

## Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Remote Connection through Zoom

September 15, 2020

### Summary of Board Actions

- **Motion:** Dean Longrie moved to adopt the meeting agenda as amended. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Dean Longrie moved to authorize reimbursement of Cowlitz CD expense for John Keatley's attendance at the December Board Meeting. Second by Dave Fenn. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Dean Longrie moved to disseminate WACD's draft strategic plan for comment at the area association meetings. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Dave Fenn moved to consider WACD's reserve accounts fully funded and received a second. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Dave Fenn moved to adopt a preamble to WACD's policy on reserve accounts. Second by Alan Chapman. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Cindy Reed moved the Finance Committee reviews WACD's policy on reserve accounts, engage with the Association, and present any recommendation at the next board meeting. Second by John McLean. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** John Keatley moved the Finance Committee, with input from staff, review consolidating WACD's accounts and make any recommendations at the next board meeting. Second by Mark Craven. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Alan Chapman moved to authorize staff to set the date of the next board meeting. Second by Dean Longrie. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Amy McKay moved to adopt Resolution 2020-01 on virtual business meetings. Second by Alan Chapman. Motion carried.

### Board of Directors June Meeting Minutes

#### Members Remotely Present

Jeanette Dorner, President (Pierce CD)

Amy McKay, Secretary (Whitman CD)

Dave Fenn, Treasurer (Lewis Conservation District)

Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)

Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)

Dean Longrie, Southwest Area Director (Clark CD)

John Keatley, Southwest Area Director (Cowlitz CD)

John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)

Cindy Reed, South Central Area Director (North Yakima CD)

Barbara Bailey, South Central Area Director (Underwood CD)

Jeff Schibel, Northeast Area Director (Lincoln County CD)

Mary Collins, Southeast Area Director (Palouse CD)

Ryan Palmateer, WADE Past President (San Juan Islands CD)

### Others Remotely Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director  
Ryan Baye, WACD Legislative & Membership Lead  
Clancy Flynn, Benton Conservation District Supervisor  
Jim Brown, WACD PMC Nursery Manager  
Larry Davis, Whatcom Conservation District Supervisor  
Carol Smith, WSCC Executive Director  
Roylene Rides at the Door, NRCS State Conservationist  
Craig Nelson, Okanogan Conservation District Executive Director  
Jerry Scheele, Spokane Conservation District Supervisor  
Zorah Oppenheimer, Clark Conservation District Manager

President Jeanette Dorner called the meeting to order at 9:02 and welcomed those participating. Ryan Baye took a roll call to confirm a quorum was present. Jeanette Dorner asked if changes were necessary to the agenda distributed earlier.

### **Area Director Reports**

The Northwest Area Director present was attending a lot of meeting thanks to Zoom. He heard from several districts concerns about continued financial stability and future funding.

The South Central Area Directors shared that Yakima, Benton, and Franklin counties were in a “weird COVID limbo”. They mentioned their districts were struggling to get conservation projects before the end of the season and how much fires affected district operations.

The one Southeast Area Director present was still shocked by the Labor Day fires in Whitman county. She highlighted district projects still being accomplished despite the recent challenges.

The Southwest Area Directors shared several districts were hiring. They reiterated their districts were also dealing with narrow windows to conducting restoration projects and the growing concern of the impact of fires elsewhere on their local timber industry.

The present Northeast Area Director spoke of the 125,000-acre fire in Lincoln county, and how his area districts were starting to compile damage assessments.

The participating North Central Area Director also spoke of their fire damage. He was also concerned of the mental impact on district already dealing with COVID pressures.

### **Board Minutes**

Dean Longrie voted approve the minutes from June’s meeting and received a second from Doug Rushton. Motion carried.

### **Treasurer’s Report**

Dave Fenn highlighted the year end budget numbers from fiscal year 2019-2020, the Edward Jones investment account performance since June’s meeting, the monthly financial report, and an update on district dues payment. He explained why the board would be asked to authorize a reimbursement of Cowlitz CD for John Keatley’s travel in December of 2019, citing the fact the reimbursement had been submitted after the due date for reimbursements and that the expense occurred in a different fiscal

year. Dean Longrie moved to authorize reimbursement of Cowlitz expense for John Keatley's attendance at December Board meeting. Second by Dave Fenn. Motion carried with John Keatley's abstention.

