

Upper Salinas – Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

September 29, 2022

Templeton, CA

- I. Call to Order. Susan Cochrane called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm and determined a quorum was present. Directors present: Tom Mora, Mike Broadhurst, Mary Bianchi, George Kendall, Susan Cochrane, Dolores Howard, Randy Heinzen. Associate Director present: Chuck Pritchard. Staff present: Hilary Phillips (NRCS) and Amy Smart, Spencer Gordon, Devin Best (RCD).
- II. Additions/Changes. None.
- III. Public Comment. None.
- IV. RCD Reports.
  - a. Board Updates. Mike Broadhurst read a recent newspaper article about a lawsuit brought by the US EEC against The Wonderful Company that involves alleged sexual harassment. There was board discussion about how this could affect the RCD.
  - b. Executive Director's Report. Devin Best reviewed the ED's report included in the board packet. Highlights: The construction phase of the Centennial Creek project is nearing completion. Bianchi "Lake" permitting process is very slow. Regarding Forest Health, AB1717 was vetoed by the Governor which means that fire/fuel projects will not need to pay the higher "prevailing" wage for labor.
  - c. Executive Director Salary. Devin Best reviewed his accomplishments and responsibilities as ED of the RCD, a comparison of the salaries of other RCD EDs in the Central Coast region, and a brief discussion of the cost of living in SLO county. He requested a salary increase to \$141,055 to recognize these realities. There was significant board discussion about metrics (staff size/budget, RCD tiers, salaries of peer EDs). Devin's salary history at the RCD was requested. There was discussion of two types of raises: Cost of Living, which should be automatic, and Merit, which should require a current performance evaluation. It was decided to agendaize a COLA raise of 7% for the October board meeting. It was also agreed to do a performance evaluation of the ED.
  - d. Auditor's Engagement Letter. Devin Best presented the service engagement letter of Moss, Levy and Hartzheim LLP, certified public accountants. He confirmed that they have the ability to perform forensic audits. Mary Bianchi moved that Moss, Levy and

Hartzheim be engaged to provide audit and necessary accounting services for the RCD. Randy Heinzen seconded. Unanimous approval.

- e. Board Member Appointment Expiration Dates. Devin briefly discussed the need for sending renewal letters to the County Clerk Recorder for board members whose terms are expiring. He will prepare the necessary letter(s) and place the item on the October meeting agenda.
  - f. Board Member Outreach. A signup list for board member outreach was circulated by Amy Smart. Members will submit a photo and brief description about conservation project(s) they support, starting with George Kendall October 1.
  - g. Bookkeeping Services. Devin reported that he has engaged Candice Tidwell Bookkeeping in Atascadero to provide financial reports, payroll services and other general bookkeeping services for \$60.00per hour. Monthly cost is estimated at \$2000.
- V. Consent Agenda.
- a. Minutes. Susan Cochrane asked for changes to August minutes. None.
  - b. Treasurer's Report. Mary Bianchi reviewed the year end treasurer's report for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. The combined checking/savings account balance at year end was \$142,939, down \$152,207. Both total income and expenses decreased in FY 2021-2022 versus the previous year. Net income was minus 50,560 in FY 2021-2022 versus plus 79,467 in FY 2020-2021. The RCD has been running a monthly deficit every month in 2022. There was general discussion about where the over budget items are, accounts receivable, availability of cash flow loans from CARCD (if needed), and a 3<sup>rd</sup> party CPA to provide financial reports. Mike Broadhurst moved approval of the consent agenda. Tom Mora seconded. Unanimous approval.
- VI. Other Agency /reports.
- a. NRCS. Hilary Phillips reported that total 2021-2022 allocations to EQIP, CSP, etc. in SLO county were \$700,000 versus \$2,000,000 in 2020-2021. FY2022-2023 should see an increase in allocations with focus on air quality and possibly fire related projects. The NRCS has its first local tamarisk removal project.
  - b. WRAC. Tom Mora reported that WRAC did not endorse the proposed groundwater management plan for the Paso Robles groundwater basin.
- VII. Board Action Items.
- a. Approval of Mike Broadhurst as Vice Chairman. Randy Heinzen moved approval of Mike Broadhurst as Vice Chairman. Tom Mora seconded. Unanimous approval.

- VIII. Agenda Setting. Justin Discussion, COLA for ED, Summary of status of our various projects, Board member appointments, Introduction of new book keeper
- IX. Closed Session. Mike Broadhurst moved to adjourn the open session and begin the closed session. Mary Bianchi seconded. Unanimous approval and closed session began at 5:41 pm. Closed session ended and the meeting adjourned at 6:00pm. There were no reportable actions from the closed session.