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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
August 16, 2024**

- Supervisors Present:** David Cain
Gerald Chavez
Larry Gomez
Jack Lockridge
Dale Rose
- Absentees:** Aubrey Dunn
Felipe Lovato
- Others Present:** Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Alejandro Collins, NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute
Kenneth Lujan, NRCS
Jason Mondragon-Martin, North Area Conservationist, NRCS
Katie Mechenbier, NMDA
Crystal Medina, NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute
Codi Stropki, SWCA

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 Vice Chairman David Cain, both in person and via Zoom at 8:00 a.m.

Welcome Attendees:

The vice 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: David Cain, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

APPROVAL/ DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The board reviewed the minutes of July 12 and July 26. **ACTION TAKEN:** Dale Rose moved approval of the minutes of the July 12 meeting. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote. David Cain, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

Jack Lockridge moved to approve the minutes of the July 26 meeting. Dale Rose seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote. David Cain, aye; Jack Lockridge, 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 month of July 2024.

ACTION TAKEN: Jack Lockridge moved to approve the treasurer's report for July with accounts payable for August. Gerald Chavez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye.

REPORTS:

NMDA Report:

Katie Mechenbier pointed out items of interest to the district from the NMDA report.

- The annual report of activities and plan for the past fiscal year are due on September first.
- Dylan Burruss has been hired as NMDA's new noxious weed coordinator.
- The New Mexico Vegetation Management Association's annual conference will be held September 11 – 12 at the Ruidoso Convention Center.
- Email from the NMDA was sent to the district announcing its allocation of operations funding for \$74,764.78. Some districts did not meet SWCD Act requirements, so that funding was divided among districts that did meet the requirements.

The district manager invited Ms. Mechenbier to the district's annual meeting on September 18 at 10:00 a.m.

NRCS Report:

Mr. Lujan referred board members to his written report and revised the amount of funding received for EQIP to four million dollars.

He also called attention to the date of the workgroup meeting to be held on September 5 at 10:00 a.m. at the Village of Encino community center.

Unfunded Cooperative Agreement:

ACTION TAKEN: Gerald Chavez moved to authorize the chairman to sign the unfunded agreement with NRCS when it is available from the state office. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: David Cain, aye; Larry Gomez, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye. The motion carried with one abstention.

District Manager's Report:

The district manager reported that the district received the annual report from the National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts as well as the annual report from the National Conservation Foundation. A call was also received from a representative of the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts asking whether the district would be represented at its annual meeting in October in Albuquerque. The district manager replied that the district was not a member and would not attend the meeting. She also said that she wouldn't be attending the employees' association meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE:

No report.

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

The district manager reported on the condition of the chippers. Both chippers are being repaired. She called the Vermeer company to task regarding the amount of money the district has spent on chippers,

which are not working. She did receive a \$300 discount. A discussion followed on the lack of service from companies and the difficulty of finding parts.

She described the impact of not having chippers on several projects:

- The Ramah crew is bringing slash to the district property to chip with a leased chipper.
- Cutting is finished on a project on Ernie Vigil's property. Chipping is needed on this project as well.
- The district's crew finished cutting a project on Deer Canyon which also needs to be chipped.

The district manager may contract with a company to do some chipping until the district's chippers are back in service.

Watershed Health Grant:

Regarding the Watershed Health Grant, the district manager said that when the Ramah crew finishes a project in Torreon, it will start work on 20 acres in the Deer Canyon Preserve. She is working with the Ramah Natural Resource Department to sell wood to Ramah from projects for \$75 a cord. The wood will be given to the Ramah elders.

New Mexico State Forestry Grant:

The district has 15 projects ready to contract. Letters are going out to owners of lands adjacent to the Hwy 337 project. Soon she will advertise requests for proposals (RFPs). All the wood from the project will go to the Chilili land grant.

Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance:

The district manager is receiving projects from the Greater Rio Grande.

Collaborative Forest Restoration Program:

The projects in the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program are going well. The district manager is working with Pattern Energy on a landowner agreement for the ranch west of Mountainair to complete conservation work on salt cedar and Russian olive on its portion of Abó Arroyo.

CFRP:

A prework meeting was held on the CFRP project last Thursday. John Formby attended the meeting. Pablo Romero was told that he had to clean up the ground before he could do any other cutting. Work on the project will be checked weekly.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program Grant:

The cultural resource surveys are being conducted on the Regional Conservation Partnership Program projects. The district manager and Codi Stropki will meet with Kris Graham Chavez on some new problems which are causing extra work on the surveys. Budgets are created for conducting cultural resource surveys before the landowners are identified, so those budgets are impacted by these problems.

FEMA Projects:

The district manager will soon be ready to send the RFPs to Homeland Security for its approval for the FEMA project. FEMA will also have to give its approval.

NM Counties Grant:

The district manager reported that the CWPP final core group meeting was held and approval needs to be granted. The draft has been advertised and posted on both the district's and CWPP's web sites. Although funding was delayed, the district manager can now pay SWCA for its work on CWPP.

SWCC Grant Presentation:

Mr. Cain introduced Codi Stropki, Crystal Medina, and Alejandro Collins to present an update on the SWCC grant, which must be finished by June 30.

Mr. Stropki gave an overview of the SWCC project. The overall goal of the project is to capture and spotlight all the work that has been accomplished during the district manager's tenure at the Claunch-Pinto district. The grant has served as an opportunity to build transitional institutional capacity. The result of the study will be a document that can guide district board members and future district managers in their future efforts. Lessons learned will also be reported. In addition, the document can serve as a model for other districts across the state. The document will be available in a paper form. It will also be published on a hub website that will be easy to access and use.

The district's land use plan will also be incorporated in the hub website, and in the future, the SWCA group will work with the board using various maps as tools to determine where the focus of the district should be in coming decades.

