



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
March 7, 2014**

Supervisors Present: LeRoy Candelaria
William Caster
J. Brian Greene
Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
Jerry Melaragno
Richard Shovelin
Dan Williams

Absentees:

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
D'Laynn Bruce, District Conservationist, NRCS
Steve Kadas, Area Conservationist, NRCS
David C. Tyler
Jim Wanstall, Field Specialist, NMDA

CALL TO ORDER:

The Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District (CPSWCD) regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors was called to order by Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman at Alpine Alley, located at 210 N Summit in Mountainair, NM at 8:14 a.m.

Welcome Attendees:

The Chairman welcomed those present and thanked them for taking the time to attend.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The Board reviewed the agenda. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to approve the agenda. LeRoy Candelaria seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the regular meeting from February 7, 2014. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to approve the minutes. Jerry Melaragno seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

The Board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of February with accounts payable for March. **ACTION TAKEN:** William Caster moved to accept the report and pay the accounts payable. Dan Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The district manager reported that she received the first draw of \$201,000 from the New Mexico Finance Authority. Mr. Williams praised her for the effort she has made to keep the loan process on track. He acknowledged the stress that the process caused her and others.

When the final inspection is carried out by the inspector hired by the New Mexico Finance Authority and the release of liens is signed by the sub-contractors, the rest of the money from the New Mexico Finance Authority will be received by the district. The board reviewed the spreadsheet showing the costs involved in the construction of the building. An updated spreadsheet on the costs incurred by the construction and the budget that was submitted to the New Mexico Finance Authority will be presented at the next meeting. **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to approve the report of the building expenses. William Caster seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA):

Jim Wanstall, field specialist from NMDA to the Claunh-Pinto board pointed out the soil and water conservation grant, item number 9 in his report and said that a proposal can address the five categories mentioned in the report. He returned to number one in the report regarding the statement issued by New Mexico Cattle Growers -- Federal Legislation: Senate Grazing Improvement Act Spells Disaster for Federal Lands Users. He explained changes in the bill added by Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and how the bill affects cattle growers who graze cattle on federal land. Mr. Wanstall also mentioned item number three, asking if the district has submitted the questionnaire now required by Risk Management. The district manager said that she filled out the form right away but now has to respond on line. She will answer the questions being asked. She wants to apply for workers comp for sawyers through Risk Management if it is less expensive. Mr. Wanstall explained number eight, 2014 AgriFuture Educational Institute and asked the district to notify potential attendees. The district manager has written a letter notifying the school district. Mr. Wanstall mentioned number 11, which announces Audit Rule and Tiered Audit trainings beginning March 7, 2014. The district manager will attend on March 19. Item number 13, Regional Supervisor Certification Trainings -- Valencia will be the closest location for the district. The times and dates are in the planning stages. Mr. Wanstall explained the content of the trainings. May 13 is the proposed date for the training in Valencia. Mr. Greene mentioned number 4, NMDA Livestock Scales Inspection Request. The deadline is March 28, 2014.

NRCS Field Office Report:

D'Laynn Bruce, the new NRCS district conservationist reported that the president signed the new farm bill on February 7. Work on CSP projects is on hold, but planning is ongoing with producers who have applied. She said that there is a new category for veterans who are farmers or ranchers. Discussion followed on outreach for these individuals and possible effects on funding projects. Steve Kadas explained the reorganization of NRCS. He talked about his responsibilities as the area conservationist for the northern area under the new plan. He wanted to introduce himself to the board and said that he would attend board meetings a couple of times a year. The chairman acknowledged the positive relationship between the board and NRCS.

District Manager's Report:

The written report is included in the board packets. The district manager noted corrections and additions to her report. Notably, the district's counsel is JulieAnne Leonard, not Howard. She talked about a meeting that she attended on February 5 in Edgewood regarding the Isleta project for which the forest service has received \$800,000 and NRCS has received \$750,000. The district manager will attend the meetings at the request of the Edgewood district. Kim Kostelnik will represent the Edgewood SWCD on behalf of the New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts, and she is facilitating the meetings.

CORRESPONDENCE:

The district manager noted the special correspondence included in board members' packets. She read an invitation to the re-opening of the Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument office and read the letter from the planning committee for the 2014 AgriFuture Educational Institute advertising its upcoming program. It will take place May 12-14 in Albuquerque and will be the first biennial meeting with 200 attendees expected. The letter asks for financial contributions to the institute.

The district manager also pointed out the discharge permit applications submitted for review.

