

Routt County Conservation District
Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2022 8:15 am

Attending:

Board Members:

Lyn Halliday
Jeremy Kline
Cam Kuelthau
Kent Sandstedt
Nadine Arroyo
Stephen Evans
Tyler Snyder
Contractor/District Manager

Kristen Rockford

Partners and Public:

Clinton Whitten, NRCS
Todd Hagenbuch, CSU Extension
CJ Mucklow, Interim Director of Field operations
Colorado State University Extension
Ken Brenner, Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District

I. Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 8:15 am by Lyn Halliday and a quorum established.
- The meeting was noticed as required by the Sunshine Law on RCCD's website.
- Lyn welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining.

II. Approval of Minutes

The July 19, 2022 RCCD Board Meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Nadine Arroyo and second by Stephan Evans.

III. Board Member Reports and Updates

President

-Lyn updated the Board as follows:

1. FUNDS:

- UYWCD grant presentation was made – UYWCD Board approved \$25,000
- YVCF grant announces awards in Sept.
- CSCB annual \$\$ support forthcoming, \$6,000 annual plus \$2,000 stimulus

2. Personnel

- Need to discuss KR contract renewal
- District Conservation Technician discussions with John Miller, CSCB & Clinton

3. Events attended this month:

- Todd's soiree – CSU Chancellor meeting great networking!

4. Upcoming Events:

- Water Congress – elevator speech with other orgs in Yampa valley Tues 8/23 8am
- Marlon Winger NRCS soil health presentation/training at Flanders ranch Hayden 8/23, board member are invited

5. Watershed Group update:

- WG meeting 8/3 – presentation on groundwater contribution to return flow, etc. USGS
- NASA remote sensing project presentation – algae blooms over last 40 years

-Friends of Yampa – starting a new initiative to designate additional Outstanding Waters in Upper Yampa. Should not affect ag except for new permits on USFS land e.g. grazing. Are there any reasons from an ag perspective that Board members might have heartburn over?

Lyn reminded Board members to please keep track of all hours and expenses and report them to her for use in grant in-kind matching.

-Kent Sandstedt

-Kent reported on CAA's upcoming Land Stewardship 202. Also that the Wildfire Council may receive a chipper from the USFS. There will be a Chamber mixer Sept. 8th at Elk Farm & Feed.

IV. Business

1. Mill Levy Presentation

CJ Mucklow provided his expertise on mill levies. He indicated the District is an incredibly unique organization and how proceeds from a mill levy can be a great asset to conservation in the community. With a focus on conservation the District can hold money, provide scholarships and loans, enhance the conservation of land, and more. It would be important to be very clear on the ballot issue, i.e. an 80 year organization that is continually addressing new conservation issues and that a more significant role is needed. 1/10 a mill would raise about \$200,000. The process is worth exploring, takes a year or two, and would need to be well planned. It could be expensive but much of it might be doable in house. A good lawyer is needed (de-Bruce/Gallagher issues as well as wording). CJ indicated there was a recent poll of RC residents relative to the PDR project and conservation was highly rated.

-CJ also suggested that the District meet with the County Commissioners for support which is common in rural communities and to his recollection the District received admin support in the past. The District needs a re-introduction to new Commission members and information about what we do. Kristin reported that she spoke with the County Assessor and asked about a mill levy that could be placed on new land purchases (a land transfer tax). This could also be a possibility (1/2 a mill to equal \$1M).

-Another funding option that was discussed was voluntary annual membership fees which could work if landowners support what would be done with their money.

-A discussion on how to best partner with CAA took place with CJ. CAA's primary objective is to represent local producers, enhance ranch profitability, and provide a mechanism for direct sales

2. Strategic Planning Discussion – Part 1

-Lyn discussed the need to update our Long Range Plan for the next three years as our current plan covers 2020 through 2022. She suggested we revisit our accomplishments over the past three years relative to the plan and outline goals and objectives for the upcoming years. Ken Brenner applauded the board for engaging in a strategic plan which is an important part of governance. He stated that DOLA has matching funds for strategic planning. A lengthy discussion ensued.

