



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

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March 24, 2022– MEETING MINUTES—*Approved April 21, 2022*

Regular Board Meeting, Thursday, March 24, 2022, 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

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

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

Others Present: P. Robins (RCDMC), M. Errea (RCDMC), M. Barker (RCDMC), A. Carter (RCDMC), A. DeLara (NRCS), A. Curry (NRCS), G. Morton (Marina Coast Water District)

Recorders: P. Robins, M. Barker

The meeting was held in hybrid form, both in-person and by Zoom conference.

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

Public Comment: Gail Morton introduced herself as running for the Special District Member seat in the Local Agency Formation Commission of Monterey County (LAFCO). She currently serves as a Director for the Marina Coast Water District and is an attorney in private practice and has been an advocate for open space in Monterey County for many years. She shared that her advocacy has focused on protecting the oak woodland and wildlife corridor from the coast to the Fort Ord Monument and advocating for the decommissioning the CEMEX sand mining plant.

Morton explained that LAFCO oversees annexation and transformation of open space and agriculture to residential or commercial development. A LAFCO ballot has already been distributed to the RCDMC for the District Member seat election. She encouraged RCDMC to have representation on the LAFCO board. April 1 is the deadline for ballots. The ballot information will be shared with Board Members and a special meeting will be held next week to discuss the LAFCO vote.

Consent Items:

- *Approval of Resolution 22-05 to comply with AB 361 for remote meetings*
- *Approval of Draft Meeting Agenda*
- *Approval of Minutes from the February 17, 2022 Regular Board meeting*
- *Staff Activities Report for February 2022*

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

Reports

NRCS Report:

NRCS Salinas District Conservationist Ariel DeLara provided an update regarding the Joint Chiefs funding available in the Big Sur area for fire fuels reduction and vegetation management. DeLara shared that in response to recent outreach by RCDMC, NRCS has received almost 40

applications so far and that they are expecting to receive more. This funding is available for lands in the Santa Lucia Mountains and Sierra de Salinas, with emphasis on recently impacted fire areas including the Big Sur and Carmel Valley communities. DeLara also shared that the Regional Conservation Protection Program (RCPP) Arundo Project has already had 4 contracts receive funding through the program and that an additional project will likely receive funding this year. Another program, the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program, addresses post-fire work for erosion control for recent fire-impacted areas. DeLara said there were 6 total applications for the EWP funds related to the River Fire. There are also 8-10 applications in the planning process for people affected by the Colorado Fire.

For regular EQIP funding, there were 40 applications submitted and 6 selected from the most recent batching period, despite an announcement of more funding available. Only 15% of the EQIP applications submitted in Monterey County were selected for funding with about \$400,000 allocated, which DeLara said was a disappointment as it was below the expected amount of funds available. Director Doud asked how applicants can get a higher rank to be more competitive for funding. DeLara said that applications that included more diverse practices to address multiple resource concerns are more competitive. As an example, a rancher wanting to install a livestock watering pipeline and fencing could enhance their application by including invasive plant removal and native vegetation plantings.

Executive Director Report:

Robins shared that he has been trying to streamline the board memo staff report, reducing the report from 10 pages to 4 pages, and grouping activities into nested categories addressing the RCDMC's Strategic Goals. Directors indicated that they noticed and appreciated the modification and how it accented progress being made on the Strategic Plan.

Directors Reports:

Director Clarke shared that there was a recent USDA Urban Ag & Innovation Production Advisor Committee meeting about urban agriculture opportunities. Robins said that RCDMC staff have been in communication with coastal city residents and staff interested in supporting urban gardening, habitat and food production efforts. RCDMC staff recently submitted two proposals (to National Association of Conservation Districts and the Community Foundation for Monterey County) for funding to support staff time for development of such projects.

Old or Standing Business

P. Robins / Directors

No items pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Monthly Financial Statements:

Finance Manager Errea presented the financial statements regarding Accounts Receivable, Payables and Bank balances for the period ending March 24, 2022. The accrual account balance on March 24, 2022 was \$231,880.86, with a balance of \$363,816.08 in the Chase Bank and County Treasury (including loans and advance payments), \$318,812 in liabilities, and \$193,307.30 due to the RCD as receivables from various grants and outstanding invoices. For comparison, the Accrual accounting balance for District Funds stood at \$224,031.13 on February 17, 2022.

Expenses:

Errea presented the list of detailed expenses to be paid on March 24, including bi-weekly salary through March 14, one-time and recurring miscellaneous expenses, and reimbursement for expenses incurred during the months of February and March, totaling \$260,626.49, including a large contract for Durden Construction for \$120,009 for the Blanco Drain Bioreactor construction contract. In addition, Errea requested permission to pre-approve

check #10103 for \$15,000 to Tailwater Systems, Inc. as a deposit to expedite initiation of the mobile bioreactor project. To protect RCDMC cash flow, project partner Preservation Inc is sending a check for the same amount to be reimbursed after the Water Board grant quarterly reimbursement is received.

Director Lipe moved to approve the March financial statements and the February and March expenses along with check#10103 for \$15,000 to Tailwater Systems, Inc. Director Doud seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

New Contracts and Agreements for review. Robins presented the following contractors for review: Pathways for Wildlife, ICA 2019-05 (wildlife monitoring study contract extension for an amount NTE \$1980); Tailwater Systems, Inc., new ICA 2022-02 (to construct, install, and operate a mobile bioreactor for an amount NTE \$40,547.68) selected from informal bid solicitation process; and Albion Inc., new ICA 2022-03 (cultural resources analysis for Rancho Rico community fuel management project for an amount NTE \$14,700) selected through negotiated contract process; all in manner consistent with RCDMC Procurement Policy. Robins asked that all Directors disclose any potential conflicts of interest before considering a vote. None were identified.

Director Gularte moved to approve the contracts as described. Director Plemmons seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

New business

Resolution 2022-06 to authorize entry into Fisheries Restoration Grant agreement. Robins introduced the resolution needed to authorize entry into a CDFW Fisheries Restoration Grant Program agreement for the recently-awarded Weston Champagne Project on Cachagua Creek, noting it is a standard procedure for most grant awards. Director Lipe moved to Resolution 2022-06. Director Gularte seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

FY 20-21 Financials Audit Report. Robins shared that the audit has been postponed again due to the Auditor's schedule. This agenda item was skipped and will be included at a later meeting.

Salinas River Partners BBQ fundraising planning. RCDMC Environmental Scientist Megan Barker walked Board Members through a list of duties needing volunteer coverage and the list of sponsors and auction donors to be contacted. Wayne Gularte of Rincon Farms was recommended to serve as this year's auctioneer, which was confirmed by text during the meeting. Director Plemmons volunteered to run the door and check in guests, with Director Lipe as a back-up. Maggie Errea volunteered to help process payment for auction items.

Announcements

Directors/ Robins

Directors agreed on a time and date (3/29, 1pm) for a Special Meeting to consider the LAFCO Special District ballot vote with Robins to provide candidate information in advance.

12:00 P.M. Meeting Adjourned

RCD Special Meeting: Tuesday, March 29th, 1pm.

Next Regular RCD meeting: Thursday, April 21st, 10am. Meeting will be held both in-person and by Zoom. The location will be at the American Ag Credit Office in Salinas.