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

The district manager reported on grants listed below, meetings attended, progress on projects, status of proposals to funding agencies, and RFPs issued by funding agencies.

Estancia Basin Watershed Health and Restoration Monitoring (EBWHRM) Project – Water Trust Board and State Forestry Grants (NFL,) and Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance:

The district manager reported on changes to the authorization bill for the Water Trust Board projects. Senate bill 112 as amended to not include all of the proposed projects and made considerable changes to the Water Trust Board. The bill passed both houses and is on the Governor's desk for signature. Proposals for Estancia Basin and Greater Rio Grande projects will be submitted to take advantage of opportunities that may occur. 2013 funds are available to spend and have been divided between the SWCDs. The district is working on Greater Rio Grande projects to insure that they are ready to go in case funding becomes available. Discussion followed on how politics affected funding for projects. The district manager said that an Estancia Basin meeting will take place on March 17 and a Greater Rio Grande meeting will occur on March 26.

Regarding New Mexico state forestry grants, the district's Non-federal Lands (NFL) funds are used to match Estancia Basin 2012 funding, which is being spent. State forestry has issued a request for proposals for NFL projects, so the district manager is preparing two proposals for those funds. State forestry has been approved for 6.1 million dollars for NFL and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) projects, so the district manager is preparing projects that will be ready to hit the ground if the bill is signed by the Governor. On the Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance, the 13-acre Alcalde project is finished, and the Albuquerque project north of Coors is almost finished. A second 20-acre project has been contracted, and the contractor has started work on it. In the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District, work on a sizable project at Bosque Farms has been finished and has passed inspection. The project on the south side of the Los Lunas bridge, didn't pass inspection, so the contractor will have to go back to finish it. The contractor for the Whitfield West project is working on it. There are two private land projects in the Valencia district. The contractor will begin work on March 18 and should finish in two weeks maximum.

Central New Mexico Cooperative Weed Management Area:

No report.

Collaborative Forest Restoration Program:

Ojo Peak Restoration:

Riparian work will soon be complete in Ox Canyon. The forest is currently closed, but the district manager may be able to get workers into the area soon. Another 50 to 75 feet of erosion structures will be built and riparian plantings will take place. This work will be a showpiece. Unused funds will be spent on 153 acres of thinning for the forest service. All of the wood from the project will go to the Manzano land grant. The district will contract with the Alamo Navajo school board to bring in a Ramah Navajo crew to fell the trees. An Alamo Navajo crew has marked the trees on the project. The crews have been camping on the district's property due to the closure of the forest.

Red Canyon Project:

This project is winding down with approximately 20 acres still to complete. Three hundred and thirty-eight acres will be done instead of the 300 acres planned on.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**Future Directions Committee – District Property, Building Progress**

The district manager said that she submitted a 150 page requisition and received funds from the loan yesterday. The NM Finance Authority was notified that the project was 90 to 95% complete and that work has been in progress since November. One inspection has been carried out by an inspector hired by the New Mexico Finance Authority. He will also do a final inspection. The NRCS IT team looked at the work in progress for technology and both this team and the inspector were complimentary about the quality of work that has been done on the building.

Land Use Plan

During March, the district manager will make notes from the tape on the discussion regarding the land use plan.

Envirothon Competition

In April, the district manager will be a judge at the Envirothon Competition in Glorieta.

Proposed CO2 Pipeline Route

The district manager referred board members to the letter she sent to Mark Mackiewicz, Senior National Project Manager for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) providing information on the district's request for cooperating agency status with the BLM. Mark Mathews, Acting Field Manager at the Socorro Field Office said that the district will probably receive cooperating agency status. The district will need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with BLM. A lot of technical information will have to be reviewed for comment. It is yet to be determined how the board will be updated on the meetings since they are confidential. The agenda, notes and power point presentation for the conference call she participated in on February 20 on the Lobos CO2 Pipeline Project are in the board packet. A letter to Andi Knight at the BLM Socorro Field Office from Rebecca Anthony on her concerns regarding the pipeline is also included. A representative from Kinder-Morgan will be asked to attend the board meeting on April 3, a Thursday. Mr. Wanstall offered to facilitate the meeting. The meeting date needs to be changed from April 4 to April 3 due to an invitation from the forest service asking district representatives to a training session on Friday, April 4 in Corona for people who will be involved in monitoring grazing allotments.

Report on the US Fish and Wildlife Lawsuit with Chavez SWCD

The district manager received a notice that the comment period has been extended to March 19.