Mr. Stropki introduced Crystal Medina to talk about the education outreach efforts including on-the-ground demonstration projects planned for in the project. She mentioned, for example, the shade ball demonstration that will take place during the annual meeting. She described other documents that will be easy to access on the hub website such as the supervisors' manual and operating procedures. The website is also intended to be a resource for landowners and other members of the public who might be interested in obtaining funding or in attending an event that the district is hosting.

Alejandro Collins introduced a test hub website that, when finished, will serve as a repository of Claunch-Pinto's information. He demonstrated tabs that can be on the actual web site. The objective is that anything someone wants to find can be accessed with three clicks. Also to be included can be maps that will overlay a map of the Claunch-Pinto district, for example, maps of current or previous wildfires. A newsletter, contact information, a calendar of events are other possible options. Mr. Stropki said that as the web site is more populated, a link will be provided to board members so that they can see what is included and how user friendly the web site is.

Mr. Lockridge asked whether best practices would be included. Mr. Stropki agreed that best practices and lessons learned will be included. Ms. Medina said that the district manager is one of the best examples of collaboration in the state. It will be valuable to learn how she has been so successful in her efforts to collaborate among such a wide range of entities.

The intention is to have the site up and live in late spring so that it can be refined with use with everything wrapped up in May. The hub site will be housed and maintained at the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute at Highlands University so there won't be any cost to Claunch-Pinto. A suggestion was made to incorporate an interactive capability. Board members thanked the group for its work.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay:

The district manager called attention to the new skid steer with its four implements. Someone will have to earn a certificate to operate the new machine. The current capital outlay agreement ends in June of 2025, so the remaining funds will have to be reauthorized. She and Roy Gibson have discussed the possibility of buying a larger trailer with higher sides. He will bring prices for the board to consider.

Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:

The district manager said that she will invite representatives of Pattern Energy to the annual meeting and invite them to make a short report. She has received the company's fire plans, which she will distribute to the board. She will also get PNM's fire plan to distribute.

HWY 42 Road Closures:

Due to pushback by members of the community of Corona, changes have been made to the implementation of the closures including consideration of school bus routes.

Annual Meeting:

The annual meeting will take place on September 18 beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the district office.

NEW BUSINESS:**Requests for Cost-Share on Different Practices:**

The district manager brought up an issue that could result in future actions that would be costly, contentious and time consuming for the district. The issue concerns the possibility that landowners might wish to transfer land from the district to another with more money. She gave three examples of requests from landowners for cost sharing, a program that the district doesn't have.

She received a request to share costs on repairs to damaged interior pasture fencing due to recent flooding. She also talked with a landowner from Carrizozo who owns land that is partially in the Carrizozo district and partly in the Claunch-Pinto district. The Carrizozo SWCD has a cost share program, so he applied to Carrizozo for funding for his pipeline; however, that land is in the Claunch-Pinto district, so he was turned down. He is now considering transferring that land from the Claunch-Pinto district into the Carrizozo district in order to get funding. Another landowner, a former Claunch-Pinto board member, also contacted the district manager for funding to put in pasture fencing. He is said to be considering transferring his land into the Carrizozo district.

The district manager has consulted with Ms. Mechenbier on the issue of landowners trying to transfer their land from one district to another in the pursuit of funding. She pointed out problems that would arise if landowners tried to withdraw from the Claunch-Pinto district. She and Ms. Mechenbier described the complicated process and costs and time that would be involved in such attempts. The process could take as long as a year or even longer.

The district manager outlined a solution to resolve the current issue with the Carrizozo area landowners' requests for funding. She described possible sources of funding for their projects and what would be involved in getting the money for them. She also suggested that in the future the board should consider the possible need to support landowners in the event of such occurrences as the recent floods that would not be addressed by FEMA or Homeland Security. Mr. Chavez commented that when events like the recent floods occur, it is a dilemma to decide whose needs should receive priority whether they are small or large landowners. He also said that people who decided to go through the process of changing districts should not be catered to. It is a danger to the district if the movement grows among landowners to change districts because they are chasing funding. Discussion followed on the problems involved with this issue.

An additional issue arose concerning districts' boundaries when the district manager was visited by Ruben Gastelum, GPS-GIS analyst and Matilda Haman, GIS technician of the Torrance County Department of Rural Addressing. They brought a map showing the boundaries of East Torrance SWCD, the Claunch-Pinto SWCD and the Central Tri-County SWCD. The map appeared to show the encroachment of the Tri-County district's boundaries onto the Claunch-Pinto's district boundaries. The district manager is confident that the map is inaccurate. She provided copies of the Claunch-Pinto district maps to the rural addressing department. She also called Joe Zabrowski who emailed to her

correct shapefiles of the district's boundaries which she sent on to the Torrance County rural addressing office. She also called the Tri-County district manager, Brenda Smythe to inform her of the issue. Ms. Mechanbier said that when the NMDA offered to update all 47 districts' boundaries in 2014, the Tri-County district opted out despite numerous discrepancies which the district was notified of. She suggested that the source of the current problem lay in that decision to opt out of the update. The district manager said that Claunch-Pinto participated in that opportunity to update its boundaries.

She also described future mil levy increases involving transmission lines including a new one, Rio Sol, which is to parallel the SunZia line. She will provide information on this new line to the board. She emphasized the fact that this area is a corridor for possible other development.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

REPORTS:

South Central Mountain RC&D:

No report.

EBWPC:

No report.

OTHER:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

Regular meeting: Friday, 8:00 a.m. on September 6, 2024 at the Natural Resource Conservation Center, located at 1206 South Highway 5, 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. Gerald Chavez seconded the motion.

DAVID CAIN, VICE CHAIRMAN

GERALD CHAVEZ, SECRETARY