The overarching project areas were discussed and it was determined that the current three should be expanded to five by splitting Forest Health and Rangeland Health and adding Funding of the Organization (e.g. donations, memberships, mill levy, leveraging dollars, etc.). Reducing greenhouse gasses and carbon sequestration were also suggested as items to include. Also education should be a component of each category.

-Clinton Whitton suggested we need a separate meeting to address the Local Working Group requirements, as the last few Annual Landowners Meeting agendas have run short of time to address adequately.

V. Projects, Events, Grants – Updates

1. Weed Sprayer Rental

-Jeremy Kline reported no weed sprayer rentals this month. He asked the RC Fair folks about displaying it at the Fair, but not approved, maybe next year.

-The promotional rack card is being distributed.

2. RC Fair

Nadine reported on the items she will be taking to the Fair exhibit and the schedule. These include our brochure, weed sprayer rack card, three year plan, table top display, a suggestion book, a coloring page for kids and some candy handouts. Also, Lyn to generate a "save the date" piece for the October 4th Local Working Group Meeting.

-Nadine suggested that we budget for items next year such as a presentation board, name tags, possibly other items with our logo.

3. STAR Plus and Soil Health Initiative

-Lyn provided an update on the STAR program.

Lyn reminded that there are \$25,000 equipment grant funds as part of STAR which must be utilized by October 1st of this year. CDA recently announced additional equipment grants with proposals due Aug. 31st. Both grants now have reduced District or Producer matches to 25%. So far we have discussed and found not to be feasible purchasing a no-till drill (ideas exhausted included RCCD purchase and hire someone to maintain; RCCD purchase with CSU/Todd; STAR participants co-op and purchases); doing a virtual fencing demonstration with Kryder Ranch; purchasing a portable Hay measurement lab; and purchasing soil moisture probes. Lyn floated the idea of purchasing two soil health test kits (a summary of items and costs provided). Lyn to get quote on Jeremy's idea of purchasing a portable hay measurement unit both as a service to producers and as a fun competition.

-Lyn asked the Board for formal approval of the Flanders Ranch's request for reimbursement for cover crop seed expenses. This money will come directly from CDA. On a motion by Nadine and second by Jeremy the motion was carried. It was suggested that Mary Beth be asked for a testimonial and that photos can be displayed on our website as a success story.

VI. Staff Updates

-Kristen Rockford sent the Board's letter to the BCC and requested a meeting date and time for the Board to provide an update and discuss potential support.

-Kristin reviewed the habitat partnership program (HPP) funding which we will not qualify for.

-The cover crop Field Day idea discussed at the last Board meeting is being postponed until next year.

-Kristen is exploring the Grazing Lands grant that was recently announced.

VII. NRCS Report

-Clinton reported he has 11 EQIP projects totaling \$750,000. And 10 enrollments in CRP. He also mentioned the RCPP project with Larry Hicks - \$350,000 for diversion and headgate structure improvements in Morgan Bottom.

-There is a new grassland program through FSA offering \$12/acre to preserve native grasses through grazing plans.

VIII. CSU Extension Update

Todd Hagenbuch reported on grasshopper spraying that the County helped to fund this year. Stephen expressed concern that the Dimilin is killing bees. Todd is busy with the Fair.

IX. Public Forum

No public comments were received.

Executive Session

A motion was made by Jeremy and seconded by Tyler Snyder to go into Executive Session in accordance with CRS 24-6-402 to discuss personnel/contractual matters. No action to be taken while in executive

session. A motion to come out of executive session was made by Kent and second by Nadine. As a result or discussions, the Board authorized Lyn and Cam Kuelthau to move forward on working toward a contract renewal for Kristen and get as close to preferred package as possible on a motion by Kent and second by Jeremy. Motion carried.

Adjournment -The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 am on a motion by Jeremy and second from Nadine.
Next Regular Meeting – September 20, 2022