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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
December 1, 2023**

**Supervisors Present:** Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman  
David Cain  
Robin Dunn  
Larry Gomez  
Jack Lockridge  
Dale Rose

**Absentees:** Gerald Chavez

**Others Present:** Dierdre Tarr, District Manager  
Aubrey Dunn  
Roy Gibson, Associate Supervisor  
Kim Kostelnik, SAKAK Natural Resource Consulting  
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 held both in person and via Zoom, and called to order by Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman, 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:** David Cain moved to approve the agenda. Dale Rose seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

**APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**ACTION TAKEN:** David Cain moved to approve the minutes for November 3, 2023. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

**TREASURER’S REPORT and APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:**

**Treasurer’s Report for November 2023:**

The board reviewed the treasurer’s report for the month of November, 2023 with accounts payable for December.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Jack Lockridge moved to approve the treasurer’s report for November, 2023 and accounts payable for December. Larry Gomez seconded the motion The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

**OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

The district manager said that the quarterly report was submitted but hasn't been approved yet. The auditor will be in the district office next week. The audit is due on December 15.

**REPORTS:**

**New Mexico Department of Agriculture:**

The NMDA's written report for December was provided to the board members. The district manager noted that the new home for the New Mexico Reforestation Center will be in Mora, NM. According to the NMDA report, "New Mexico is taking a major step in the critical process of restoring forests that have been devastated by wildfires and impacted by climate change by identifying a site for constructing a new reforestation center."

**NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:**

No report.

**District Manager's Report:**

The district manager reported that District Field Technician Vernon Kohler had complications from hip replacement surgery in November, so he can't return to work. He will retire on December 29.

**CORRESPONDANCE:**

No Report:

**UPDATE ON GRANTS, December 1, 2023:**

**The District Manager's Written Report to CPSWCD Board – Update on Grants**

Vernon Kohler, the District Field Technician, will be retiring on December 29, 2023.

**Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board (WTB):**

**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. The district manager will have reimbursements ready for both of these grants in January 2024. Both field coordinators are working on requests for projects so those projects can move 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 the proposals will be funded. The district manager has a 2024 WTB Readiness Application Training on December 7<sup>th</sup> and will submit the first set of readiness items in late December or early January for these two proposals.

**NM State Forestry Grants:.**

**2020 NFL Funding** – The district has started submitting reimbursements for this funding. The funds must be spent by December 31, 2023. The Bearcat mastication project on State Land has been completed and inspected. The district has 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. The district 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:**

##### **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 the near future. 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 4<sup>th</sup> year. The Forestry Program Manager is planning to start working with the contracting officer within the next month.

#### **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):**

**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:**

**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 Grant (Building Capacity to Increase Conservation and Build Resilience at SWCDs across New Mexico Project):**

*[The district manager said that the first core team meeting was held for the CWPP update for Torrance County and Claunch-Pinto. She mentioned the entities whose representatives attended the meeting.]*

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. All of the cultural survey work has been completed and SHPO provided 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:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> CORE Team Meeting – February/March 2024
- 3<sup>rd</sup> 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. The district is working out the criteria for this funding.

<b>Project Status</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Project Cost</b>
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

The  the	Approved	92.6	190,200.40
	Contracted	2.5	5,000.00
	Approved	36.0	20,220.00
	Approved	48.0	70,416.00
	Approved	3.2	1,596.80
	Approved	8.0	7,096.00
	Approved	274.0	294,002.00
	Approved	45.0	17,955.00
	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

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

Approved	19.0	7,986.00
Approved	69.0	45,295.00
Contracted	166.0	183,680.00
Approved	136.0	234,872.00
Approved	143.0	246,961.00
<b>TOTAL PROJECTS</b>	<b>1,851.55</b>	<b>\$2,329,765.95</b>

**The District has 10 more projects to plan.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Capital Outlay:**

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

Roy Gibson and Aubrey Dunn will work together on the purchase of the skid steer. The district manager explained that forty thousand dollars of capital outlay funds has to be spent by the end of June, 2024. One hundred thousand dollars has to be spent by the end of June 2025. Mr. Gibson reviewed steps that he has already taken in identifying a procurement method and vendors.

**Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:**

The district manager plans to invite Jeremy Turner to the January or February meeting to give an update.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Resolution No. 08 – 2024 – Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of a Water Project Grant Agreement for the EBWHRM Project:**

**ACTION TAKEN:** Jack Lockridge moved to approve Resolution No. 08 – 2024. Dale Rose seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

**Resolution No. 09 – 2024 -- Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of a Water Project Grant Agreement for the GRGWA Project:**

**ACTION TAKEN:** David Cain moved to approve Resolution No. 09 – 2024. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

**Discussion:**

**Possible Fees for Chips:**

Discussion centered on whether to charge for the chips themselves. The district manager described the circumstances under which the public gets the chips plus the amount of work involved in both in chipping and in the work involved in supplying the chips to the public.

**Chipper Rental Fees:**

The district manager reviewed what the district is currently charging and what kind of work is being done with the chippers. Other issues raised were the neglect or misuse of the chippers by some renters and the district's cost for chipper repair and maintenance. The district manager will find out what rental fees are charged in Albuquerque and present the information at the next board meeting.

**Land Use Plan Planning – Kim Kostelnik:**

Ms. Kostelnik said that she will help the board update the district's land use plan. She named those parts of the plan that board members need to update. Members should look at the list of resource concerns and determine whether they are still the board's major concerns. Ms. Kostelnik suggested that the list should be paired down and should be addressed in a more proactive manner by including action items. She said that maps are available, thanks to Joe Zabrowski, and that some of the information can be embedded in those maps. She gave examples of some concerns that are still relevant but stressed those that should be updated. She emphasized that the board should determine its concerns and then express its plan for what to do about them and how that action plan will be accomplished.

Discussion followed on what some of the major concerns should be. The lack of water was brought up. Ms. Kostelnik mentioned some discussions that she is having with other districts on the east side of the state on what they are doing concerning water scarcity related to irrigation. She also mentioned bills before congress.

Ms. Kostelnik said that climate change should be addressed as a major resource concern in the land use plan. She said that how climate resiliency can be achieved should be included. She gave the example of how the district is already improving resiliency through its thinning projects. She also mentioned soil health programs and projects carried out post wild fires that improve resiliency. Ms. Dunn suggested that the plan should focus on climate resiliency. Mr. Gibson mentioned that drought resiliency has always been an issue in New Mexico.

Ms. Kostelnik said that the state's 50-year water plan also needs to be included in the land use plan. The district manager added that the state land office's plans and efforts should be noted in the plan.

Ms. Kostelnik will guide the board in person in a discussion of what needs to be updated and added and will write a draft revision of the plan for the board's review and approval, and then she will finalize the updated plan.

**REPORTS:**

**NM Coalition of Conservation Districts:**

Ms. Kostelnik said that her work with districts on their land use plans is being supported by the NM Coalition of Conservation Districts.

**South Central Mtn. RC&D:**

No report.

**EBWPC:**

No report.

**ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:**

Mr. Gibson reported on options for buying the skid steer and its implements. One way is through the state procurement office. A second possibility may be going through the Cooperative Education Services. The third option is to write a scope of work and go out to bid. Mr. Gibson is also reviewing other aspects of the equipment needs.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**OTHER:**

**MEETINGS ATTENDED:**

**PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING:**

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:**

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, January 5, 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. Larry Gomez seconded the motion.

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FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

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DAVID CAIN, SECRETARY