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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
March 1, 2024**

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

**Absentees:**  
Dale Rose  
Gerald Chavez

**Others Present:** Dierdre Tarr, District Manager  
Roy Gibson, Associate Supervisor  
Kim Kostelnik, SAKAK Natural Resource Consulting  
Katie Mechenbier, NMDA  
Jason Mondragon-Martin, North Area Conservationist, NRCS  
Ernie Taylor, Mountainair Ranger District

**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. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Jack Lockridge; Aubrey Dunn; Larry Gomez.

**APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**ACTION TAKEN:** Aubrey Dunn moved to approve the minutes for February 2, 2023. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Larry Gomez.

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

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

**ACTION TAKEN:** Aubrey Dunn moved to approve the treasurer's report for February 2024. David Cain seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge; Aubrey Dunn.

## **OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

### **Mil Levy Rate Resolution No. 11 – 2024 (moved from New Business):**

**ACTION TAKEN:** Mr. Lockridge moved to approve Mil Levy Resolution No. 11 – 2024. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge; Aubrey Dunn.

## **REPORTS:**

### **New Mexico Department of Agriculture:**

The NMDA's written report for March was provided to the board members. Katie Mechenbier summarized items of interest to the board members.

- The Land of Enchantment Fund grant application period opens today and continues to May 3. Zoom work session meetings will be held via Zoom by each district's respective region, but those interested may attend any other zoom work sessions.
- SWCD's third quarterly budget report is due to DFA-LGD on April 30.
- NMDA is accepting applications for Healthy Soil Program grants until April 26. Interested entities can register for March 5 webinars.
- 2024 Water Quality & Conservation Grant proposals are due by April 5.
- NMDA is seeking feedback from each SWCD on who has GIS mapping for noxious weeds.
- The NM Association of Conservation District Employees is accepting enrollments from SWCD employees.
- The Department of Finance and Administration will be holding a virtual LGBMS training from 9:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. on April 25<sup>th</sup>. (The district manager provided a copy of the memo from the Department of Finance and Administration on Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget preparation and submission guidelines for special districts.)
- A link to information is provided to districts which might be considering zoning their SWCD.
- Requests for NMDA Livestock Scale Inspections must be made by March 31 of the current inspection year.
- Chief Procurement Officer Certificates must be renewed every two years. (The district manager is certified and was re-certified last year.)
- The 2024 request for proposals for the America the Beautiful Challenge has been released.
- A list of multiple funding opportunities for New Mexico from BLM is provided.
- The Environment Department is asking for Information to develop Strategic Water Supply, especially concerning brackish water.

Ms. Mechenbier explained an issue that the Edgewood district has because the boundaries of the town of Edgewood have expanded, but the town hasn't updated its maps. Therefore, there are people within the city limits who are being taxed for the district's mil levy. This is an issue because the district excludes municipalities from the mil levy. The district manager said that to make sure that Claunch-Pinto does not have a similar issue, it will be discussed under its planning grant.

### **NRCS Mountainair Field Office Report:**

The NRCS Mountainair Field Office written report was provided to board members. Jason Mondragon-Martin reported for Kenneth Lujan. He pointed out that the ranking deadline for EQIP is March 1, 2024. He said that Mountainair staff are ranking FY 2024 applications. One contract has been obligated and four others have been sent up for obligation. CSP applications are also being ranked. The deadline for EQIP – IRA is April 26.

Mr. Mondragon-Martin also announced an outreach in education grant targeted toward conservation for between ten and twenty thousand dollars. He will provide information to the district manager.

**Discussion on Zoning the District for Supervisor Representation (moved from New Business):**

**ACTION TAKEN:** Mr. Lockridge moved to take up discussion on zoning the district for supervisor representation. 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.

Ms. Mechenbier explained that the board is required to notify the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) that it wants to zone the district for supervisor representation. The commission meets on March 27<sup>th</sup>.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Aubrey Dunn moved to notify the SWCC that the district wants to zone for supervisor representation. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye.

**District Manager's Report:**

The district manager reported that she and Victoria Sedillo, a retired public employee, are working through the process of developing a contract to be approved by the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) so that Ms. Sedillo can present educational workshops which are provided for in the district's grants. Mr. Chavez and Mr. Lovato have also met with Ms. Sedillo.

