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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
February 2, 2024**

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

Absentees:

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Roy Gibson, Associate Supervisor
Kim Kostelnik, SAKAK Natural Resource Consulting
Kenneth Lujan, NRCS
Crystal Medina, New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute
Codi Stropki, SWCA
Ernie 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

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: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Jack Lockridge; Gerald Chavez; Aubrey Dunn.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve the minutes for December 1, 2023. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye.

TREASURER’S REPORT and APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

Treasurer’s Report for December 2023:

The board reviewed the treasurer’s report for the month of December, 2023.

Treasurer’s Report for January, 2024:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of January, 2024 with accounts payable for February.

ACTION TAKEN: Aubrey Dunn moved to approve the treasurer's reports for December, 2023 and January, 2024. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge; Gerald Chavez; Aubrey Dunn.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Financial Statement Format – Aubrey Dunn:

A discussion took place on revising the format of the financial statement to provide a whole picture of the accounts, including accounts receivable. It was suggested that the district manager get an updated version of Quickbooks.

Audit – Aubrey Dunn:

The district manager said that she expected the auditor to come to the office again when the audit is approved by the state auditor's office. She explained that the district's auditor, Dan Austin, is in the third year of his contract. She will have to go out on a bid for a contract for subsequent audits. Mr. Austin can submit a bid during this process.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture:

The NMDA's written report for February was provided to the board members. The district manager noted that she will attend a zoom meeting on NMDA's Legacy Funding regarding the Land of Enchantment Fund, which is specifically intended for SWCDs and NM Watershed Districts overseen by SWCDs. Links to information on the work sessions are included in the announcement. She also mentioned the item on the Livestock Scale Inspection Program which accepts requests for inspections annually during the months of January through March.

NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:

Mr. Lujan reported that the ranking deadline for regular EQIP is February 16 and for IRA EQIP applications is April 26, 2024. The Mountainair office has 29 pending applications, including 1 EQIP--IRA application. He hopes that number can be increased. An additional 30 million dollars has been allocated to the state. He described the differences between EQIP and EQIP – IRA and the work involved in processing the applications.

Grant funding for educational workshops was discussed.

Mr. Lujan explained the issues involved with archaeology clearances.

He announced a community meeting sponsored by Santa Rosa for Sunday, Feb. 4 to encourage producers to submit applications for funding. He said that there is a lot of money available. He will attend the meeting to explain what information is needed to submit applications. He also said that a prescribed burn workshop would take place in June and that he would provide more information. He especially invited board members to attend. There is money available for producers to contract with NRCS to carry out burns. The district manager will calendar the workshop. Discussion followed on the rationale for carrying out the burns.

District Manager's Report:

The district manager reported that she completed approximately \$650,000 in reimbursements on grants. She finished all the W-2 forms. Seventeen employees worked for the district in 2023.

CORRESPONDANCE:

The district manager received thank you notes from Dalli and Macklee Cain for the add-on that the district did for the fair. She also received a thank you from Corona students for the district's support of the Corona Buyers Club to buy an animal at the Lincoln County Fair. She received a Christmas card from the Quivera Coalition. She sent a memo from the Cebola National Forest on prescribed burns to the board. The Mountainair Ranger District will do a broadcast burn on 543 acres in the Capilla

reduction area. Thirty-six million dollars is available for water quality infrastructure projects that Manzano might benefit from. A pamphlet was received from the state environment department on ground water discharge permits. She presented two baskets of snacks to the board. One was received from SWCA, and the other was from the Isleta Pueblo from its Feast Day celebration.

UPDATE ON GRANTS, February, 2024:

Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board (WTB):

[The district manager reported that she closed out one Water Trust Board grant and is starting work for both the Estancia Basin and Greater Rio Grande grants. The district's proposals for the 2024 WTB funds are ranked one and two.]

2021 EBWHRM WTB Funds: The district manager is in the process of drawing down the remaining EBWHRM funds to close out this grant. This should be completed next week.

.2021 GRGWA WTB Funds: The district manager is in the process of drawing down the remaining GRGWA funds to close out this grant. This should be completed next week

2023 WTB Grants: The Board has the grant documentation for the 2023 EBWHRM and GRGWA grants so the Board can approve the resolutions for the Chairman and Secretary to sign these documents. The closing on the grants will be December 29, 2023. I will have reimbursements ready for both of these grants in January 2024. Both field coordinators are working on requests for projects, so we can move these projects forward.

