



744 La Guardia Street, Building A, Salinas, CA 93905

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August 27, 2020— MEETING MINUTES—APPROVED Sept. 17, 2020

Regular Board Meeting, Thursday, August 27, 2020, 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Directors Present: R. King, J. Doud, B. Plemmons, J. Clarke, B. Jefferson

Directors Absent: B. Lipe, J. Gularte

Others Present: P. Robins (RCDMC), M. Barker (RCDMC), M. Errea (RCDMC), E. Boyland (NRCS), J. Warner (NRCS), M. Ritter, I. Mendoza, L. Murphy (RCDMC), A. Carter (RCDMC)

Recorders: M. Barker, P. Robins

Because of shelter-in-place orders for the COVID-19 outbreak, the meeting was held by Zoom conference.

Open Session: Director King called the meeting to Order at 10:01 am

Public Comment: Ignacio Mendoza introduced himself to the Board as an applicant for Board service as an Associate Director.

Consent Items

- *Approval of Draft Meeting Agenda*
- *Approval of Minutes from the July 23, 2020 Regular Board Meeting*
- *Accept Staff Activities Report for July 2020.*

Director Doud moved to approve all Consent Items. Director Jefferson seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

Reports

Executive Director Report: Paul Robins gave a brief overview of recent activities: 1. Participation in group proposal with RCDs of Santa Cruz and San Mateo Counties to the Coastal Conservancy for carrying forward the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program (IWRP) to 2023; 2. Preparation of a grant application to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) in September to carry arundo work on the Salinas River downstream to Gonzales through 2025; 3. Postponement of Trout Unlimited fish passage projects in Carmel Valley until next year because of recent fires; 4. Release of the Blanco Drain Bioreactor Request for Bids (RFB) for work that will hopefully begin this year; 5. Environmental Scientist Megan Barker and Engineer Adrienne Carter working on the Wave Rider Nursery project construction; 6. Development of worker safety guidelines during periods of poor air quality (smoke); and 7. Temporarily hiring a former NRCS engineer with NRCS funds to help cover post-fire technical assistance demands for the local wildfires.

NRCS Report: District Conservation Erika Boyland reported that she is going to be on a 90-day detail in Florida effective September 13, so Engineer Desi Ramirez will be overseeing the post-fire recovery efforts and EWP-related work. District Conservationists from Hollister and Livermore will be covering other aspects of management for the Salinas field office in

Boyland's absence.

Soil Conservationist John Warner is retiring from the Salinas field office. Warner has been an instrumental provider of financial and technical assistance for both NRCS and RCDMC. He shared a brief video highlighting some key moments from his career with NRCS and board members thanked him for his service in Monterey County.

Directors' Updates: Directors Plemmons attended the Central Coast RCD area meeting recently and will share key takeaways at the next board meeting.

Old or Standing Business

P. Robins / Directors

No items pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Monthly Financial Statements: M. Errea presented the financial statements regarding Accounts Receivable, Payables and Bank balances for the period ending August 27, 2020. The accrual account balance on August 27, 2020 was \$ 201,274.78 with \$489,667.56 in the Chase Bank and County Treasury accounts (taking into account checks to be signed at the meeting), \$663,805 in liabilities, and \$375,412.38 due to the RCD as receivables from various grants and outstanding invoices. For comparison, the Accrual accounting balance for District Funds stood at \$178,569.56 on July 23, 2020.

Expenses: Errea presented the list of detailed expenses to be paid on August 27, including bi-weekly salary through August 16, one-time and recurring miscellaneous expenses, and reimbursement for expenses incurred during the months of July and August, totaling \$134,908.49.

Director Jefferson moved to approve the August financial statements and the July and August expenses as presented. Director Plemmons seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

RCDMC Procurement Policy: Robins again discussed a change to the procurement policy that had been presented to the board in October 2019 and July 2020 but never finalized. The proposed modification increases the threshold for requiring competitive bidding for state-funded professional services contracts from \$60,000 to \$100,000, which would give RCDMC flexibility for moving quickly with time-sensitive design and permitting work. This would not limit RCDMC Board of Directors' oversight of awards and approvals. After a brief discussion, Director Plemmons moved to approve the revised RCDMC procurement policy as presented. Director Doud seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

Review of New or Revised Independent Contractor Agreements: The following two contract modifications and new contract were reviewed:

