

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Bow, WA with Zoom connection

June 20, 2022

Summary of Board Motions

- **Motion:** Doug Rushton moved to approve the draft agenda with the addition of an agenda item “thanking Annie Byerly and Bill Blake for their service as board members” and the rescheduling of the “WACD Comment Policy” agenda item. Second by Jeff Schibel. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Jeff Schibel moved to adopt the public comment policy as presented. Second by Amy McKay. A friendly amendment by Craig Nelson was accepted to substitute “up to five minutes” for “limited to no more than five minutes”. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Barbara Bailey moved to approve the minutes from the April and May meetings as presented. Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried with abstentions by Jeff Schibel and David Iyall.
- **Motion:** John McLean moved that WACD’s Board of Directors write a letter regarding concern about the siting of large scale solar projects without local input. Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Amy McKay moved to adopt the investment policy as presented by the Investment Task Force. Second by Chris Porter. A friendly amendment by John McLean was accepted that the remaining balance in the money market account be designated as the amount of PMC reserve until the implementation of a new reserve policy. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Amy McKay moved to approve Wenatchee Convention Center as the venue for the 2022 and 2023 Annual Conference venue. Second by John Preston. Motion carried on a voice vote.
- **Motion:** Alan Chapman moved to accept the draft FY23 work plan as presented. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Chris Porter moved to approve the present COLA amount giving all full-time staff a uniform flat increase. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Amy McKay moved to approve the draft budget with the updated travel estimates and up to \$1,500 in travel assistance for Larry Davis to attend the NACD Summer Meeting. Second by Doug Rushton. A friendly amendment by John McLean to increase the amount from \$1,500 to \$3,000 was accepted. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Chris Porter moved to authorize the purchase of a new vehicle up to \$40,000 plus tax, title, license, and warranty expenses. Second by John Preston. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Alan Chapman moved that after conversations with the five districts listed in the letter, the WACD Board of Directors respond with a message that included an acknowledgement of their concerns, and a statement that WACD wants things to work well for everyone. The

message would include a reminder there are opportunities to participate in leadership and the ability to write resolutions; that WACD wants to keep communications open to work together to change and move forward in WACD's processes. Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried with an abstention by Chris Porter.

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Board of Directors March Work Session Minutes

Members Present

Mike Mumford, President (Pend Oreille CD)
Amy McKay, Vice President (Whitman CD)
Barbara Bailey, Secretary (Underwood CD)
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)
Jeanette Dorner, Past President (Pierce CD)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
Chris Porter, Northwest Area Director (King CD)
Lisa Zaborac, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor CD)
David Iyall, Southwest Area Director (Thurston CD)
John Preston, North Central Area Director (Grant County CD)
John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)
Jeff Schibel, Northeast Area Director (Lincoln County CD)
Craig Nelson, WADE Vice President (Okanogan CD)

Others Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director
Jim Brown, WACD Director of Nursery Operations
Lori McLaughlin, WACD Financial Accounting & Human Resources Administrator
John Knox, WACD PMC Assistant Nursery Manager
Ryan Baye, WACD Director of Legislative and Membership Services
Christopher Pettit, WSCC Executive Director
Mark Craven, Snohomish CD Supervisor
Mike Tobin, North Yakima CD District Manager
Josh
Zorah

President Mumford called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. After introductions of those present in person and remotely, he presented the draft agenda for the meeting with two proposed adjustments. Doug Rushton moved to approve the draft agenda with the addition of an agenda item "thanking Annie Byerly and Bill Blake for their service as board members" and the rescheduling of the "WACD Comment Policy" agenda item. Second by Jeff Schibel. Motion carried.

Public Comment Policy

Ryan Baye presented the proposed public comment policy and how feedback from the May Work Session was incorporated into the present version. Jeff Schibel moved to adopt the public comment

policy as presented. Second by Amy McKay. A friendly amendment by Craig Nelson was accepted to substitute “up to five minutes” for “limited to no more than five minutes”. Motion carried.

Area Focus

Mike Tobin presented on the natural resource priorities in his district with a focus on water diversion, habitat, and conservation easements. He answered questions about ranger district programs and the permitting of large-scale solar facilities in the area.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Barbara Bailey moved to approve the minutes from the April and May meetings as presented. Second by Amy McKay. Motion carried with abstentions by Jeff Schibel and David Iyall.

Partner Reports

Chris Pettit thanked the districts for their hard work based on what he’d seen so far. He spoke to his district visits, project tours, and attending the WADE Conference. He shared details from the Commission’s proposed decision packages and the 2023-25 biennium budget process.

Craig Nelson presented the names of the new WADE officer corps and recapped the success of the recent WADE Conference. He answered questions about future conferences and the turnout for the 2022 conference.

Doug Rushton discussed the Washington Conservation Society’s leadership and the discussion around potentially helping WACD dispose of their Lincoln town car in a way that benefited the Society.

Doug Rushton also presented on behalf of the National Association of Conservation Districts regarding upcoming dues and the numerous new NACD staff.

Committee Updates

Ryan Baye discussed the progress of the Sustainable Funding Committee, the Livestock Task Force, and the Harmful Algae Bloom Work Group. He also described changes in the Open Public Meeting Act that required some WACD committees and task forces to be made available for public participation.