### **Nursery Manager Report**

PMC Sales Manager Jess Oman joined the meeting to deliver the sales report as of early September. She reported there were more orders at this point than in previous years, but in comparatively smaller amounts leading to less total dollars. She noted a concern among long-time customers around ability to plant large-scale projects as well potential lack of funding among public organizations. She answered questions about sales to private landowners, how the PMC could contribute to fire recovery efforts, and the individual sales trends among the different types of groups the PMC normally sells to.

PMC Manager Jim Brown discussed the different crop insurance options available to the nursery under the new USDA insurance program for their shrubs, coniferous, and deciduous species. Recommended at a minimum purchasing insurance for their evergreens since they are susceptible to frost damage and make up the largest portion of inventory. He answered questions about cost, the different policy options, and the recent history of crop failures.

Jim Brown also spoke about the need to hire a new crew leader, described the preparations as well as designing new safety protocols for fall harvest, and agreed to learn if purchasing only a single insurance policy was possible. Dean Longrie moved to authorize \$3,000 for the purchase of new banders and received a second. Dave Fenn raised a Point of Order, noting the expense was already included in the adopted budget and did not need to be approved by the board. Motion was withdrawn by Dean Longrie.

### **Tribal Relations Committee Report**

Larry Davis presented as WACD's Tribal Relations Committee Co-Chair. He described the new activity among the committee, including hosting former State Senator John McCoy on their last call. He reported the committee did a survey of CDs and tribal entities on their working relationships. He answered questions about the NACD Tribal Resource Policy Group since he serves as Chair of that committee and his hope for future accomplishments between districts and tribal partners.

*There was a recess from 10:48 – 11:05.*

### **WACD Strategic Plan Group Report**

Tom Salzer presented the strategic plan worked on by staff and the Strategic Planning Group. He showcased the new format and what potential Action Plan, Scorecard, and Goals might look like. He answered questions about the formulation of the goals and the potential timeline for adoption after consulting with member-districts. Dean Longrie moved to disseminate draft strategic plan for comment at area association meetings. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.

### **WACD Finance Committee Report**

Dave Fenn explained the Finance Committee's recommendation, based off the current figures in Edward Jones compared to their funding goals that WACD should consider its reserve accounts fully funded. He answered questions about timing, details behind individual reserve accounts, and the current return on investment. Dave Fenn moved to consider WACD's reserve accounts fully funded and received a second. Motion carried.

Dave Fenn then spoke to a potential preamble to WACD's reserve account policy offered by John Keatley at the previous week's work session to explicitly outline the goals for the Plant Material Center. John

Keatley answered questions about the history of the Plant Materials Center and was complimented by others for his efforts. Dave Fenn moved to adopt John's preamble to WACD's policy on reserve accounts. Second by Alan Chapman. Motion carried. The following will be added to WACD's Policy Book:

“The primary principle, purpose, reason, objective for owning/operating the PMC is to fund WACD and to provide funds to lower/eliminate the need for district dues, while providing conservation plants to district operations and other conservation efforts. This allows more money to be available for member districts on their programs.”

There was additional conversation among the board on WACD's reserve accounts, covering the reasoning behind the current funding goals and if there were alternative uses for the funds that could be better utilized on behalf of districts. Cindy Reed moved the Finance Committee reviews WACD's policy on reserve accounts, engage with the Association, and present any recommendation at the next board meeting. Second by John McLean. Motion carried.

Dave Fenn continued by relaying a discussion among the Finance Committee around WACD's financial accounts and relationships. He reported that there was interest among the committee to streamline and consolidate WACD's financial operations and banking to a single checking account, a single investment account, and a savings account with Washington State's Local Government Investment Pool. Mark Craven joined the meeting to answer questions about Snohomish CD's experience with LGIP. John Keatley moved to authorize the Finance Committee to arrange WACD's financial accounts and report back on their decision. Second by Mark Craven. Dave Fenn believed that decision should be made by the board, not the Finance Committee. John Keatley withdrew his motion without objection. John Keatley moved the Finance Committee, with input from Jim Brown, review consolidating WACD's accounts and make any recommendations at the next board meeting. Second by Mark Craven. John McLean offered a friendly amendment to substitute "staff" for "Jim Brown" to allow more staff input, the amendment was accepted by the maker of the motion. Motion carried.

