



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
June 2, 2023**

Supervisors Present: Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
David Cain
Gerald Chavez
Jack Lockridge
Dale Rose

Absentees: Robin Dunn
Larry Gomez

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Roy Gibson, Associate Supervisor
Kenneth Lujan, NRCS
Katie Mechenbier, S&W Cons. Spec., NMDA
Ernest Taylor, Mountainair Ranger District
Katheryn Taylor, volunteer

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District (CPSWCD) was called to order by Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman, both in person and via Zoom at 8:00 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.

SUPERVISOR OATH OF OFFICE:

Felipe Lovato administered the oath of office for the position of District Supervisor to Gerald Chavez.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The board reviewed the agenda. **ACTION TAKEN:** Jack Lockridge moved to approve the agenda. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION TAKEN: David Cain moved to approve the April minutes as read. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer's Report for April 2023:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of April, 2023.

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve the treasurer's report for April, 2023. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

Treasurer's Report for the month of May, 2023:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of May, 2023.

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve the treasurer's report for May, 2023. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:**Interim Budget for FY2023 – 2024:**

Mr. Lovato thanked Mr. Lockridge, Ms. Rose, Mr. Gomez, and the district manager for developing the interim budget.

ACTION TAKEN: Mr. Cain moved to approve the interim budget for FY2023 – 2024. Mr. Lockridge seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote. Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

REPORTS:**New Mexico Department of Agriculture:**

The NMDA's written report for June was provided to the board members. Katie Mechenbier said that she will be the permanent contact with the NMDA for Claunch-Pinto. She highlighted the relevant items for the district in her report.

- The Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) will meet June 20.
- The Point System Worksheet is due to the SWCC and NMDA specialist on July 15.
- The deadline to provide information to the county tax assessor(s) on mil levies is July 15.
- July 30 is the deadline to submit the fourth quarter budget report.
- Michael Purdy was hired to fill Jim Wanstall's position.
- FY24 Healthy Soil Program grant notifications to be made late June, mandatory grantee training will be held on July 10.
- Members of the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association (NMCGA), New Mexico Wool Growers, Inc. (NMWGI), New Mexico Federal Lands Council (NMFLC) and New Mexico CowBelles will meet jointly at the Ruidoso Convention Center June 4th-6th.
- USDA's CLEAR30 offers producers with expiring voluntary conservation contracts longer term options.
- Agricultural producers can begin to apply for two new important programs for revenue losses, from 2020 and 2021 natural disasters or the COVID-19 pandemic. Both programs equitably fill gaps in earlier assistance.
- The USDA is seeking nominations for four positions on the Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production.
- The PLC grant process is now open for 2023.
- The United States Forest Service is offering the opportunity to submit comments on adapting its current policies to protect, conserve, and manage the national forests and grasslands for climate resilience. Comments are due in writing by June 20.

NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:

The NRCS Mountainair Field Office written report is included in board member's packets. Mr. Lujan reported on the status of his team. He said that his offices were short staffed, down about half. He explained how he would be providing support to get the work done in affected offices and what his future staffing goals are. Several positions have been advertised and one offer has been made.

Increased funding was noted with its possible positive effects on producers, especially those with small holdings. However, without enough staff, getting the money into the hands of producers will be a challenge. Adequate productivity by current staff is an issue in some offices.

The status of the programs was the next topic. One hundred percent obligation for all EQIP programs are due July 7th. Staff is in the process of getting everything completed. Contracts for RCPP 2018 funds may be delayed until August or September. EQIP funding may total 3.4 to 3.5 million dollars. The district manager mentioned a slight change in ranking for 2017 RCPP funding, which she thinks will help small ranchers and farmers.

Next year's local work group will probably be hosted by the Edgewood SWCD. Mr. Lujan would like for the meeting to be in person and located in Encino at the end of August or early in September. He hopes someone from the state office will attend. A discussion followed on establishing a special watershed and funding for it and on the use of WaterSMART and Energy Efficiency grant funds. The district manager said that if a request is made at the local work group for a special watershed and funding is provided, efforts must be made to make sure that participants apply for the funding.

