

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Board of Directors March Work Session Minutes

Remote Connection through Zoom

March 15, 2021

Members Remotely Present

Jeanette Dorner, President (Pierce CD)
Mike Mumford, Vice President (Pend Oreille CD)
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)
Mark Craven, Past President (Snohomish CD)
Chris Porter, Northwest Area Director (King CD)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
Dean Longrie, Southwest Area Director (Clark CD)
John Keatley, Southwest Area Director (Cowlitz CD)
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Grant County 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)
Amy Amerein, Southeast Area Director (Columbia CD)

Others Remotely Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director
Ryan Baye, WACD Legislative & Membership Lead
Carol Smith, WSCC Executive Director

President Dorner called the meeting to order at 6:02. Roll call was taken, and the board welcomed Amy Amerein as the newest SE Area Director.

Area Director Reports

Several districts in the NW area were changing staff leadership, the last count had seven CDs with transition in their Executive Director/District Manager position. Many districts also sold out their plant sales stock with lots of turnout. King CD tried something new and mailed a postcard to every King CD registered voter with information on how to vote in their election. Whatcom CD also had a novel experience with their first candidate forum for a Whatcom supervisor position in anyone's memory.

Northeast area CDs were also running their elections as well as participating in WACD's Legislative Week. Jeff Schibel believed all the NE he spoke with would be meeting in-person with the change in health restrictions. Of note to Lincoln County CD, they received funds from the will of recent Supervisor Alan Stromberger and that well-monitoring in their county found the water level so far in 2021 had dropped an average of 4 ½ feet.

Underwood CD was excited a new Supervisor would be joining their board, as well as the creating of a "tool library" for public use in partnership with a local grange. Benton held a highly successful series of workshops on small farms, with 127 participants. Plant sales were going on in the SC area as well. Districts were waiting for the weather to cooperate and the mud to dry before beginning district projects for the spring.

In the Southwest area, several CDs had productive legislator meetings. Cowlitz and Wahkiakum planned to take out their new legislators on a district project tour after the session ended, expanding their conversations about using district funds and solving local issues involving salmon restoration. Dean Longrie shared Clark CD had a write-in candidate for their election, a recent first for them.

John Preston shared Grant County CD was able to meet in-person for the first time in a year, with several members of the district still participating virtually. They had finished the five year VSP report for Grant County, also working on their Adams County VSP report since their CD contracted with both counties. He was excited the district would soon be breaking ground on a new office building in a partnership with a local fire district. He called out Harold Crose for his work on the Odessa Aquifer in trying to secure new state, private, and federal funding.

Standing Committee Reports

Larry Davis joined the call to report on the Tribal Relations Committee. A recent survey report was being finalized on how CDs and tribal entities could mutually strengthen their relationships. The committee was finishing their discussion at the April meeting. He shared the committee was reviewing a list of recommendations for the WACD Board of Directors stemming from that survey.

Ryan Baye spoke on Treasurer Dave Fenn's behalf on the Finance Committee. They would be meeting for the first time in the next week, and he shared a short list of topics on the Finance Committee's radar.

Special Committee Reports

Tom Salzer recounted the work of the Joint Committee on Elections thus far, how the Commission staff was taking the lead and who was on the committee. WACD was leading the DEI committee process, which was going slower. He was looking at securing an outside facilitator, and that committee volunteers had been selected but not appointed. Jeanette added geographic representation, and the two representatives per area, were important to her and was glad Mike Mumford had worked hard to finding people willing to serve. Mike was glad a staff person and supervisor was available in almost every area and he was still working on a supervisor from the North Central Area Association.

Legislative Update

Ryan relayed how many CDs WACD helped secure legislative appointments this year and he was reaching out to the 10-12 other CDs to hear how their appointments went.

Brynn Brady joined the meeting, discussing the fiscal impact of the American Rescue Plan on the state budget development and the changes forthcoming due to the additional funds. She cited rumors around delaying the budget timeline, both the writing and the adoption, because of complexities regarding federal funding. She answered questions from board members on broadband internet access, bill status, and other federal impacts on state and local budgets.

Dean Longrie, Jeanette Dorner, and Mark Craven shared some of their district interactions with legislators.

Larson Gross Financial Review

Tom highlighted three items from the review done by WACD's auditor: that there were no findings or items of major concern, their note of the valuation of the PMC, and the discrepancy of opinions between sales to members and sales to non-members. He answered questions of generally accepted

accounting practices (GAAP) and ways to resolve some longstanding questions about the valuation of the nursery in Bow and any benefit of changing accounting practices.

2021 Annual Conference Decision

Ryan described the staff memo on the future decision to be made regarding this year's Annual Conference and the options staff presented. He answered questions about the three possibilities laid out, if Area Directors were expected to be the ones asking their member-districts, and if online voting would be an option if an in-person business meeting was to be held. Several board members offered their initial opinions.

NACD Fly-In

Doug Rushton updated the board on the Fly-In, attendees, and topics to be discussed. Carol Smith added the Commission's perspective on these federal-level meetings and some of her goals.

Recent Letters to the Board

Tom discussed a potential response to the letters received by the Board of Directors. He answered questions from Doug and Mark Craven on what communications would be provided to the committee members and fielded additional comments regarding respecting the resolution process and the remaining uncertainty around the goals being asked of the committee.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28