



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
February 3, 2023**

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

Absentees:

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Roy Gibson
Kenneth Lujan, NRCS
Katie Mechenbier, S&W Cons. Spec. NMDA
Arlene Perea, 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 8:05 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. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain; Larry Gomez.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION TAKEN: Dale Rose moved to approve the December 2022 minutes as read. Robin Dunn seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain; Larry Gomez.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of December, 2022. Mr. Lockridge praised the district manager for getting requests for reimbursements sent out and funds spent by the end of 2022.

ACTION TAKEN: Larry Gomez moved to approve the treasurer's report for December, 2022. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain; Larry Gomez.

The district manager pointed out that in the January report, a deposit of \$103,024.16 was received from Torrance County for the district's mil levy. She contacted the Torrance County Treasurer and reported an error in the mil levy distribution. An overpayment of \$50,024.64 had been made. Subsequently, the district manager received an invoice from Torrance County for that amount.

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

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

DFA Quarterly Report:

This item is included for review only. The report was turned in on time.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture:

The NMDA's written report for January was provided to the board members. Katie Mechenbier highlighted the relevant items for the district.

- Proposals for the 2023 Water Quality and Conservation Grant are due Thursday, April 7th by 5:00 p.m.
- The position for a Natural Resource Policy/Planning Analyst formerly held by Jim Wanstall closes on February 13.
- The NMDA will open the application period for individual applicants for the Healthy Soil Program on February 17.
- The NMDFA – Local Government Division has made federal funding opportunities available to all local governments. Information can be obtained from the DFA Federal Grants Bureau.
- The legislative session for 2023 began January 17th at noon and ends on March 18th at noon.
- The 2023 land and water summit will take place on March 1 – 3, 2023 at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque.
- The Office of the State Auditor is in the process of amending 2.2.2 NMAC, the audit rule. A public hearing will be held virtually on March 3, 2023.
- A new \$80 million in Water SMART grant funding for environmental water resources projects for FY2023 has been announced. A webinar will be held on February 6, 2023 from 2 – to 3:30.
- The NMDA is asking livestock scale owners to become part of the routine livestock scale inspection program.

NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:

The NRCS Mountainair Field Office written report is included in board member's packets. Mr. Lujan pointed out that the Fort Sumner field office has a new Soil Conservationist, Michael Mares, who started work on January 17, 2023. Mr. Lujan said that Steven has been detailed to Las Vegas to help with ECP. Mr. Lujan reported on the NRCS enclosed trailer which will be used in Fort Sumner for storage until a facility can be built. He explained the layout of the new open concept building that will be built there, including a description of a windowed door, like a banker's window, and how cooperators will be received into the office. The district manager said that a similar door with a window may have to be installed in the NRCS Mountainair office in the district's building.

District Manager's Report:

The district manager reported that the district's new volunteer, Marie Mitchell, is in charge of the Salinas giftshops for all three of the ruins. She would prefer to work in the field, so toward that end, she will submit her transcripts to be evaluated by NRCS to learn what course work she needs to complete in addition to her degree for possible employment by NRCS. She can work

as an Earth Team volunteer and then can go out in the field with Jody and Steven. At present, the district manager is sending Marie into the field with Vernon Kohler.

The district manager said that the IRS has changed the mileage rate, so she will put the item on the agenda for the next board meeting.

The district manager was contacted by the Occupational Health and Safety Bureau and told that she will have to submit reports on various aspects of employees' work.

She was also interviewed regarding workman's compensation rates.

CORRESPONDANCE:

The district manager passed around a note from David Cain's two daughters with a picture of them with their goats. The note thanked the district for helping them at the fair. She also showed the board a wine rack that Mr. Cain's daughter Macklee made.

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

The District Manager's Update on Grants Report to CPSWCD Board, February, 2023:

The district manager closed out both the 2020 EBWHRM WTB and GRGWA WTB funds. In addition, she will send the paperwork in today for reimbursements for the NM State Forestry funds, closing out the grant. Those reimbursements total \$425,506.25. Additional reimbursements need to be submitted, but they will apply to the new grants.

Vern Kohler met with two inspectors on the Bartolo Canyon project on a total of 300 acres on their concerns about water and rutting on the roads. He also met with Pablo Romero regarding *his* concerns. Vern took pictures that the district manager can refer to during her telephone conversations with Pablo. Serious muddy conditions caused by heavy rains and melting snow have meant that work can only take place until 11:30 or so in order to keep from tearing up the resources. The district manager will contact Cody Stropki to ask him to check on what the inspectors said that they saw on the project when he begins the monitoring project with the high school students in the summer. She wants to be sure that all the problems have been taken care of. At this point, the inspectors have only approved payment for 23 acres of the work that has been done since August. Pablo can also be paid for 17 acres that he completed last year. Eight-five acres have already been paid for.

About the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), the district manager received a copy of the ranking criteria which differed somewhat from what the districts had submitted, so she sent in further information to correct the differences.

As to the FEMA grant, when phase 2 has been approved, and after the paperwork has been signed, Torrance County will have just one year to submit its Hazardous Mitigation Plan and get it approved. The project itself must be finished by the same date. The consequence of failing to meet the deadline is that funding that has not been drawn down for any uncompleted work will be lost.

The district manager submitted her quarterly report to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission for its grant.

Concerning the NM Department of Transportation Project, a meeting was held with Andrew Alderete, who oversees the roadside environment design integrated vegetation management, and with representatives from State Forestry on the topic of the 92.6 acres that will be cleared from the highway right away. First, a tabletop cultural resources survey will have to be

conducted and will be paid for from state funds, after which the project must be on the ground and complete within one year. The funding for this project is \$155,000. The project from Estancia to the intersection of State Highway 55 and 337 is for 409 acres and is funded for \$480,000.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay:

State Senator Stefanics contacted the district manager regarding her request for more capital outlay money, and they worked with Legislative Council Service staff to turn in the district's request for an additional \$100,000.

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

The district manager said that a meeting will be held the following Wednesday with SunZia to discuss its NEPA.

Petition Concerning NRCS Small Landowner Assistance – Frank Luna:

Frank Luna called the district manager, and said that he had more people who wanted to sign his petition, so he will attend next month's board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Re-organization of the Board:

ACTION TAKEN: David Cain moved to maintain the current board structure. Robin Dunn seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; David Cain; Larry Gomez.

ACTION TAKEN: Larry Gomez moved to combine the positions of vice-chairman and treasurer temporarily. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote with one abstention: Dale Rose, aye; Felipe Lovato, aye; Robin Dunn, aye; David Cain; Larry Gomez.

Chairman Lovato appointed Roy Gibson as associate supervisor.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts:

The district manager said that she continues to work on disseminating information on fire preparedness.

South Central Mountain RC&D:

No report.

Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee:

A meeting will be held the following Thursday. If there is no quorum, there may be discussion on disbanding the committee. The chair and secretary positions still need to be filled.

New Building on Fair Grounds:

No report.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Taylor asked the district manager to report on his behalf that the pile burns in Box Canyon had been completed on Tuesday. Arlene Perea reported on the procedures that took place to ensure that the fires are completely extinguished. In response to Ms. Dale's question, Arlene Perea explained that winter fires are entirely possible depending on the dry conditions.

OTHER:

Mr. Lujan said that NRCS can now pay for removing and burning brush. He explained the conditions for payment. He asked the board to support his position on charging for mastication.

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN for NEXT MEETING:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, March 3, 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, Jack Lockridge moved to adjourn. Robin Dunn seconded the motion.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

DAVID CAIN, SECRETARY