

Routt County Conservation District
Board Meeting Minutes
January 23rd 2024 8:15 am
Mountain Valley Bank Meeting Room

Attending:

Board Members:

Lyn Halliday
Kent Sandstedt
Tyler Snyder
Cam Kuelthau
Patrick Stanko
Stephen Evans

Partners and Public:

Todd Hagenbuch, CSU Extension
Jonathan Bowler – Watershed Coordinator for The Headwaters of the Colorado Initiative Via Zoom

I. Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 8:22 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.

Jonathan Bowler Presentation

Jonathan Bowler from the Headwaters of the Colorado Initiative (HoC) presented in front of the Board. He let the Board know that he had an initial presentation with the YWG Round Table and he thanked Patrick for connecting him with the Board and thanked the Board directly. He informed the Board that of his area of interest which includes, Elk River, Little Snake River, Savory Creek, and down to the Yampa east of the Elk. He mentioned that they are currently looking into forest treatments and the initial push was to bring Colorado and Wyoming together and expand to private and public lands. He was reaching out to the Board to possibly have the two entities work together on cost sharing, grant sharing, and project sharing, where there might be a good fit to improve forest health and watershed function. HoC partners with USFS, BLM in Wyoming, Colorado and Wyoming State Forestry Departments. HoC has received a water foundation grant to find staff and he is the coordinator. HoC also received a watersmart grant for a three-year period and it has National Forest Foundation funding until next December. Jonathan began in March and has been travelling the project area to present to possible stakeholders. He is trying to recruit new membership currently and form a steering committee. The goals of HoC are to; -have a forest model for resilience in a changing climate -increase water storage and supply to increase ag water production -sequester carbon -create a wildfire readiness action plan - improve fisheries and habitat. Jonathan will host a meeting on February 7th from 10-1 at the Yampa Valley Regional Airport conference room in Hayden. The HoC will recruit stakeholders and then from a watershed and wildfire plan and identify shovel ready projects. Todd asked about the forestry plan and Jonathan responded that there are some shovel ready sage and shrub treatments, cedar removal, and mastication projects on about 3000 acres so far. Jonathan also said the HoC is helping to fund some stream channel projects and ag diversions. Patrick asked Kent about the Wildfire Mitigation Council having a project in the Elk River already. Jonathan said that it is not the intent for the HoC to take over, but to create efficiency. Jonathan said they will be flying the project area in February and will compile a laundry list of things that need to be addressed. He mentioned that there will be a virtual option for the February 7th meeting and he thanked the Board for having him.

Approval of the December 19th 2024 minutes

*Lyn moved to approve the minutes as read. Cam seconded *Motion Passed

Treasurer's Report

Cam informed the Board that Doris is very close to being done with the financials and will be done by the February meeting. The \$1270 Steamboat City grant came in and Lyn has printed the necessary brochures for the year. Next month Cam will prepare the exemption from audit for review and signing at the February meeting. Patrick asked about the exemption from audit and Cam informed the Board that as long as the total income is under \$750,000 then you can file for exemption; however, the form is different if total income is over \$100,000 and last year that threshold was not met. If income is over \$100,000 then it takes Doris longer to prepare the paperwork, but no formal audit should be needed.

GLCI Manager Decision

Tyler briefed the Board on the discussions from the GLCI hiring committee and that the Committee is close to selecting a contractor but the Committee has decided to hold individual interviews to get to know the candidates a little more and ask some more detailed questions. Cam mentioned that he thinks the interviews that the Hiring Committee is conducting will help to narrow down the applicants and give the Committee clarity. Lyn asked if the Committee was planning to combine the two roles or have two separate positions? Tyler mentioned that we will try to keep two separate roles unless the interviews give us an indication that we can combine the two. Tyler asked if there was an issue with the manager being a potential participant? Cam mentioned that the Board needs to address the situation but it is not fatal for the decision of best fit in the contractor. Lyn asked if there was going to be a legal contract with the participants? Cam said that there should be requirements for animal handling and other requirements and we will need to have some sort of legal contract with participants. Patrick asked if the Board needs to have a special meeting after the interviews, or if the Committee can make the final decision on hiring? Todd asked if it is possible for the Committee to hold executive session? Lyn stated that it needs to be the full Board and a special meeting is required in order to go into executive session. Cam mentioned that we need a 1 or 2 yearlong contract that can be renewed and that contract will point to the grant and the manager will need to adhere to the grant requirements. Lyn said we have received 2 emails of interested parties. Cam asked about herd size and if it will work with smaller operations? Tyler mentioned that it does not matter how big of herd people have, they need to figure out their own breakeven and we will consider any herd size for the grant. Came said he has a couple producers he will reach out to. Patrick asked about having the special board meeting on January 30th at 10 am. Cam motioned to hold the special board meeting on January 30th at 10am Steven seconded *Motion Passed

