Chipper:

The district manager reported that the memorandum of agreement was submitted to the NMDA, but she is waiting for the final executed document and the notice to proceed. Then she can send out a request for proposals on the equipment.

Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy, Corona Wind Companies, Western Spirit Transmission Line:

The district manager understands that the projects are moving along well and the Western Spirit Line should be finished by the end of the year.

Sun Zia Transmission Line:

The district manager said that she sent an email to the district's lawyer concerning a meeting with Pattern and its attorney to reach a written agreement on the conservation work that should be done on the Sun Zia Transmission line. She explained that Pattern wants to come to an agreement with the district in order to avert a request by the district to become an intervener. She would bring back any proposed plan for board approval.

Mr. Lockridge mentioned other groups with objections to aspects of the Sun Zia line and asked whether they are involved in similar talks. He is concerned about the way that Pattern does business and that it will use the district's name to promote its own interests.

Paperwork through the Forest Service for an Incident Command Center:

The district manager said that she is still working on submitting the required paperwork. She wants to propose an incident command center and helicopter pad at Deer Canyon.

Personnel Handbook:

The district manager will arrange a meeting with Jack Lockridge, Larry Gomez and herself to review the handbook and work on wording for the drug policy and workman's compensation.

District Salary and Wages:

The district manager sent a spreadsheet to board members setting out the salaries and wages of the district's employees for the 2022 budget. She pointed out that a one dollar an hour raise was approved for the employees that she is responsible for. She explained that the raise was based on their meeting district expectations concerning attendance, punctuality, and performance of their duties. She said that these employees deserved their raise.

The district manager explained that she has been satisfied with her own salary, that she has always been grateful that the district chose her for her job, and that she loves her job. She talked about her history of employment and how she feels about her salary.

She reported on the number and kind of employees of other area districts: East Torrance, Edgewood, Taos, East Rio Arriba, Valencia, Socorro. She also reported on these districts' amounts of income from the mil levy compared to Claunch-Pinto's income from the mil levy, which is on the low end. She explained why the Claunch-Pinto district decided not to include Mountainair in its mil levy due to the challenging circumstances of its residents. She also explained that the district would have to go out on a referendum to include Mountainair and what that effort would entail.

Any increases to employee salaries depends on the amount of income received by the district balanced against other demands on the budget. The district manager encouraged board members to become involved in determining how increasing salaries of district employees might be achieved. Mr. Lockridge reported on the reasoning of the budget committee based on the district manager's recommendations. He said that he has been told that the Claunch-Pinto district does more than any other district in the state and does it with less. Ms. Dunn suggested that the district manager should receive the same raises that other employees enjoy.

The district manager reminded the board that a contingency plan needs to be developed for the future when she and Vern Kohler retire. She asked the board to decide the level that it wants the district to operate at. Mr. Candelaria said that kudos should be awarded to the district's board for the positive way that the members work together.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution No. 05 – 2022 WTB Submission of Application for EBWHRM:

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve Resolution No. 05 – 2022. Dale Rose seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye.

Resolution No. 06 – 2022 WTB Submission of Application for GRGWA:

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve Resolution No. 06 – 2022. Leroy Candelaria seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Leroy Candelaria, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye.

Consideration of Having a Small Museum for Past Farming and Ranching Activities:

Felipe Lovato gave credit to the district manager for bringing up the idea for a museum. Other board members supported the idea and said that they had items that they could donate. Ms. Rose said that she could serve as a support person on the interpretation side.

Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful, a Resolution:

A discussion followed on resolutions opposing the federal government's "30 by 30" program that the district manager provided to the board for information only. The district manager said that the board needs to get more information on this issue. She explained why the board needs more information and why the issue need to be followed. The issue of the definition of the actual amount of land protected in New Mexico and what the real goal of the program was discussed.

FY 2020 – 2021 Annual Report:

The district manager said that she is working on finalizing the report.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts:

No report.

South Central Mountain RC&D:

The district manager said that a meeting was held. She said that work is being done in the Sacramento and Cloud-Croft areas.

Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee:

The district manager said that a new vice chair was elected, and that the group, including Bernalillo, Santa Fe, and Tarrant counties, is still working on deep well exploration.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

OTHER:

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN for NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, October 1, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. at the Natural Resource Conservation Center, 1206 South Highway 55 in Mountainair, NM.

OTHER:

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the board, the regular meeting of the Claunch-Pinto Board, Jack Lockridge moved to adjourn at 10:20 a.m. Dale Rose seconded the motion.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

David Cain, SECRETARY