



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

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June 24, 2021– MEETING MINUTES—Approved July 22, 2021

Regular Board Meeting, Thursday, June 24, 2021, 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

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

Directors Absent: I. Mendoza (Associate), M. Ritter (Associate)

Others Present: P. Robins (RCDMC), M. Errea (RCDMC), M. Barker (RCDMC), A. DeLara (NRCS)

Recorders: M. Barker, P. Robins

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

Closed session: Executive Director annual performance review.

Open Session: Director Jefferson called the meeting to Order at 10:30 am

Report out from closed session: Director King expressed that Executive Director performance review was positive overall. Robins continues to bring in new projects and has growing responsibilities. He was encouraged to continue to delegate any tasks he can to lighten his workload. An associated 3% salary increase for Robins was approved by the Board to be effective July 1.

Public Comment: None

Consent Items:

- *Approval of Draft Meeting Agenda*
- *Approval of Minutes from the May 20, 2021 Regular Board Meeting*
- *Accept Staff Activities Report for May 2021.*

Director Clarke moved to approve the Consent Items. Director King seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

Reports

Executive Director Report:

Robins announced that RCDMC Program Coordinator Brandt Bates's daughter Brynn Hazel was born on Monday. There will be a CARCD in-person annual conference the week after Thanksgiving in Santa Barbara. Board members and interested RCDMC staff can attend.

NRCS Report:

The NRCS District Conservationist Ari DeLara announced that a selection has been made for the Agronomist position and that the applicant has accepted the position. She attended grad school at UC Davis and is currently employed with NRCS in Arkansas. The NRCS Salinas Office is also currently looking to hire a Range Conservationist and Engineer. Former Salinas

Office Range Conservationist Allison Tokunaga has been promoted to the Soil Scientist position. An engineer intern from Tuskegee University will also be working in the Salinas Office for the summer.

DeLara shared that there is a lack of NRCS funds this year and the total funding available for the Central Coast and Monterey County is substantially less than previous years.

A new Salinas River Arundo Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) contract for our area was approved for \$270,000. DeLara shared there is a new EQIP-CIC (Conservation Incentive Contract) program which blends traditional contracts with the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The application deadline for NRCS funding is July 12th. NRCS is hoping to have planning completed by August 1st. DeLara noted that less money has become available for EQIP in recent years, whereas the CSP program funding has increased.

Director Jefferson shared that the current NRCS AGI limit of \$900,000 is too limited for Central Coast growers, who typically gross much more than that because of the high value crops grown in the region. DeLara stated that the AGI waiver might be worth applying for despite the cumbersome process. He also shared that he hopes that an AGI waiver can be written into future programs as it is for the RCPP. Director Lipe suggested that USDA utilize a block grant approach for farmer conservation cost share dollars rather than the current paperwork-intensive approach. Director Clarke mentioned that cost and return studies are being done to look at the costs incurred by farmers in different parts of the country (<https://coststudies.ucdavis.edu/en/>). Director Gularte also shared a link for a study done by Cal Poly that looked at regulatory costs (https://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/agb_fac/155/).

Directors Reports:

Director Plemmons requested that anyone who would like to suggest a 2021 CARCD Speak Off Contest topic let him know because a topic has not been selected yet.

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 June 24, 2021. The accrual account balance on June 24, 2021 was \$230,888.25 with \$220,376.53 in the Chase Bank and County Treasury, \$121,519 in liabilities, and \$132,031.21 due to the RCD as receivables from various grants and outstanding invoices. For comparison, the Accrual accounting balance for District Funds stood at \$267,914.69 on May 20, 2021.

Expenses: Errea presented the list of detailed expenses to be paid on June 24, including bi-weekly salary through June 21, one-time and recurring miscellaneous expenses, and reimbursement for expenses incurred during the months of May and June, totaling \$411,666.73.

Director King moved to approve the June financial statements and the May and June expenses. Director Clarke seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

2021-22 Annual Workplan: The Annual Work Plan is a summary of both proposed work and aspirations for completion during the Fiscal Year of July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022, as supported by the associated Fiscal Year Budget and contributions of time from the RCD Board of Directors and cooperating land managers, owners, partner organizations and community members. Robins briefly outlined notable changes since the prior version of the Annual Plan. In response to Director Lipe, Robins confirmed that progress reports will be made to the Board to keep them

abreast of status towards meeting the goals of the plan during the course of the year.

Director Lipe moved to approve the 2021-22 Annual Work Plan as presented. Director Doud seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

2021-22 Annual Budget: Robins reviewed the annual budget with the board. The RCDMC finance committee members (Directors Plemmons and Lipe) reviewed the budget the prior week and indicated their support of it. There were no additional questions from the Board about the 2021-22 Annual Budget.

Director Plemmons motioned to approve the 2021-22 Annual Budget. Director Lipe seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

Review of New or Revised Independent Contractor Agreements: RDO small restoration project irrigation system at Elm Ave. Robins briefly described this contract for assistance with an irrigation system to maintain native vegetation on the Salinas River. This project is supported by a combination of landowner, NRCS and the Wildlife Conservation Board resources with an NTE of \$6,677.69.

New business

Agreement update with Salinas River Management Unit Association: Robins reported that he'd recently met with both the RMU Association board and separately with RMUA President Christopher Bunn and Norm Groot from the Farm Bureau regarding budgeting for RCDMC assistance to the RMU Association for the Stream Maintenance Program. The Association may need to adjust their participants' project fees in order to cover the program cost, and Bunn has proposed a T-shirt fundraiser to raise additional money for the program this year since a BBQ was not an option. RCD Board members present indicated support for the concept.

2021 Calendar and quarterly mini-tour board meetings in rotating Sup. Districts: Robins noted that North County (District 2 – John Phillips), South County (District 3 – Chris Lopez) and Salinas (District 1 – Luis Alejo) districts have not yet been toured. Potential tour sites in North County could be Tembladero Slough or Santa Rita Creek. Robins expressed that he would like to begin hosting monthly in-person board meetings again while maintaining social distancing at outdoor locations, such as the Farm Bureau. Board members encouraged him to inquire about options.

Fundraising and events discussion for coming fiscal year: The discussion was postponed until the next board meeting.

Hosting fall Central Coast Area RCDs meeting: The Central Coast Area RCD meeting will be held on a Wednesday in mid- to late-October and will incorporate the Speak Off Contest and a tour. A meeting venue has not been decided on yet. Board members discussed potential meeting locations and tour sites.

Annual Calendar for Upcoming Fiscal Year: Robins will prepare an annual RCD calendar of activities prior to the next board meeting.

Announcements

None.

Directors/ Robins

12:05 P.M. Meeting Adjourned

Next Regular RCD meeting: Thursday, July 22, 10am. Meeting location is to be determined.