

# Laramie County Conservation District

11221 U.S. Hwy. 30  
Cheyenne, WY 82009

## Regular Board Meeting

Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020

4:00 p.m.

### Attendance

**Supervisors Present:** Tom Farrell, Chairman; Kevin Wells, Vice Chairman/Treasurer; Ann Sanchez, Secretary; Jay Berry, Member, Jeremy Manley, Member.

**District Employees Present:** Shaun Kirkwood, Kathy Cooney, Jeff Geyer, Paul Sandler, Rex Lockman.

**NRCS Employees Present:** Mason Peebles

**Associate Supervisor:** Jim Cochran

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

At 4:10 p.m. Tom called the board meeting to order.

At 4:12 p.m. Tom closed the regular meeting and opened the Budget Amendment Hearing.

### 2. Budget Amendment Hearing - Consider approval of changes to the FY '19-'20 budget.

Income: increase #4223 to \$70,000.00 for additional grant funds received; add #4226 for Nature Conservancy Grant for \$20,000.00; add #4227 for WY Wildlife & Nat. Resource Trust Grant for \$150,000.00; add #4228 for American Recovery/Reinvestment Grant for \$60,000.00.

Expenses: decrease #6020 to \$1,488.00 to cover stream trailer cost; add #7061 for Nature Conservancy Grant for \$20,000.00; add #7062 for WY Wildlife & Nat. Resource Trust Grant for \$150,000.00; add #7063 for American Recover/Reinvestment Grant for \$60,000.00; increase #7068 to \$70,000.00 for additional grant funds received; increase #7580 to \$10,800.00 actual; decrease #7615 to \$288.00 to cover tree protector purchase; decrease #7795 to \$0.00 to cover cost of stream trailer; increase #8300 to \$13,600.00 to cover cost of stream trailer.

Tom asked if there was any public comment. There being none;

Kevin moved to approve the budget amendment items as presented;  
Ann seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

At 4:15 p.m. Tom closed the Budget Amendment hearing and opened the regular meeting.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING- Feb. 20, 2020

Ann moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting;  
Kevin seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

**4. TREASURER'S REPORT- Profit and Loss Statement – (Feb., March, & April 2020) & Budget Overview – July 2019-March 2020**  
**Shaun**

Shaun presented the Treasurer's Reports and the Board recommended to submit it for audit.

**5. PROGRAM REPORTS –**

**–Education (Ann, Paul)**

Paul stated the last three months he has been working on expanding the social media for the District.

Paul also stated the new stream trailer is done and in the yard. He will be working on plumbing it, and getting the supplies for the inside of the tub.

Ann stated she didn't have anything to add.

**-Wildlife & Range (Kevin, Rex)**

Rex stated he has been working on small water projects with engineers, and is working on a project on Curt Gowdy for cheat grass.

Rex stated he assisted with Tree Distribution Day, helped Dale lay weed barrier for planting sites, and is working with NRCS to improve a grass seed mix. Mason stated this would be a cover crop mix to save moisture.

Kevin asked how sharp tail surveys had gone. Rex stated that numbers were up a bit this year.

Kevin stated he hasn't been able to get away for his annual bear hunt due to COVID-19 restrictions.

**- Water (Tom, Jeff)**

Jeff stated he has been working with small water permits for engineering, and planting at the Library in the detention pond area. Jeff mentioned Mindy Meade, with Partners for Fish & Wildlife, has played a huge part in securing grant funds for the District.

Kevin asked about the equipment working on Crow Creek. Jeff stated that was Black Hills Energy doing the work there. Jeff stated Cowboy Dodge is willing to give the city an easement on the east side of I-25. The project will be moving into excavation in June or July. Jeff stated when they start moving dirt, he would like to get TV Channel 5 there to do a press release. Kevin asked about putting signage up at the site. Shaun stated the District has signs in the shed used on Community Enhancement project that can be used saying "Your Tax \$'s at work".