Patrick mentioned that to protect the applicants, the Board should not record the interviews. Cam recommended a baseline set of questions for each applicant and that it is a good idea to ask a couple of redundant questions to ensure that they respond similarly to how they did in the application letters.

Annual Landowner's Meeting

Tyler informed the Board that the space is open on March 19th at the Soroco High School Ag annex building to hold the Annual Landowner's Meeting. *Kent made a motioned to hold the meeting on March 19th at 5:30PM, Cam seconded *Motion Passed.

Agenda Items that were mentioned are: an FFA Presenter, a business meeting, a resource concern discussion, a Vence speaker, Mendi to update on measuring rules, Patrick update on automation of the Bear, Kent to discuss weeds and the weed sprayer, Todd to update on the edge of field studies, and an

update on watershed group studies that are going on in the area. The Board will finalize the agenda at the February meeting.

Worker's Comp Resolution

The Board members waive their right to worker's comp and to make a worker's comp claim. *Lyn motioned to pass the resolution as presented in the Board packet. Patrick seconded. *Motion passed

CAWA Grant Discussion

Patrick submitted an application for the CAWA grant and is waiting to hear back but has not gotten a firm date yet.

Toolkit

Lyn updated the tool kit title page before printing the latest version and updated the contact page. Patrick asked about a download and Lyn said she will inquire about a pdf version that can be posted.

Star

Lyn thanked the Board for keeping this on the agenda as it is still an active program. There has not been much activity through the winter. Lyn will be contacting participants and getting comprehensive soils tests done by each. The program is in its third year and will soon expand to other states. The field forms and scoring sheets have not been updated yet but Lyn will pass along information. Lyn believes that soils health should stay as a major focus for the District.

Weed Sprayer Update

Lyn mentioned that she had spoken to Jeremy and it is business as usual for the weed sprayer and he wanted to continue to have his phone number be the main point of contact and still plans to house the sprayer on his place.

Board Member Reports

Kent updated that CAA will be host ag week the same week that we will have our Landowner's meeting and is excited that it falls on that same week.

Patrick mentioned that we need a volunteer to sit at the ag breakfast table as a host for the March 20th breakfast. Kent said he will represent the District at that event.

Patrick mentioned that there is a Yampa Rendezvous put on by CMC on May 29th and 30th and they are forming a land and water connection and would like people to participate so the Board should keep people in mind.

Lyn mentioned that he has filed the budget with DOLA and it has been approved. She also mentioned that SAM needs to be updated every year and needs to be a notarized document for DOLA.

Lyn mentioned that UYWCD is investing just under \$1,000,000 to compose a wildfire readiness action plan for the Bear River which will focus on thinning of trees and fuel.

Lyn mentioned that the Upper Yampa Watershed Group is researching the nutrient and sediment loading in the Bear subbasin. They have hired a consultant for the best modelling.

Todd mentioned a drone workshop for weed spraying and plant identification and that there is a drone class at CSU once a month for drone training.

Todd mentioned that he and Michael will be travelling to the San Luis Valley to facilitate a panel for virtual fencing at the San Luis Vally Ag Conference.

Todd mentioned a wolf workshop on February 28th in Steamboat for presentations from CPW.

Website

Patrick mentioned that the minutes are posted and updated to the website and the meetings are on the calendar

Elections

Lyn mentioned that there are no members up for reelection this year since we are on 3-year terms. There will be no need to publish an election announcement in the newspaper or a cancellation, but it is something that we will need to do once people are up for reelection.

Kent Motioned to Adjourn at 11:21 PM