*There was a recess from 12:40 – 1:10*

Jim Brown reported the outcome of his call with the crop insurance agent, that WACD was able to get crop insurance at different coverage rates for their different species. Dean Longrie moved to authorize the purchase of crop insurance for WACD's conifers for this year's growing season. Second by Mary Collins. Jim Brown shared that insurance was all or nothing, they could not only insure one species. Dean Longrie withdrew his motion without objection.

### **Partner Reports**

Roylene Comes at Night reported for the Natural Resource Conservation Service that her agency was hiring more staff, but they were having challenges within the agency on the relocation process. She announced NRCS has renewed their contract with the Conservation Commission to continue their joint activities and upcoming staff trainings.

Ryan Palmateer reported for the Washington Association of District Employees of planning budget cuts and re-examining the yearly activities of WADE.

Doug Rushton reported for the National Association of Conservation Districts and their successful forestry webinar series, with plans to expand to regional webinar events. NACD was still planning on an in-person 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in February, but was holding off on a final decision. He also explained recent changes to NACD's job board.

Larry Davis reported for the Washington Conservation Society and their interest in a “Conservation Week” campaign.

Carol Smith reported for the Washington State Conservation Commission and their push to aid those impacted by recent fires with funding. She was worried about the funding provisions, if expenses like cattle feed to replace the grasslands just destroyed could be covered. She also spoke about the Commissions decision packages being submitted to the Office of Financial Management in advance of the 2021-2023 Operating and Capital Budget.

### **Legislative Report**

Brynn Brady joined the meeting to report on legislative and political activity relevant to WACD – the likelihood of a special session, budget revenue forecast numbers, and the COVID changes expected to next year’s legislative session. She also spoke of WACD’s need to show support for funding in the Governor’s budget. She also answered questions about potential election outcomes, the politics around fire fighting in Washington, and the chances of a new tax to fund wildfire prevention and recovery efforts next January.

### **2020 WACD Annual Conference and Business Meeting**

Ryan Baye briefly ran through the planned conference format and programming options staff was finalizing in consultation with the Conference Planning Team. He also spoke of the pricing system they were expecting to use as well as the election system staff was putting into place.

Ryan Baye also presented a staff request to move the next WACD board meeting so there could be more dedicated time to the Annual Conference, since they were not gathering in person in 2020 and did not need to schedule the board meeting adjacent to the conference. Alan Chapman moved to authorize staff to set the date of the next board meeting. Second by Dean Longrie. Motion carried.

Ryan Baye finally presented a draft resolution requested by several board members after the last meeting on expressly authorizing a virtual Association business meeting. Amy McKay moved to adopt Resolution 2020-01. Second by Alan Chapman. Motion carried. The following resolution was adopted:

TITLE: Authority to hold 2020 WACD annual meeting virtually and to vote by electronic means

**WHEREAS** the bylaws of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts are vague and unclear about what constitutes a meeting and about voting procedures; and

**WHEREAS** an annual meeting has traditionally meant being together in one shared physical space; and

**WHEREAS** the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 prevents members from assembling and voting in a traditional meeting; and

**WHEREAS** current technology allows WACD to hold an annual meeting and to vote by virtual means to carry out the purposes of the Association as described in the bylaws; and

**WHEREAS** the Board of Directors is authorized to designate the time and place for the WACD annual meeting;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** this 15th day of September, 2020, that the 2020 WACD annual business meeting will be held December 2, 2020 by telephone and internet, and that voting may be conducted by voice vote and by use of an electronic voting system.

Tom Salzer spoke to the three bylaw changes staff had identified for potential amendment this year: removing the old Olympia address; officer term of service; and creating a third category of WACD

membership for friends or supporters of WACD and answered questions. There was no objection to his recommendation these three topics be discussed at area association meetings.

**Snapshot Survey of WACD Board Members**

Tom Salzer thanked the board for participating in his survey to gauge their opinions of his time as Executive Director thus far and commented on the responses. There was a conversation on the difference between “not improving” and “acceptable” as survey responses, if it skewed the results and if the Association should aim for always improving.

*Meeting was adjourned at 3:32.*