Executive Office Update

Tom Salzer shared with the Board the legislative planning to be done over the summer, the summer schedule for publishing the weekly 5 Things Newsletter, and the resolutions Tom and Ryan planned to work on over the next few months.

John McLean moved that WACD’s Board of Director write a letter regarding concern about the siting of large scale solar projects without local input. Second by Amy McKay. Mike Tobin shared during public comment the need to relate the proposed letter back to conservation, land conversion, and habitat concerns. Chris Porter noted that no matter how the letter was to be crafted that WACD would be wading into very political waters. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report

Tom Salzer presented the monthly financials, highlighting the \$1.6 million in revenue for the year. He answered questions about the budgeted income and expenses for the Executive Office, the status of the investment account, and the difference between actual and unrealized gains from the stock market.

Nursery Manager's Report

Jim Brown spoke to the board and highlighted a few items from his written report. He answered many questions from Board members, including questions: comparing this year to pre-pandemic sales; the impact of the wet and cool spring; if the PMC saw an impact on reforestation plant sales after recent wildfires; his thoughts on the Commission's Riparian Planting Program funding; the possibility of expansion at the PMC; the PMC's new policies regarding excessive heat working condition and overtime pay; and for an update on crop insurance options.

Investment Task Force

Barbara Bailey presented the recommendations of the Investment Task Force, their assumptions that led to this set of recommendations, and the hypothetical financial outcome using 50-year historical returns of a 60% equity/40% fixed income portfolio as a projection. She answered questions about WACD cash flow, the purpose of the investment fund and possible uses of taking 2% out of the fund each year, the possibility of socially responsible investments, and if WACD had ever withdrawn funds from the investment fund.

Amy McKay moved to adopt the investment policy as presented by the Investment Task Force. Second by Chris Porter. Mark Craven asked during public comment what amount of money would be carried as the PMC's liability reserve and where it would be located. A friendly amendment by John McLean was accepted that the remaining balance in the money market account be designed as the amount of PMC reserve until the implementation of a new reserve policy. Motion carried.

2022/2023 Annual Conference Venue

Ryan Baye presented the two proposals from the Yakima and Wenatchee Convention Center for hosting WACD's Annual Conference. He noted Yakima's hotels did not satisfy the requirement that their rates be set at the government per diem rates and showed photos from both venues. There was discussion about traveling to North Central Washington in late November and what location would generate the most attendance. Amy McKay moved to approve Wenatchee Convention Center as the venue for the 2022 and 2023 Annual Conference venue. Second by John Preston. Motion carried on a voice vote.

WACD Work Plan

Josh Monaghan joined the meeting to present the final version of the FY23 work plan and the five suggested edits based on the comments received during their outreach to the membership. Alan Chapman moved to accept the draft FY23 work plan as presented. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.

Potential Cost of Living Adjustment

Tom Salzer presented the proposed COLA based on WACD's preference for equal increased for all full-time staff based on the rate of inflation for the two WACD work sites in Olympia and Bow. There was a discussion amongst the board members of the impact if a cost of living was not provided for staff as well as if an amount less than the rate of inflation was appropriate. Chris Porter moved to approve the present COLA amount giving all full-time staff a uniform flat increase. Second by Doug Rushton. Motion carried.

FY 2023 WACD Budget

Ryan Baye presented the financial assumptions in the budget to the board and provided updated estimates for travel expenses based on recent increases. Tom Salzer provided additional details for the Executive Office and PMC budgets. There were questions about the assumption of how many districts would pay dues this year, the reasoning behind a negative budget figure for the Executive Office, the Commission's contract with WACD and if the increase in PMC sales was due in part to the new policy allowing the use of credit cards.

There was also discussion of the accuracy of the PMC sales estimates, the ongoing issues with the IRS, and various options for a new work vehicle in Olympia. Amy McKay moved to approve the draft budget with the updated travel estimates and up to \$1,500 in travel assistance for Larry Davis to attend the NACD Summer Meeting. Second by Doug Rushton. A friendly amendment by John McLean to increase the amount from \$1,500 to \$3,000 was accepted. Motion carried.

Chris Porter moved to authorize the purchase of a new vehicle up to \$40,000 plus tax, title, license, and warranty expenses. Second by John Preston. Motion carried.

Correspondence Received from Districts

The discussion began with trying to confirm the details included in the letter received by the WACD Board of Directors and who received copies. Various board members offered their opinions on recent decisions by both the WACD Board and the membership and how mistakes were made. Several board members expressed confusion at the letter's obliqueness and absence of desired actions from the five districts expressing their dissatisfaction with the direction of the association. There was a desire for direct communication before a proper response could be composed.

Alan Chapman moved that after conversations with the five districts listed in the letter, the WACD Board of Directors respond with a message that included an acknowledgement of their concerns; a statement that WACD want things to work well for everyone; a reminder there are opportunities to participate in leadership and the ability to write resolutions; and a statement that WACD wants to keep communications open to work together to change and move forward in WACD's processes. Second by Amy McKay. Zorah Oppenheimer joined the meeting and offered during public comment her belief that mistakes in WACD's processes were made and that issues arise when the process is not transparent or easy to follow. Jeanette Dorner shared her recollection of the 2021 Annual Business Meeting and that meeting's contribution to this discussion. Amy McKay and Alan Chapman volunteered to contact the five districts. Lisa Zaborac believed not everyone was remembering the events in question the same. Motion carried with an abstention by Chris Porter.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.