NEW BUSINESS:**Resolution No. 05 – 2014 Mil Levy Resolution:**

ACTION TAKEN: Brian Greene moved to approve the resolution. Richard Shovelin seconded the motion. Motion carried by a voice vote as follows: LeRoy Candelaria – yea; William Castro – yea; Brian Greene – yea; Felipe Lovato – yea; Jerry Melaragno – yea; Richard Shovelin – yea; Dan Williams – yea.

Resolution No. 06 – 2014 Authorizing and Approving Submission of a Completed Application for Financial Assistance and Project Approval to the New Mexico Water Trust Board – Estancia Basin Watershed, Health, Restoration, & Monitoring Project:

ACTION TAKEN: Richard Shovelin moved to approve the resolution. William Caster seconded the motion. Motion carried by a voice vote as follows: LeRoy Candelaria – yea; William Castro – yea; Brian Greene – yea; Felipe Lovato – yea; Jerry Melaragno – yea; Richard Shovelin – yea; Dan Williams – yea.

Resolution No. 07 – 2014 Authorizing and Approving Submission of a Completed Application for Financial Assistance and Project Approval to the New Mexico Water Trust Board – Greater Rio Grande Riparian and Watershed Restoration Project:

ACTION TAKEN: William Caster moved to approve the resolution. Dan Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote as follows: LeRoy Candelaria – yea; William Castro – yea; Brian Greene – yea; Felipe Lovato – yea; Jerry Melaragno – yea; Richard Shovelin – yea; Dan Williams – yea.

REPORTS:

New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Districts (NMCCD):

A board meeting is scheduled to meet on April 17 in Mountainair. A board meeting was held in Santa Fe on February 10. The board decided to send several letters, one regarding the removal of Trudy Healy as a voting member of the WTB and regarding the two seats held by representatives of the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts. Ms. Healy will serve as an ex officio member of NMCCD but won't attend board meetings or vote. A letter was sent to the governor regarding senate bill 112 which fails to mention that there are two soil and water conservation district associations in New Mexico. The association participated in AgFest and Soil and Water Conservation Day. Over 1200 handouts were given out. The main goal has been to publicize the coalition.

The coalition is paying close attention to how the Isleta project takes place. There was a conference call last week. There are 14 members in the coalition. A meeting will be held in the middle of April in Mountainair in the district's building. A meeting will be held in June in Edgewood. The district manager will set up meeting dates for every other month to get ready for the 2015 legislative session. A petition is being circulated opposing the incorporation of the Organ Mountains into a national park that would encompass over 25% of Doña Ana county ranches by private land owners. Doña Ana is working on a mil levy.

South Central Mountain RC&D:

Brian Greene reported the big concern is filling vacancies.

Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee (EBWPC):

Mr. Greene said that a quorum wasn't present at the last meeting. He noted that last year the state engineer received \$400,000 to update regional water use plans. He asked for an additional \$400,000 to update water plans. Mr. Greene said that the money may be used to figure out how much water there is and create plans based on this information. A revision will be asked for water plans. The state engineer praised the Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee and its plan. He wants to insure that all stakeholders are included and that the submissions of the plans are synchronized. Three hundred thousand dollars will be available to help regions to update plans. The EBWPC will have to update its plan. Mr. Kadas spoke about the lack of information on how many water rights actually exist. Mr. Candelaria mentioned the water rights issue between Texas and New Mexico.

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

OTHER

The chairman acknowledged Mr. Tyler and invited him to give his presentation. He distributed several handouts and a CD regarding the Estancia Basin water situation and the regional water plan. He pointed out internet links that support his information. He came to the board to raise a red flag about water use and the possibility that the Estancia Valley aquifer may go dry as early as 2054, 41 years from the present. He says that water levels are declining primarily because of agricultural irrigation. A discussion followed on the frustrating issues involved in trying to affect declining water levels. Mr. Tyler

said that measures should be taken to monitor water usage. He ended by pointing out an increase in irrigation in the valley during this extended period of drought.

MEETINGS ATTENDED:

PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING:

Kinder Morgan presentation

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, April 3, 2014 at 8:00 a.m. at Alpine Alley, located at 210 N Summit in Mountainair, NM.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the board, the regular meeting of the Claunch-Pinto Board **ACTION TAKEN:** Richard Shovelin moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 a.m. Brian Greene seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote was unanimous.

FELIPE LOVATO, JR., CHAIRMAN

RICHARD SHOVELIN, SEC. – TREAS.