**- Trees (Jay)**

Jay stated Clark had been out to do replants on his living snow fence, and planting is going well.

Shaun stated plantings are on schedule if not a day ahead. Kevin stated his site was not ready yet.

### **- Administration (vacant, Shaun, & Kathy)**

Kathy stated the District is emailing planting invoices this year, and has only mailed one. So far, the response has been great, with some customers calling and wanting to pay before the tree crew has even left their property.

Shaun stated he planted two Community Enhancement projects so far at Archer & St. Mary's, and has replanted a few living snow fence sites. Shaun also planted for Rooted in Cheyenne on May 16. Due to COVID-19, only 5 crews planted, with 2 or 3 per crew. 100 trees were planted.

Shaun also noted that his email, along with Kathy, Rex, and Paul so far had added the social media icons to our email signatures with links to the District Website, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube videos.

### **-NRCS (Mason Peebles)**

Mason stated there has been some staff changes for NRCS recently with the addition of Tyler Therkildsen as Range Management Specialist, and that Catelyn Cornils had been hired by Farm Service Agency, and a new temp. replacement for that position just started on Monday. Mason stated an article about Tyler is the most recent District newsletter.

Mason stated there were 25,000 acres of CRP up for renewal this year. Approximately ½ were accepted to continue and the other ½ are not going back in. Of those not going back into CRP, some have applied for EQIP, and some will be returned to farm ground. Mason stated there were zero new acres enrolled in CRP.

Mason stated the program he is working with Rex on is creating a pasture mix to get rid of smooth brome.

Mason stated the office opening will be in phases. More instructions will be coming. Farm Service Agency isn't able to telecommute as not all employees have access to laptop computers. NRCS has been successful working from home with limited staff in the building.

### **Farm Service Agency (Shaun)**

#### **Conservation Plans:**

- 📍 (1) CRP ownership change
- 📍 (2) Conservation plan/compliance
- 📍 (3) CRP renewal
- 📍 (4) Upland Wildlife Habitat Management

Kevin moved to approve the listed Conservation Plans.

Ann seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

### **Consent Agenda:**

- 6. Review and document mileage reimbursement rate** - current rate is \$0.575 per mile. Consider approving mileage reimbursement rate to be the same as the State of Wyoming.

7. **Confirm capitalization policy** - (minimum dollar limit of recording a fixed asset)  
Current capitalization policy is \$500.00. Consider approving \$500.00 as the minimum dollar limit for a fixed asset.
8. **Confirm bank depository** - Current depositories are Wyoming Bank and Trust for active accounts (checking account, depreciation account, and cash reserve account). Building Reserve accounts are maintained at First Interstate Bank, Central Bank and Trust and Platte Valley Bank. Consider approving bank depositories.
9. **Authorization to Incur Debt** - Current policy states the following “The District Board allows the employees to purchase any item up to \$200.00 without Board or District Manager approval. The District Manager must approve any purchase up to \$500.00. The District Manager can approve normal budgeted operating cost (i.e.: general vehicle maintenance, purchasing fabric mulch, trees, developing publications, etc.). The Board of Supervisors must approve any item exceeding \$500.00 before purchase. Consider reconfirming current policy.
10. **Approval of check signers** – Current check signers for Wyoming Bank and Trust for checking account includes all Board of supervisors and Shaun Kirkwood; current signers for cash and depreciation accounts are Kevin Wells, Tom Farrell and Shaun Kirkwood. Current signers for First Interstate Bank, Central Bank and Trust, and Platte Valley Bank are Kevin Wells and Tom Farrell. Consider approval of check signers.

Kevin moved to approve the Consent Agenda items 6-10.

Ann seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

#### **Discussion Items -**

11. **2020/2021 LCCD budget (draft)** - questions, comments and concerns?

