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**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
June 3, 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
Christian Larson, Mountainair Ranger District, acting District Ranger
Joe Zebrowski, New Mexico Highlands University
Katheryn Taylor, Volunteer

CALL TO ORDER:

The special 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.

PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS THE DISTRICT'S INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ICIP):

Mr. Lovato opened the public meeting to discuss the district's ICIP. The district manager called attention to last year's plan. She explained that the ICIP was submitted to the legislature and would be used if the district applied for capital outlay funds or submitted a grant request. This year's list will encompass the years 2026 through 2030.

After discussion, the following priorities were established for the ICIP FY 2026 – 2030

For 2026 –

- 1 – New one ton truck
- 2 – 4-wheel drive vehicle
- 3 – Greater Rio Grande Watershed Project
- 4 – Estancia Basin Watershed Health Project
- 5 – South Claunch-Pinto Hazardous Fuels Project

For 2027 –

1 – 4-wheel drive vehicle

For 2028 –

1 – Re-surfacing driveway, and add solar panels

For 2029 –

1 – Office furniture and computer upgrades

For 2030 –

1 -- Greater Rio Grande Watershed Project

2 – Estancia Basin Watershed Health Project

3 – South Claunch-Pinto Hazardous Fuels Project

The public meeting concluded, and the June third special meeting opened at 8:15.

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, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION TAKEN: Larry Gomez moved to approve the minutes for April, 2024. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

TREASURER’S REPORT and APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

The board reviewed the treasurer’s report for the months of April and May 2024.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay Funded: FY2022 and FY 2023 – Skid Steer:

Bids Received for Skid Steer and Trailer:

Mr. Gibson reviewed the quotes received for the skid steer and trailer from John Deere, CAT, and MCT, Inc. He explained the differences in features and capabilities of the skid steers and the trailers. He said that all the quotes were within reason and pre-qualified by the Cooperative Education Services. Mr. Gibson presented his recommendations for both the skid steer and trailer and explained his reasoning, including the size of inventories and ready availability of the equipment. Mr. Gibson also recommended several attachments that would be added to the contracts. Discussion then followed on the disadvantages of buying a skid steer that requires the use of DEF. Mr. Dunn asked for additional information on the trailers, which Mr. Gibson provided. The question was raised as to whether a truck might also be bought. The district manager said that she would check on the terms of the capital outlay funding. Mr. Dunn summarized the consensus of the board on equipment purchases: skid steer -- 325G, 4 Rivers, John Deere with no DEF required for \$80,017.99; trailer -- Townmaster Deckover, 4 Rivers Towmaster for \$12, 202.40; and pallet forks and a scrap grappler.

Approval of Purchase – Skid Steer and Trailer:

ACTION TAKEN: Mr. Dunn moved to approve the purchase of the 325G skid steer for

\$80, 017,99, the Towmaster Deckover trailer for \$12,202.40 plus pallet forks and a scrap grappler. Mr. Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

NEW BUSINESS:

FY 2024 –2025 Interim Budget – Review and Approve:

Mr. Dunn said that he, Mr. Gomez, and Mr. Cain met to review the proposed interim budget. He stated that he would like to prioritize getting rid of cedar trees in the cheapest way possible to save water. He also stressed that the district's number one priority should be to hire an employee to be trained to assist in the management of the district. He is concerned about the long-term viability of the district and the need for a plan to prepare for the eventual need for a new district manager. The district manager explained that she has gotten \$30,000 from the tri-counties group that could be used to hire an employee and there is an additional \$12,000 in the district's personnel budget that can cover benefits. She is working on advertisements for the job that should be posted the following week.

The district manager then explained that the district works with a collaborative that was established in 2003. It includes soil and water conservation districts, State Forestry, Forest Service, the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute, and a State land representative when possible. The members of this group set the guidelines for how hazardous fuels and defensible space are addressed. Joe Zebrowski from Highlands University chaired the group for 15 years, and Crystal Medina from New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute is now the facilitator of the meetings. The guidelines for the practice plans that are developed by the district's field technicians were agreed on by the collaborative. She described some history of the group. She also explained that the services of John Formby, who replaced Vern Kohler and Victoria Sedillo are paid from grant funding and mentioned the reports that are required in order for the district to be reimbursed. She spoke of other sources of revenue, and then went over expenses covered in the budget, for example, vehicle insurance and chipper repairs. Mr. Lovato said that Vern Kohler used to trouble shoot issues with chippers and his expertise is no longer available. In addition, the chippers are heavily used. He also expressed his opinion of the value of the chips to the land, the appearance of the land after chipping, and the value to the community of the cords of wood gleaned from projects. The rental amounts received from the chipper and labor and other costs were also discussed. Mr. Dunn brought up the possible advantages of mastication as opposed to chipping. The district manager explained that the Estancia Basin Watershed Planning Committee sets the guidelines and prices for grant-funded projects. She also said that neither conditions nor prices of existing grant agreements and work plans in place right now can be changed at this point. Mastication is an allowed method for clearing land. A meeting will be held the following week when raising prices could be discussed, but prices can't be raised until the next grant agreement and work plan are created. Ms. Rose raised some other issues regarding mastication. One of which is that some homeowners don't like mastication and wouldn't do projects using mastication. Another issue is that smaller contractors couldn't be used because they don't have the machinery to masticate. The district manager said that she recently made a report to the Watershed and Dam Owners Association that indicated that since 2003, the district has brought in a little more than 32 million dollars in grant funding and has thinned over 55 thousand acres. Funding came from NRCS' RCCP projects, Forest Service, State land projects and private land projects. Mastication was used on a few of these projects. A contracted project is currently underway that will use mastication after the wood is removed, a choice made by the land owner.

ACTION TAKEN: Mr. Dunn moved to approve the interim budget. Mr. Chavez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

Resolution No. 12 – 2024 – ICIP:

ACTION TAKEN: Mr. Lockridge moved to approve Resolution No. 12 – 2023 – ICIP: Ms. Rose seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

OTHER:

Mr. Lovato thanked Mr. Gibson for his help in the process of buying new equipment. He also thanked Mr. Zebrowski for attending the meeting. Mr. Zebrowski expressed his appreciation for being allowed to attend and said that over the 15 years of his involvement with the Estancia Basin project, he has been really impressed by what the Claunch-Pinto board members and the district manager have accomplished in getting projects done on the ground.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

Mr. Dunn requested that an executive session be held during the next meeting. The district manager will make the appropriate arrangements to allow for board members to participate both in person and remotely.

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, July 12, 2024, 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, Mr. Lockridge moved to adjourn. Ms. Rose seconded the motion.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

DAVID CAIN, SECRETARY