



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

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July 22, 2021– MEETING MINUTES—*Approved August 19, 2021*

Regular Board Meeting, Thursday, July 22, 2021, 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Directors Present: R. King, B. Plemmons, J. Clarke, B. Lipe, J. Doud, M. Ritter (Associate)

Directors Absent: B. Jefferson, J. Gularte, I. Mendoza (Associate),

Others Present: P. Robins (RCDMC), M. Errea (RCDMC), M. Barker (RCDMC), A. Carter (RCDMC), A. DeLara (NRCS), Maree Forbes (National Travel Center on behalf of Big Sur By-Ways Organization)

Recorders: M. Barker, P. Robins

The meeting was held by Hybrid In-person/Zoom conference.

Open Session: Director Clarke called the meeting to Order at 10:12 am

Public Comment: None

Consent Items:

- *Approval of Draft Meeting Agenda*
- *Approval of Minutes from the June 24, 2021 Regular Board Meeting*
- *Accept Staff Activities Report for June 2021.*

Director Lipe moved to approve the Consent Items. Director Plemmons seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

Reports

Executive Director Report:

Robins shared that a CARCD in-person annual conference is planned for the week after Thanksgiving in Santa Barbara. Planning for the RCD Area Meeting (which will be hosted by RCDMC in October) will begin in the coming weeks. Robins also announced that the \$300,000 Dry Period Loan request has likely been approved by the County.

NRCS Report:

The NRCS District Conservationist Ariel DeLara announced that a new Agronomist will be starting at the end of the month. The selected applicant attended grad school at UC Davis and is currently employed with NRCS in Arkansas. The NRCS Salinas Office is also currently interviewing for a Range Conservationist and Engineer position.

DeLara shared that NRCS is still working on EQIP applications and EQIP-CIC applications. He also shared that the Joint Chiefs Partnership may be extended and that the interpretation of eligible projects has been broadened to include more properties outside those bordering the National Forest. A new 1-year engineering partnership agreement with RCDMC is close to being completed. DeLara provided a follow-up explanation to the discussion at the last board meeting about the EQIP AGI (Adjusted Gross Income) limit. He said that the current AGI limit of

\$900,000 is written into the current Farm Bill and that limit is re-considered every time a new Farm Bill is developed. The next Farm Bill comes up for review in 2022, and stakeholders such as the RCD are encouraged to provide input on topics of concern such as this.

Directors Reports:

Director Clarke shared that the County Board of Supervisors approved a motion to discuss a proposal to co-fund farm advisors for UCANR that the CA Leafy Greens Council and Farm Bureau and others have proposed. With existing funding UCANR will be funding a Plant Pathologist for the region to be based in Watsonville. The additional funding proposal would cover the currently vacant Entomologist and soon-to-be-vacant Weed Scientist posts.

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 July 22, 2021. The accrual account balance on July 22, 2021 was \$222,732.40 with \$224,606.31 in the Chase Bank and County Treasury, \$121,103 in liabilities, and \$119,229.15 due to the RCD as receivables from various grants and outstanding invoices. For comparison, the Accrual accounting balance for District Funds stood at \$230,888.25 on June 24, 2021.

Expenses:

Errea presented the list of detailed expenses to be paid on July 22, including bi-weekly salary through July 19, one-time and recurring miscellaneous expenses, and reimbursement for expenses incurred during the months of June and July, totaling \$90,286.02.

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

RCD Annual Calendar, & Fall RCD Central Coast meeting:

Robins shared the RCDMC Annual Board Calendar for 2021-2022. The calendar includes approximate timeframes for fundraising and outreach events in the coming fiscal year. The 2021 Speak Off Contest will be held at the October board meeting, and this year's topic is "What can Resource Conservation Districts do to help create a more inclusive dialogue about conservation work?". The RCD Area Meeting will also be held in October and RCD staff have the option to give presentations at the meeting. RCDMC will host this year. The Land Judging Contest is planned for early November

New Board Member search:

Director King is attempting to recruit a new board member to take her place as Vice President. She has reached out to Todd Champagne from Happy Girl Kitchen but is awaiting a response. Director Doud will also reach out to Chanel Keller of Dirt House Farms who lives in the Palo Colorado Canyon area to see if she would be interested in joining the board.

New business

Fundraising and event planning:

Director King is attempting to find a replacement who can help take the lead on a fall fundraising event. The discussion about the fall event has been tabled for the next board meeting when outreach lead Director Gularte is present. Christopher Bunn (RMU Association) has reached out

to artists and donors to raise \$20,000 for the Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program to help offset costs. The Annual BBQ is still planned for Spring 2022 (assuming that there is not another delay due to COVID Delta variant).

Big Sur Byway Organization request for fiscal agent and organizational support:

Maree Forbes from the National Travel Center spoke on behalf of the Big Sur Byway Organization (BSBO) to provide an introduction about the organization to RCDMC staff and board. Forbes stated that Highway 1 is the most popular Byway in the world, and one out of every three images of tourism shown of California is of the Big Sur area. Forbes has been assisting Byways Organizations for 20 years and is actively looking for grants to help support the BSBO's efforts such as the highway projects program. The BSBO was formed to get public input and comment about development in the region. A functional budget for the BSBO is estimated to run between \$50,000 and \$200,000. The BSBO has requested that the RCD serve as a fiscal agent and provide initial organizational support (for bookkeeping, etc.) to help activate the organization. Since the BSBO is not a 501c3, they are limited in their ability to raise and handle funding. Forbes shared that there are two small grant options through Community Foundation (\$5,000 each) as well as Caltrans funding available to start these efforts. The RCD is considered a good fit to serve as a fiscal agent because it is eligible to receive a variety of funds, including those from private donors and Caltrans agreements. The Big Sur Byway Organization has requested a letter from RCDMC stating that they can serve as the fiscal agent.

Forbes also described how the southern portion of the Byway is run by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments. Director Lipe shared that the Hearst Family owns a large sized property that straddles San Luis Obispo and Monterey County and they might be a potential funder.

Director Lipe moved that RCDMC put a letter together stating that they can serve as the Big Sur Byway Organization's Fiscal Agent. Director Plemmons and Clark seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Announcements

None.

Directors/ Robins

11:41 A.M. Meeting Adjourned

Next Regular RCD meeting: Thursday, August 19, 10am. Meeting location is to be determined.