

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

May 20, 2024
Work Session Minutes
Hybrid Meeting

Members Remotely Present

Mike Mumford, President (Pend Oreille CD)
Amy McKay, Vice President (Whitman CD)
Barbara Bailey, Secretary (Underwood CD)
Mark Craven, Treasurer (Snohomish CD)
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
David Vliet, Northwest Area Director (Kitsap CD)
Lisa Zaborac, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor CD)
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Columbia Basin CD)
John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)
Jack Clark, South Central Area Director (Benton CD)
Cindy Reed, South Central Area Director (North Yakima CD)
Jeff Schibel, Northeast Area Director (Lincoln County CD)
John W. Floyd, Northeast Area Director (Pend Oreille CD)
Mary Collins, Southeast Area Director (Palouse CD)
Cindy Pierce, WADE President (Skagit CD)

Others Remotely Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director
Jim Brown, WACD Director of Nursery Operations
James Thompson, WSCC Executive Director
Brandy Reed, Whatcom CD District Manager
Al Latham, Jefferson County CD Supervisor

In Person

Ryan Baye, WACD Director of Legislative and Membership Services

President Mumford called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

Northwest Area Focus

Brandy Reed presented on behalf of Whatcom CD. She spoke of recent district projects from Climate Commitment Act funding and May being Wildfire Awareness month in their county. The district is expanding their stormwater program, translating district material into Spanish, and building up their board's governance policy. She answered questions about riparian efforts in Whatcom County and employee position announcements.

Al Latham shared information about Jefferson County CD and was excited about the new avenues for the district. Their most recent focus is on flood control by removing canary grass in Chimacum Creek. He also shared details of a recent purchase of farmland in Jefferson County by the Port of Port Townsend. There was a conversation about farmland preservation in Jefferson County and the matrix of livestock fencing and riparian habitat.

Alan Chapman shared updates from other Northwest Area districts: the purchase of an office building at San Juan Islands CD, King CD's effort to create voting precincts for their next election, and the disagreements around a diking project in Clallam County.

David Vliet talked about how Kitsap CD outsourced their supervisor election to a third-party to reduce the demand on district staff, with a seemingly positive outcome. He also spoke to their ongoing Farm to Freezer and GRACE projects.

Mark Craven discussed how Snohomish CD seemingly had "a million projects going on" and provided an update on the district's efforts to construct an office building.

Cindy Pierce shared how Skagit CD had several brand-new employees. The district's farm planning was in overdrive, responding to landowner frustrations around CREP, and their continued search for new office space.

Financial Summary

Treasurer Mark Craven walked through the March and April WACD Financials: highlighting plant sales, Investment Account performance, aged receivables figures, and the YTD expenses & revenue.

WACD Financials

Tom Salzer guided the board members through the Executive Office division's draft budget. He answered questions about employee office space, using banking transfer transactions for district payments to WACD, provided additional information on the potential DEI contractor to comply with a WACD resolution, and explained his vision of creating a conservation marketing plan with an outside contractor.

Jim Brown detailed the Plant Materials Center division's draft budget. He provided information about the expected purchase of a new pump and the various options, as well as how the PMC's contract with the Conservation Commission to provide riparian plants was a part of the budget forecast for plant sales.

Tom Salzer presented a copy of the performance of WACD's Investment Account and the composition of the portfolio.

Tom Salzer explained the decline of accountants affecting the search for an auditor for WACD's needed five-year audit. He had two options to consider and shared the one estimate staff was able to secure from ClarkNuber.

WACD Operations

Jim Brown talked about the year's sales and how the cooler was being shut down marked the end of sales. He pointed out the increase in contracts for the next harvest, and how the PMC had their second-best year ever. He provided additional information on the failing pump and how the field crew was planting spring beds and transplants.

Ryan Baye provided logistical information for the June board meeting at the PMC in Bow and asked for a count of which board members were planning to attend in-person.

Ryan Baye shared with the board legislative conversations WACD was asked to participate in around outdoor education for high school students, as well as the initial contacts he had made with various agencies to discuss resolutions adopted by the membership at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

Alan Chapman updated the board on the upcoming Livestock Committee meeting.

Spring Legislative Workshop

Ryan Baye informed the board of the expected number of attendees at the Spring Legislative Workshop the following week and the released agenda.

Work Session Focus on Resolutions

Ryan Baye discussed the provided resolution spreadsheet covering WACD activity on the 81 active resolutions and the various types of projects requested of WACD. He outlined how staff were prioritizing resolutions in the absence of direction from the board, since the workload was more than current staff capacity. He led the board in discussions around various ways to respond more effectively to the membership's directions, including more committee work, more adequately noting staffing needs to address resolutions, and how resolutions might be ranked.

Announcements

Alan Chapman announced that WDFW information about their riparian grants was now available.

Tom Salzer announced that Past President Jeanette Dorner's father died unexpectedly.

President Mike Mumford adjourned the meeting at 8:26.