- Washburn Grove Management ICA 2019-17, modification 1: Contract modification establishes new NTE amount of \$235,000 and scope of work for 2020 Arundo Program Work Season. Contractor will mow at least 75 (and up to 100) acres of *Arundo donax* in the Salinas River riparian corridor between the cities of Soledad and Gonzales. Two mowers will be used concurrently over a period of 25 days, broken into three 10-day (or less) units.
- California State Parks, Monterey. Agreement under CAL FIRE Los Padres Grant, NTE \$169,450: State Parks will conduct 348 acres of prescribed burning, which will include preparation of 50 acres of removing brush species, primarily coyotebrush (*Baccharis pilularis*) and leaving the cut material to be burned later in the prescribed burn. They will also conduct 30 acres of French broom (*Genista monopesulana*) treatment in the Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park utilizing herbicides and hand pulling methods. Treatments on State Parks lands will be carried out according to State Parks management practices and managed by State Parks personnel. Personnel time will include a matching contribution of \$23,176. Because the agreement is with a state agency, they have requested (required) use of their own form of agreement, to be finalized in September, 2020.

Director Clarke moved to approve the New or Revised Independent Contractor Agreements as presented. Director Plemmons seconded and all motioned to approve.

New Associate Director Applications: Marissa Ritter & Ignacio Mendoza – A formal vote was held to accept both Marissa Ritter and Ignacio Mendoza onto the Board as Associate Directors. Marissa has been participating in the Outreach and Education and board meetings for the few couple months. Ignacio has recently applied to join the board as an Associate Director. Director Jefferson voiced his support for both applicants joining the board.

Director Plemmons moved to approve the New Associate Director Applications as presented. Director Doud seconded and all motioned to approve.

New Business

Directors/ Staff

Consideration of Resolution 2020-05 to authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the California Department of Parks And Recreation to provide fire prevention services on State Park lands in Monterey County for a cost not to exceed \$169,540 in CAL FIRE grant funds: Robins described the resolution needed by State Parks in order to enter into contract with them as a sub-grantee under the new CAL FIRE grant for the Santa Lucia Strategic Community Fuelbreak partnership. After brief discussion, Director King moved to approve the Resolution 2020-05 as presented. Director Jefferson seconded and all motioned to approve.

Biennial Conflict of Interest Code review Recent Newsletter & Outreach Planning: Every two years RCDMC has to confirm that the Conflict of Interest Code is up-to-date. Robins received slightly updated legal language from the County of Monterey and incorporated it into the draft shared with the Board. He will request approval the updated conflict of interest code at the September board meeting.

Strategic Plan update planning: The RCD strategic plan is up for revision in 2021, and Robins solicited guidance from the board for the best means of conducting that given the likelihood of Shelter In Place orders being maintained through much of the current fiscal year. Director King suggested that a survey be sent out prior to the strategic plan meeting by email. Robins recommended that the plan review be spread out over several meetings via Zoom with a couple intensive sessions in January or February. He proposed an Executive Committee meeting be held in early September to map out a course of action for the board's consideration in September.

Soil Scientist Staff presentation: Healthy soils & agronomic technical assistance: RCDMC Soil Scientist Laura Murphy provided an overview of her recent work. She shared that she has been assigned to several projects related to healthy soils which have proven to be challenging. Murphy voiced the importance of the relationship with RCD of Santa Cruz County in these efforts. She noted that it has been particularly difficult to get growers who are not currently using cover crops to adopt them. Adoption seems to be more popular for growers who own rather than lease their land. Murphy also shared that she has been using the NRCS Soil Quality Test Kit for conducting soil respiration, bulk density and soil aggregate stability tests. She discussed the difficulty in gaining insights from the testing because of the varying soils across sites. Murphy shared that the inclusion of organic soil amendments (compost) has been particularly popular.

Murphy's presentation was followed by a brief discussion with the board. Director King offered

to set up a connection and field visit with Phil Foster from Pinnacle Farms to have a look at what he has been doing with no-till production of organic vegetables. Director Jefferson offered insight about the importance of annual soil and water testing to determine soil amendments (type and rate for each year) prior to planting to ensure healthy crops. Jefferson shared that he has also received benefits from cover crops and compost. However, he noted that the costs of rent will be a limiting factor for farmers who do not own their land. Director Doud indicated the importance for rangeland producers in maintaining living cover and roots, keeping at least a minimum amount of productive grass upon entering the rainy season to maintain soil health and productivity.

Announcements

None to report.

Directors/ Robins

11:50 P.M. Meeting Adjourned

Next Regular RCD meeting:

Date: Thursday, September 17, 10am

Location: Meeting will be held by teleconference