

Upper Salinas – Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2022

Templeton, CA

- I. Call to Order. Chair Susan Cochrane called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm and determined a quorum was present. Directors present: Susan Cochrane, Mary Bianchi, Tom Mora, Denise Howard, George Kendall. Staff present: Devin Best, Amy Smart, Spencer Gordon.
- II. Additions/Changes to the Agenda. Board Action Item VIIa was moved up to immediately follow Public Comment.
- III. Public Comment. Amy Smart commented about several current RCD issues, including increased work load and inefficiencies due to the current staffing and staff location situation. She also commented on the significant growth of the RCD over the past few years, changed/improved benefits, some new policies such as the grievance policy and the effectiveness of RCD management. There was some general discussion of the policy handbook and how to handle grievances.
- IV. This Board Action Item VIIa in the agenda. Approval of FY 2022/2023 budget. Devin Best presented the proposed FY 22/23 budget. The new budget format includes a Contract Numbering System. “Notice to Proceed” is highlighted where a signed contract is not yet in hand but there is sufficient correspondence to justify expenditures or invoices. Willow Creek Conservancy is OK to start \$100,000 in preliminary work. “Project Grant Services” (PGS) refers to contracts with significant “pass through” income to subcontractors for on-the-ground work. Devin explained anticipated expenses and overhead and answered various questions. Legal and consultant expenses will be included in wages and salaries. A potential restoration technician and possible contract book keeper are also covered. The anticipated “net revenue” of \$145,000 was discussed. Mary Bianchi suggested quarterly tracking. We may find ourselves in a position to deposit to the money market account or purchase a CD. Tom Mora moved to approve the budget as presented. Mary Bianchi seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- V. RCD Reports.
 - a. Board Updates. Susan Cochrane discussed the positive impact of rotational grazing during this drought year. Tom Mora commented on spring flows in the Santa Lucia Range.
 - b. Executive Director Report. Devin Best reviewed the highlights of the report included in the meeting packet. Two Forest Health grant applications were awarded for funding. Staff is doing baseline monitoring re Cal Trans 2 – Centennial Creek. Regarding Grass-C, CDFA has requested that the USLT RCD and CARCD prepare a scope of work to update Grass-C.

- c. Devin Best mentioned the need to fill the Vice Chair position.
 - d. Devin Best mentioned the Fall Central Coast Regional RCD meeting and the need to replace the regional secretary. Note: Director Howard left the meeting at this point – no quorum.
- VI. Consent. There was brief discussion of but no vote on the May meeting minutes. There was no treasurer's report, but Mary Bianchi did discuss account balances, net income and accounts receivable. There was board and staff discussion about RCD finances, including Fixed Assets, Liability//Equity and Deferred Revenue. Mary Bianchi mentioned the Financial ad hoc committee.
- VII. Other Agency Reports.
- a. NRCS. No report.
 - b. WRAC. George Kendall reported that the June WRAC meeting was mostly about Gov. Newsom's executive order about drought issues and the order's impact on SGMA basins in SLO county.
 - c. ALAB. No report.
- VIII. Old Business. Note: Director Randy Heinzen arrived. Mary Bianchi reported that the Executive Committee, with county counsel Ben Dore's assistance, had reviewed several legal firms and made a unanimous decision to hire legal firm Best, Best and Krieger to conduct the workplace investigation. Mary Bianchi explained that the investigation is about a personnel matter and is therefore confidential. The investigation will deal with issues raised in a formal personnel complaint. Staff raised concerns about the negative impacts of the current staffing situation and the uncertainties surrounding the workplace investigation. The board reiterated the need to conduct the investigation in a deliberate and proper manner – even if it is slow – in order to resolve the personnel matter. Randy Heinzen suggested that if certain RCD work is not being done then a contract book keeper or other contractor could be hired temporarily to accomplish that work. The board generally agreed with hiring a temporary book keeper if needed but not to bring in a third party or neutral party to be a buffer between RCD employees.
- IX. Agenda Setting. The next meeting will be a zoom meeting will be July 19 .to review/approve the Centennial Creek contractor. The next full board meeting will be August 25.
- X. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 pm.