2024 WTB Grants: The two proposals for the 2024 WTB grant cycle are on the Water Trust Board list for legislative approval. This does not mean our proposals will be funded. The district manager has a 2024 WTB Readiness Application Training on December 7th. The district manager will be submitting the first set of readiness items in late December or early January for these two proposals.

NM State Forestry Grants:

[The district manager said that she is in the process of closing out one grant. There are two other grants plus the Highway 337 project. She is working on getting approval from the state land office for the Highway 55 project.]

2020 NFL Funding – The district has started submitting reimbursements for this funding. These funds must be spent by December 31, 2023. The Bearcat mastication project on State Land has been completed and inspected. We have a contractor looking at a 100-acre project on the Chilili Land Grant.

2022 NFL Funding –The work plan for this funding has been signed by the district. The district has received the signed work plan and been given a notice to proceed on this grant. We will start expending these funds right after the first of the year.

2023 NFL Funding – The District has been notified their FY2023 NFL proposal has been approved for funding. State Forestry is waiting for the US Forest Service to release the funding for this grant before we have paperwork to sign.

State Forestry – Funding for a Liaison – The district was requested by NM State Forestry to be the fiscal agent and contractor to hire a sub-contractor to act as a liaison for the EMNRD, Forestry Division with the Hermit's Peak-Calf Canyon Economic Recovery line of Effort's Timber Task Force. The district contracted with New Mexico Forest Industry Association to act as a liaison for EMNRD, Forestry Division.

BNSF Railroad Project:

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

Collaborative Forest Restoration Projects:

[Regarding the 2019 funding, the district manager thanked Mr. Taylor for helping her to get a bird survey. She mentioned that she is making arrangements for two of the students who worked with Codi Stropki on the monitoring project to make a presentation to the board on the Bartolo project.]

Watershed Restoration and Fuel Reduction in Bartolo Canyon of the Manzano Mountains:

SWCA Environmental Consultants worked with three high school students to conduct the field monitoring on this project. The students will give a presentation of their findings in October or November. The District Field Technician and District Manager met with the forest health program coordinator for EMNRD Forestry Division to look at some bug problems we had on some private land and we also looked at the Douglas Fir moth on the Bartolo CFRP. We have decided to add the Douglas Fir moth infestation to our Bartolo monitoring in the early summer. The forest health program coordinator will be coming out to work with our student monitoring crew. The district manager and Gerald Chavez, Board member met with the Pablo Romero and the Forest Service timber management technician on the Bartolo project to discuss problems on the project, a fire plan, and fire equipment on all of Pablo's equipment. We also discussed getting some additional acres flag so Pablo can get the work completed. The district manager is working with the Forestry Program Manager for the Cibola to get an extension on this project for the 4th year. The Forestry Program Manager is planning to start working with the contracting officer within the next month.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

[All of the agreements on the Regional Conservation Partnership Program have been signed. The district manager has funding for workshops for the whole area.]

2018 RCPP Funding – The majority of the \$327,985.62 for the 2018 RCPP has been contracted. SWCA will be starting the cultural resource surveys on the project associated with this funding within the next couple of weeks.

2019 RCPP Funding – This is the renewal of the 2015 RCPP funding. There was \$1,781,286.43 available for producer contracting within the NCNMWRP during the EQIP sign up period that ended late year. The majority of this funding is in the process of being contracted. The district has \$416,404.62 available for cultural resource surveys, workshops and a RCPP brochure.

Additional RCPP Funding – The district was notified that NRCS found the 2017 RCPP renewal funding in the amount of \$969,225. The district has received the agreement with all of the signatures.

FEMA Grant Proposal:

[The district manager is still waiting for reimbursements so that SWCA can be paid. The department of finance and administration has yet to issue a purchase order.]

Hazard Mitigation Project - HMGP 5281 Sub Grant Agreement:

The district received a new sub-grant agreement to sign. The sub-grant agreement has been returned to the district with all of the signatures, so the district can proceed with the projects associated with this funding.

Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) Grant (Building Capacity to Increase Conservation and Build Resilience at SWCDs across New Mexico Project):

Cody Stropki, SWCA, Joe Zebrowski, New Mexico Highlands University, Crystal Medina and Alejandro Collins, New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute, Kim Kostelnik, Sakak Natural Resource Consulting, and the district manager have met once a month for the past 4 months to work on the timeline for the project and start preparing documents related to resources for this project. The goals of the project are: 1) to develop a planning document to guide CPSWCD over the next decade and beyond; 2) Development of an electronic capacity building document that will benefit future managers of CPSWCD. The remaining timeline for this project is as follows:

October-December 2023 – Begin development of planning document and storymap/hubsite

January – March 2024 – Partner/Stakeholder engagement meeting

April - June 2024 – Continued Development of planning document and storymap/hubsite

July – September 2024 – Begin finalizing planning document

October – December 2024 – Begin finalizing storymap/hubsite

January – June 2024 – Final reporting and submission of planning document and storymap/hubsite.

New Mexico State Land Projects:

The district has three additional State Land projects we are working on with the State Land Office.

New Mexico Department of Transportation Project:

The district is working with Lawrence Crane, District Forester for the Bernalillo Office, EMNRD – Forestry Division and Andrew Alderete, NM Department of Transportation (NMDOT) on the remaining paperwork that needs to be completed prior to starting any work on the HWY 337 project. We have all of the cultural survey work completed and SHPO approval on the HWY 337 project. NMDOT has their traffic control roadway permit approved. The final practice plan has been sent to NMDOT for their signature. The EMNRD – Forestry Department is waiting for the practice plan to be returned to the district, so they can get the final work plan signed by their legal department. This project is 92.6 acres - \$205,325.00.

New Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC):

The district is working with Torrance County on updates for both Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP). The District and Torrance County will be working together over the next year to update these plans. SWCA is the contractor for these updates. SWCA has been working on the maps need for the updates. The first CORE team meeting was held on November 29 2023 in McIntosh. There were thirteen people in attendance. The timeline for this work is:

2nd CORE Team Meeting – February/March 2024

3rd CORE Team Meeting – April 2024

Public Outreach

In person/virtual public meeting – TBD 2024

Gather Data – On-going (February 2024)

Establish community base maps – December 2023

Complete desktop risk and hazard analysis – January 2024

Complete on-the ground risk and hazard assessment – March/April 2024

Develop recommendation strategies and actions – ongoing (April 2024)

Develop the draft community wildfire protection plans – May 2024

Complete the final community wildfire protection plans – June 2024

Funding for Small Acreage Landowners:

The district manager has worked with the Tri-County Committee and NM Foundation to obtain \$50,000 in funding for some small projects for the small acreage landowners. This funding will need to be spread across the three SWCDs. We are still working out the criteria for this funding.

The district has the following projects either contracted or ready to contract as we have the funding and contractors available:

Project Status	Acres	Project Cost
Approved	5.3	\$7,775.10
Contracted	2.0	2,001.00
Contracted	10.5	5,239.50
Approved	50.0	58,285.00
Approved	409	600,003.00
Approved	92.6	190,200.40
Contracted	2.5	5,000.00
Approved	36.0	20,220.00
Approved	48.0	70,416.00
Contracted - Completed	1.5	1,330.50
Approved	3.2	1,596.80
Approved	8.0	7,096.00
Completed	5.0	7,510.00
Approved	274.0	294,002.00
Approved	45.0	17,955.00
Completed	38.0	33,706.00
Approved	10.0	15,020.00
Approved	21.0	10,479.00
Approved	13.0	11,537.00
Approved	170.0	182,170.00
Approved	33.5	35,945.50
Completed	2.0	2,146.00
Approved	19.0	7,986.00
Approved	69.0	45,295.00
Completed	38.45	31,098.15
Contracted	166.0	183,680.00
Approved	136.0	234,872.00
Approved	143.0	246,961.00
TOTAL PROJECTS	1,851.55	\$2,329,765.95

The District has 10 more projects to plan.

Presentation on SWCC Grant -- Building Capacity to Increase Conservation and Build Resilience at SWCDs across New Mexico Project:

The participants who are working with the district manager on the project include:
Codi Stropki, watershed scientist and fire ecologist – SWCA Environmental Consultants;
Crystal Medina, collaboration program manager – New Mexico Forest and Watershed;
Restoration Institute based at Highlands University;
Alejandro Collins, collaboration technician -- New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute;
Joe Zebrowski – Highlands University;
Kim Kostelnik, SAKAK Natural Resource Consulting.

Codi Stropki gave a project overview concentrating on two emphases. Kim Kostelnik is working with the district manager and the board to update the land use plan, focusing on the district's direction for the future. Codi Stropki with Crystal Medina, Alejandro Collins and Joe Zebrowski are working on an easily accessible electronic document that compiles the knowledge and experience of the board and the district manager that can be used by future Claunch-Pinto boards and district managers as well as other SWCDs to plan for the future.