Mr. Chavez asked for information on the acronyms of programs, what resource concerns they address and what the funding supports for producers. Mr. Lujan reported on the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) funding. Last week was the deadline to apply for this funding. The issues concerning distribution of FEMA funding to address losses from fire were discussed.

District Manager's Report:

No report.

CORRESPONDANCE:

The SunZia and Southwest Transmission project decision has been made and will move forward. At first, one transmission line will come through followed by a second one. Including the Western Spirit line, there will be three lines. The electricity from the SunZia line will go to Arizona and California.

A letter from the New Mexico counties was received saying that the Claunch-Pinto SWCD has been awarded \$20,000 from the wildfire reduction grant program to update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The updated plan then allows for the district to apply for Hazardous Fuels on Non-Federal Lands (NFL) funding as well as for Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) funding. Torrance County was also funded for \$20,000. Next week, the district manager will meet with the county emergency manager to discuss running the two grants parallel to each other so that the funding will go further. For example, joint public meetings can be held. Maps from another grant can be used for both the district and county.

The district manager received an email from Linda Jaramillo, the Torrance County clerk reminding her about the upcoming election. Felipe Lovato and Robin Dunn will be on the ballot.

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

The District Manager's Report to CPSWCD Board – Update on Grants, June 2:

The district manager stated that she would highlight information on some of the grants.

New Mexico State Forestry Grant -- Hazardous Fuels on Non-Federal Lands (NFL):

The district will receive an additional \$260,000 for the FY 2023 proposal.

Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP):

Most of that work on the CFRP has been done except for the monitoring. Monitoring will be scheduled during the last part of July. Cody Stropki will be working with a high school student forestry team to complete the monitoring.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Grant:

The district manager is finishing up the paperwork on the 2017 renewal. A small amount of money for administration is included this time.

FEMA Projects:

The district manager explained that Torrance County is supposed to work on its Hazardous Mitigation Plan update at the same time as the district is working on its phase two FEMA projects, which are funded for \$410,000. If the plan and projects aren't completed in a timely manner, the funding will be lost. She explained some of the problems concerned with working on the FEMA projects: she is working with her third or fourth mitigation specialist just in the last year; FEMA's entire staff has changed, so the new people are uninformed and are not up to speed; the phase two funding is ready to go, but approval of a budget addendum by FEMA has been pending since December, so the funds can't be spent. She said that at this time, it has been very difficult to work with both FEMA and Homeland Security.

SWCC Grant:

The district manager will meet with Codi Stropki next week regarding the Soil and Water Conservation Commission grant and the following week with him and Joe Zabrowski regarding the grant. There will be work sessions with the Claunch-Pinto board to develop a five-year and ten-year plan for the district. An example of such long-range planning is that the board directed the district manager when she was hired 26 years ago to bring about the construction of a building and natural resource conservation demonstration projects on the district's property.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay:

The district manager is waiting to receive the agreement for the FY 2023 funding, and then she will work with Roy Gibson to buy the equipment. Mr. Gibson described his history in ranching, his education and background in civil engineering and his commitment to conserving the natural environment and the planet for future generations. He expressed his appreciation to the board for welcoming him as an associate supervisor.

**Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:
Corona Wind Companies**

Dale Rose reported that the radar lights are now working on the wind towers and are not lighted unless there is airplane traffic.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution No. 20 – 2023: 2023 – 2024 Wildlife Risk Reduction Program for Rural Communities:
ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve Resolution No. 20 – 2023. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion was approved by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

REPORTS:

NM Coalition of Conservation Districts:

No report.

South Central Mtn. RC&D:

No report.

EBWPC:

The committee will hold a meeting next Thursday. The committee has asked the Estancia Basin Resource Association to pay for water monitoring. If that request is denied, SWCA will be asked for help.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

OTHER:

Claunch-Pinto SWCD
June 02, 2023
Regular Meeting

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN for NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, July 14, 2023, 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, David Cain moved to adjourn. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

DAVID CAIN, SECRETARY