Shaun noted the price of weed barrier could change from what is in the draft budget, as we may be ordering a smaller quantity, which will increase the price, but less will budgeted due to stocking needs. Professional Fees line item includes a GIS intern, which might be removed due to City constraints. Line item #7910-Community Enhancement includes trees for 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders, since schools are closed and trees couldn't be given out this year. It also includes \$4,000.00 for Rooted in Cheyenne. Shaun discussed the amounts in Cash and Depreciation Reserve account, and the amount recommended for each.

Ann moved to accept the Draft Budget for FY '20-'21.

Kevin seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

12. **State Engineer** - discussion on letter, voicing LCCD stance on SEO's order on Control Area of water wells. Comment period has ended.

Jeremy stated the order was issued three years ago, and public input has expired, but the State Engineer's Office would still accept public comment.

Jeremy stated 600 plus meters were required. Meter reporting is not easy. Good data is not being received. General rules were used in the model. County wide standards cannot be set as the county is so diverse.

Control area applications are pending. Jay asked what basis the State Engineer's Office stood on to issue new wells in Laramie County. Jeremy stated state statue says the State Engineer's Office shall

issue new wells unless not in the public water interest. Jeremy stated the applications met the requirements.

**13. Local Work Group** - identify the priority resource concerns within Laramie County. Ideas have been submitted.

Mason suggested meeting with just Laramie County residents rather than several counties at once, and then taking those ideas/suggestions to NRCS state staff to address. Mason has received input to be addressed as tree plantings, grass conversions, and expiring CRP. Ground water depletion was discussed. Mason stated the new Farm Bill focuses on dollar specific priorities.

**14. Board member program oversight** - adjustment to LCCD program oversight through Board of Supervisor.

Board position description were discussed. Tom, Kevin, and Ann will oversee their current areas. Jeremy Manley will oversee Trees, & Jay Berry will move to oversee Administration.

**15. Old stream trailer to Converse County** - sale of old educational stream trailer to Converse County. Set dollar amount.

Paul stated the new stream trailer has side steps for students, and the water reservoir is under the tub. Paul stated he needs to purchase the educational materials to put into the tub yet.

The amount to sell the old stream trailer to Converse County was discussed. It was decided on \$1.00 with everything included.

Ann moved to sell the old stream trailer complete to Converse County for \$1.00.

Kevin seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

**16. LCCD vendors** - review of LCCD vendors for auditor information and tracking.

Kathy stated the auditors ask the Board to review the current list of vendors annually. Kevin asked about those vendors marked in yellow. Kathy stated those are vendors that are not often used or if used, only small purchases are made. Employees have been encouraged to put those purchases on the District credit cards to reduce the number of checks the District has to issue, and on postage for the vendor as well as the District.

**17. WDA** – notification of LCCD Supervisors terms that are expiring and filing deadlines.

Shaun stated the District had received a letter from the WY Dept. of Ag regarding Board members that will be up for election on the November ballot. Tom, Kevin, and Jeremy's positions will up for election.

**18. New building construction** - ????????????????????

Shaun asked for suggestions on ways to save money on the building plan. Moving the building closer to Whitney Road, eliminating the classroom, and turning the District conference/break room into a multi-purpose room were discussed. Comments need to be sent to Shaun by May 29<sup>th</sup>, then Shaun will set up a meeting with Plan 1. Jeremy stated the site prep quote was listed twice in costs.

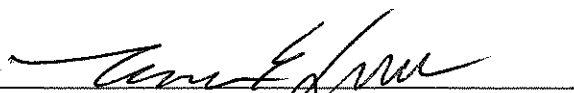
**19. Other Business-**

Rex respectfully asked the Board if he could work 4-10 hour days. Rex asked that the Board consider his request. Tom stated it should be equitable for all. Kevin noted businesses may be reducing the hours in a work week. Tom stated the Board would discuss the request.

Shaun stated according to the Employee Policy Book, a flex work schedule is a Board decision.

## 20. Adjournment-Tom

Tom adjourned the meeting at 6:22 p.m.



Thomas E. Farrell, Chairman



Ann Sanchez, Secretary



Transcribed by Kathy Cooney, Financial Coordinator