Crystal Medina went over the project timeline and reviewed the activities of the team to date. She spoke of resources that are being compiled such as the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) that will be used in the final planning document. She described the outline that has been written and mentioned this presentation, which is intended to engage the board, get input and answer questions. Later in the year, team members will participate in workshops that the district manager will arrange for. The planning document, as well as the storymap/hubsite will be finalized. The board can view sample hubsites from links in the presentation.

Codi Stropki closed by referring to the long history of working together by SWCA and the NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute. He expressed his enthusiasm for producing the hubsite and for creating a useful planning tool for both Claunch-Pinto and for other SWCDs across the state. He thanked the district manager for getting the project funded and for assembling the team. She said that the project will help the Claunch-Pinto district know where it wants to be for the next ten years.

Kim Kostelnik said that Joe Zebrowski has created maps that will show comprehensive aspects of the district including such things as the power lines and vegetation.

Mr. Lovato brought up the issue of the scarcity of water in New Mexico. He hopes that the land use plan will address depletion of water. Ms. Kostelnik said that water is a number one priority for any land use plan. Mr. Dunn said that brush control is an aspect of water depletion. Mr. Lujan added that the Mountainair office does more brush management than any other team in the state. It is a huge resource concern with the juniper trees depleting aquifers. Further discussion took place on the viability of wells.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay:

FY2022 Funded (skid steer) and FY 2023 Funded:

Roy Gibson said that he has been working with the general service department of the Department of Transportation (DOT) to piggy back on one of their skid steer contracts; however, such a possibility is not viable for skid steers. He is working with the cooperative extension services to use its procurement vehicle to buy the skid steer and trailer. At the next meeting, he will present a summary of that effort and some prices. The district manager said that these funds must be spent by the end of June.

FY2023 Capital Outlay Funded:

The district manager said that these funds do not have to be spent by the end of June.

Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:

The district manager said that she sent information regarding work stoppage on a project in Arizona to the board. Mr. Dunn described construction and damage to nearby areas here in New Mexico. He mentioned several consequences that the companies should be held accountable for. Mr. Lockridge reminded the board that the district manager requested a fire plan from the company, but it has never been presented. A discussion followed on the proliferation of noxious weeds.

Discussion:

Possible Fees for Chips: Chipper Rental Fees (\$150/day or \$750/week):

The district manager reported on the rental fees for chippers that are charged by Vermeer. Suggestions were made about possible fees that should be charged ongoing.

Mr. Lovato supported charging fees for chips. Action items concerning chipper rental fees and fees for chips will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Fill Position No. 5 – At Large Position Plus Appointed Position:

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Dunn moved to appoint Jack Lockridge to the at-large board position number 5. Mr. Cain seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Dunn moved to approve Mr. Larry Gomez as the appointed board member. Mr. Cain seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

Mr. Lovato administered the oath of office to Mr. Lockridge and Mr. Gomez.

Re-Organization of the Board:

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Lockridge moved to re-appoint Felipe Lovato as board chairman. Mr. Cain seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Dunn moved to appoint David Cain as vice-chair. Mr. Chavez seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Dunn moved to appoint Gerald Chavez as secretary. Mr. Cain seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; David Cain, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Cain moved to appoint Aubrey Dunn as treasurer. Mr. Chavez seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; David Cain, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

Resolution No. 10 – 2024 – Bank Signature Authorization:

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Dunn moved to include all board members on the bank signature authorization. Mr. Cain seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; David Cain, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Larry Gomez.

Approval of IRS Mileage Reimbursement Rate -- \$.655/mile:

ACTION TAKEN: Mr. Lockridge moved to approval of the IRS mileage reimbursement rate of \$.655/mile. Mr. Chavez seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; David Cain, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

REPORTS:

NM Coalition of Conservation Districts:

No report.

South Central Mtn. RC&D:

No report.

EBWPC:

No report.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

PUBLIC COMMENT:

OTHER:

Mr. Chavez said that some land grants are receiving revolving funding and are acquiring land, and they should be made aware of opportunities to steward the land. Other concerns include water scarcity. He volunteered to reach out to these communities regarding their concerns.

The district manager said that the board should concern itself with zoning the district, which could affect future elections of board members and involves a significant process. The district manager will put discussion of the issue on the agenda for the next board meeting.

Mr. Taylor added a comment regarding the land grant communities.

MEETINGS ATTENDED and PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, March 1, 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