

Routt County Conservation District
Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes
May, 16th 2023 8:15 am

Attending:

Board Members:

Lyn Halliday
Michael Moon
Tyler Snyder
Cam Kuelthau
Patrick Stanko
Jeremy Kline

Partners and Public:

Clinton Whitten
Baili Foster, US Forest Service
Mandi Gordon
Gene Backhaus, NRCS State Office via zoom
Kristina Wood, USFS via zoom

I. Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 8:15 am by Tyler Snyder and a quorum established.
- The meeting was noticed as required by the Sunshine Law.
- Tyler welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining.

Approval of Minutes

Lyn Halliday made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 21st meeting as distributed.
Michael Moon Seconded – Motion Passed

Treasures' Report

Cam had no new major changes to the treasurer report.

Executive Session

The Board determined that there was no need to enter into executive session.

III. Business

GLCI Grant Discussion with Gene Backhaus - Lyn gave an overview and information about the GLCI grant and introduced Gene Backhaus to the board. Lyn asked Gene if there were any changes that we need to make to our application regarding our deliverables given the recent changes in District staffing as well as having received a grant from CAWA to help fund collar leasing for one year. Gene informed the Board that he will put the deliverables together in a packet based on what was in the original application. He went on to inform the Board that the agreement is based on the original application but there is flexibility based on the changes that have occurred. The national office needs assurance that the Board can maintain the intent of the original grant application. Gene said he believes advancements or upfront payments are possible for the purpose of achieving deliverables, but he will get clarity on that subject. Clinton asked Gene what the reporting procedures are. Gene said that it will require quarterly one page progress reports and a final report after 2 years. Lyn asked if the 2-year time requirement has flexibility. Gene said he thinks that extensions are possible but he will need to dig in and find out. Lyn asked if there is a restriction to roles partners might play in bringing the project to fruition. Gene informed that partners can do anything as long as the level of contribution does not fall. Lyn asked what

the approval mechanism is for contribution. Gene said that the District monitors how/who/what so long as the contribution level is met. Baili asked how a hire might be handled and how that impacts the grant related to taxes, employment, and etc. Gene said that contract employees can be 1099. He recommends that we contact Cindy Laird or Nikki Brinson to verify the possibility of a 1099 employee. Clinton asked if a contractor will have access to NRCS tools? Gene said yes but we need to call Cindy to verify. Tyler asked if there has ever been a contractor used to execute this type of project. Gene responded that the contracts need to be tight and upfront. Lyn questioned about the timeframe for the agreement to come to fruition. Gene said that the Government Grants and Agreements Specialist might get back within two weeks, but it will likely be 1-2 months once the funds are received. Clinton asked about the expectation of having the funds available. Gene said that he forwarded the information to the NRCS staff to ensure funds and that there will be a quick turnaround. He projected that we can be operational within a month. Lyn asked if we can restructure the original application. Gene said that is possible but recommended that the Board not spend any money before the agreement is signed. Gene elaborated that the funding will be based on the original application, so the 424 budget sheet cannot be changed too much. Clinton asked about an extension of the timeframe. Gene said that it can be extended for up to 5 years. The Board met Mandi Gordon who is interested in the project, and the possibility of becoming a contractor for the project. Cam was questioning how we can get all the questions answered in such a short timeframe. Clinton commented that he thinks that CDA staff can get access to the grazing plans software and get CTA training. Cam asked how those DCT staff are employed by the District and have access to NRCS vehicles. Cam is concerned about the Board's role and capacity to oversee the contractor and how reporting will be done between a contractor and the Board. Baili mentioned that this round of grants will be much more competitive as there is more interest in projects. Michael said the Board can have one point person but he thinks one employee will be suitable to carry out the project from a logistical perspective. Patrick questioned whether or not we will be able to find a qualified person to take on the responsibilities. Lyn mentioned that this person will have a specific task and the position will be very different than Kristen's prior commitment and that might make it easier for the Board to manage. Mandi gave the Board a brief background of who she is and what she does. She currently operates a custom grazing operation and connects landowners with cattle owners and focuses on regenerative grazing and holistic practices. Mandi expressed interest in the project and said that she is intrigued by what she has heard so far. Cam would like to see a plan for closure on this subject and for the voting process.

Jeremy Kline made a motion for a special GLCI planning meeting (motion was withdrawn).

Tyler agreed to call the Eagle County CD Manager Laura Bohannon to ask her about her experience with similar projects. Cam agreed to look at the budget and report back with an analysis. Clinton agreed to call Cindy with the CSCB to discuss the employee situation. Michael agreed to produce a management structure in order to keep the Board and a potential employee on track. Lyn agreed to continue a dialogue with Gene to address any ongoing concerns.

Patrick Stanko made a motion to change the regular Board meeting date in June to set a meeting date June 15th 2023 to accommodate everyone's schedule. Michael Moon seconded. Motion Passed

2. Baili gave the Board an update on the Range Judging competition last year and mentioned that there were Routt County residents who not only competed but excelled and won the competition. Tim Bedell was given an award for first place and Carmen Anarella placed second. Baili asked if the Board is interested in supporting the event again for the 4th year in a row.

Lyn Halliday made a motion to support the range judging event with a monetary donation of \$500. Cam Kuelthau seconded. Motion Passed

3. Lyn asked the Board about purchasing an Owl speaker and camera to make it easier for people to participate via zoom. Patrick said he will try to bring one to the next meeting so the Board can try it before making a purchase.

Toolkit

Lyn proposed a project budget via email to produce a field guide. In addition she will facilitate a field day. Cam said he would like to have a breakout of Eric Fuchs field day expenses.

Patrick Stanko made a motion to approve Lyn to complete toolkit field guide up to \$20,000 at her discretion after agreed upon amendments to the proposal and questions to Eric Fuchs have been answered. Tyler Snyder seconded. Motion Passed

CAWA

Lyn updated the Board on the CAWA grant for reimbursing collar leases for one year as part of the North Routt Virtual Fencing Demonstration project with the USFS>. She is waiting on receiving receipts from the two participating ranchers to submit invoices to CAWA.

Board Member Reports

Jeremy gave a weed sprayer rental update that he had two reservations so far. Patrick said he will get an article into the ag journal for June 15th.

Kent Informed the Board that the Wildfire Council meeting will be held on April 3rd and Ag week is this week.

Lyn provided her detailed report in writing regarding updates on STAR, the RCCD Soil Health Initiative, the Upper Yampa Watershed Group, and perfunctory requirements for the election process and other administrative requirements.

Lyn updated the Board on the soils health initiative. She said she has one sign up so far for the free comprehensive soil test. Clinton said that the lab payments need to be approved through the RCCD. He has some additional rancher requests. Lyn updated us on the operators who have signed up.

NRCS Report

Clinton reviewed the Civil Rights Responsibilities with the Board and mention that it should be reviewed annually. He said he has interviewed a few people no hires have been made yet.

Adjournment

Patrick Stanko made a motion to adjourn at 11:15am and the meet was adjourned.

Next Regular Meeting – June 15th, 2023.