**CORRESPONDANCE:**

The district manager received a letter from Peter Vigil, president of New Mexico Envirothon and the district manager of the Taos SWCD. The letter requested a donation for the 2024 Envirothon to be held April 12 – 14. Five hundred dollars for this purpose is included in the district's approved budget.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Mr. Dunn moved to donate five hundred dollars to NM Envirothon. Mr. Lockridge seconded the motion. Motion passed by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye.

**UPDATE ON GRANTS:**

Discussion took place on landscape-scale restoration projects. The district manager explained what these projects entailed. She also stated that she added expiration dates to the grants listed on the agenda.

The district manager reported that she and Codi Stropki with SWCA are working with Krista Bonfantine at the Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee to discuss ways to use some of SWCA's monitoring funding to assist with some of the monitoring that the committee is doing. This monitoring would provide information on what is happening in the Estancia Basin.

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

**2021 EBWHRM WTB Funds:** This grant is closed.

**2021 GRGWA WTB Funds:** This grant is closed.

**2023 WTB Grants:** We have started drawing down funds on these two grants.

**2024 WTB Grants:** The two proposals for the 2024 WTB grant cycle are on the Water Trust Board list for legislative approval. All of the readiness items have been prepared and submitted to the Water Trust Board. The Water Trust Board meets on April 23<sup>rd</sup> to decide the projects to fund.

**NM State Forestry Grants:**

**2020 NFL Funding** – The district has started submitting reimbursements for this funding. These funds must be spent by December 31, 2023. There will be a third Bear Cat project this fall.

**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.

**Highway 337 Funding** – The district has the funding to start the process of finding a contractor for the HWY 337 defensible space project. With the cost of the project, we will need to advertise a request for proposal for this project.

**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 April Board meeting. 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. We will not be able to start this project until the bird surveys the first part of June are completed. We are planning on the contractor being able to work all summer on this project.

#### **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 soon.

**2019 RCPP Funding** – This is the renewal of the 2015 RCPP funding. There was \$1,781,286.43 available for producer contracting within the NCMWRP 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 (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:

- 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:**

See report under State Forest Grants.

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

<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

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
<b>TOTAL PROJECTS</b>	<b>1,851.55</b>	<b>\$2,329,765.95</b>

The district has just finished the planning on 10 more projects.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Capital Outlay:**

**FY2022 Funded (skid steer) and FY 2023 Funded:**

Roy Gibson provided a memo to board members summarizing his research concerning options for buying equipment. He recommends that the district purchase both the skid steer plus attachments and a trailer using the CES Contracting Mechanism, and he further recommends that the district buy either the John Deere model 324G or the 262D3 model from CAT. He asked whether a goose neck trailer or tongue pull trailer should be bought. Mr. Gibson can get competitive cost estimates for all the equipment through the CES process.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Mr. Lockridge moved for Mr. Gibson to proceed with the CES option for obtaining costs for all the equipment. Mr. Cain seconded the motion. Motion passed by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye.

**Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:**

No report.

**Fees for Chips:**

**ACTION TAKEN:** Mr. Cain moved to continue to ask for a donation for chips and to re-evaluate the issue in the future. Mr. Lockridge seconded the motion. Motion passed by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye.

**New Rate for Chipper:**

**ACTION TAKEN:** Mr. Cain moved to raise the chipper rental rate to \$250 per day. Mr. Gomez seconded the motion. Motion passed by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Request to Sponsor a Healthy Soils Project:**

The district manager was contacted by the owner of the local market in Mountainair to ask for the district’s approval for a healthy soils project. The district manager asked for the proposal with a preliminary budget to be submitted in writing, but she hasn’t received anything. NRCS was also contacted, and Steven Ferguson has been assigned to work with the individual. A conservation plan is a requirement for an application. The district manager expressed her concern that the SWCDs are listed last as entities to be informed of someone’s interest in submitting a proposal. Ms. Mechenbier said that she would communicate the concern to the NMDA.

The district manager explained that the Manzano Retreat wants to build a water catchment system for one of its buildings. Kelly Smith from the Edgewood district will go with her the following Tuesday afternoon to a meeting to discuss designing the system. It may be possible to apply for a water quality and conservation grant to fund the system.

**REPORTS:**

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

No report.

**EBWPC:**

The district manager reported on the EBWPC under agenda item Update on Grants.

**ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**OTHER:** Mr. Taylor commented on the endangered species act.

**MEETINGS ATTENDED and PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING:**

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:**

The next regular meeting will be held Friday, April 5, 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, Jack Lockridge moved to adjourn. Larry Gomez seconded the motion.

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FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

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DAVID CAIN, SECRETARY