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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
January 10, 2025**

Supervisors Present: Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
David Cain
Gerald Chavez
Aubrey Dunn
Jack Lockridge

Absentees: Larry Gomez
Dale Rose

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Tom Carroll, Deer Canyon Preserve
Roy Gibson, Associate Supervisor
Kim Kostelnik, SAKAK Natural Resource Consulting
Sara McCall, Pattern Energy, Public Engagement Manager
Katie Mechenbier, NMDA
Katheryn Taylor, volunteer
Jeremy Turner, Pattern Energy, Director for NM Project Development

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District (CPSWCD) was called to order by Chairman Felipe Lovato, both in person and via Zoom at 8:05 a.m.

Welcome Attendees:

The chairman welcomed those present and thanked them for joining the meeting.
The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The board reviewed the agenda. **ACTION TAKEN:** David Cain moved to approve the agenda. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye.

APPROVAL/ DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The board reviewed the minutes of January 10, 2025. **ACTION TAKEN:** David Cain moved approval of the minutes of the January, 2025 meeting. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye.

TREASURER'S REPORT and APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of December 2024 with accounts payable for January, 2025.

ACTION TAKEN: Aubrey Dunn moved to approve the treasurer's report for December with accounts payable for January. Jack Lockridge seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

No report.

REPORTS:

NMDA Report:

The written report is in the board members' packets. Ms. Mechenbier highlighted some of the items in the report:

- The second quarterly budget report is due to DFA-LGD on January 31.
- SWCDs should schedule meetings with county clerks to find out what is needed from the district and when it is needed for the 2025 SWCD supervisor elections.
- The grant application cycle opens on January 15 for the Healthy Soil Program and final webinars are on January 23.
- The District Opportunities grant will open on Monday, February 3rd and close on Friday, March 14.
- The application period for NMDA's Noxious Weeds Management grants will open on Monday, March 3 and close on Friday, April 11, 2025.
- Districts should review their mileage and per diem policy.
- Concerning the Open Meetings Resolution, the state sets a limit on advertising rates that can be charged to governmental entities for required advertisements.

Mr. Chavez asked what the difference is between small and large ranches. Ms. Mechenbier said that she would find out what the definition is and send it to the district manager.

FO Report:

No report.

District Manager's Report:

The district manager reported that included in the board packet is a copy of the letter sent to Sara de Fierro, Climate NRCS Mitigation Lead, requesting an update of the Annual Precipitation Map that was used to determine suitable areas for funding.

CORRESPONDENCE:

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board:

The district manager said that some projects are being finished; for example, the contract for a big project for the Central Tri-County SWCD has been completed. Four projects for the East Torrance SWCD have been completed. Claunch-Pinto has 25 applications for projects.

All the paperwork for the Water Trust Board grant has been signed, so money can be spent. An in-person Estancia Basin Watershed Committee is being planned for February.

New Mexico State Forestry Grant:

One of the projects for the East Torrance SWCD will be funded by this grant.

NFL Grants -- HWY 337 Grant, the HWY 55 Grant and the 2023 NFL Grant:

The district manager is sending out a request for bids for the Bearcat project just north of Chilili, and that will include the last 50 acres of state land. All the firewood will go to the Chilili Land-grant. The state land office will pay for the wood to be hauled from the project area to Chilili.

Progress on the HWY 337 grant is delayed until a traffic control plan is approved. The company that will provide the traffic control needs to submit the paperwork for a plan, which must then be approved. Traffic control must be provided because of the hills north of Chilili where there are visibility issues. The work on the project area north of Chilili needs to be completed before the work on the area south of Chilili can be started. Chilili receive the wood from this project.

The work plan for the HWY 55 project has been submitted to State Forestry for final review and signature. Then a contractor(s) can be hired.

The work plan for the 2023 NFL grant will be written after the HWY 55 work plan has been approved and signed.

The Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance (Upper Rio Grande Salt Cedar Project):

There are two grants. One finished in December. The Greater Rio Grande committee will have a meeting at the end of January, 2025 in Taos. There are 15 small projects in Taos. This is the first time that the Taos SWCD has been involved. The district manager has riparian projects in the Acoma Pueblo.

The district manager is working with Pattern Energy on doing riparian work at the ranch in Dripping Springs.

CFRP – Watershed Restoration and Fuel Reduction in Bartolo Canyon of the Manzano Mountains:

The project has been started. Pablo Romero is cutting and hauling out wood. The goal is to finish cutting and hauling wood out by the first of March. The district manager has seen good inspection reports. One more round of monitoring will be conducted by high school students in June or July.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program Grant (RCPP):

The district manager said that projects included in the 2018 funding are progressing. The 2019 funding was a renewal of the 2015 funds. The renewal for the 2015 grant is pending clarification on what will happen with one landowner, so the cultural resource survey hasn't been done on this property. All the rest of the surveys have been completed. The district has received high compliments from the state NRCS archaeologist on the work by SWCA on the cultural resource surveys.

FEMA Project:

The district manager expects to send out a request for proposals on this project next week.

SWCC Grant:

Kim Kostelnik said that the board received the last draft of the land use plan last month. She asked for comments from board members on the draft. Mr. Lovato said that he likes the plan and thinks that it is a good plan. Mr. Dunn asked for an update on the water basin maps. Ms. Kostelnik said that she is still trying to get an update. He asked for the update to be included if one can be found and that otherwise the plan looks good to him. Mr. Chavez asked how the plan is tied to the county's ability to monitor water. Ms. Kostelnik referred him to the section on water and said that the documents give the district the ability to work with the state engineer's office to find out what kind of monitoring is done, especially on the use of water that is not being reported, agricultural water use, for example. She said that the plan gives the district standing and the authority to get entities to pay attention to the district's issues. The district manager commented that the plan allowed the district to go to the PRC when Western Spirit was initiated. Mr. Chavez mentioned the changes that have occurred for land owners regarding water from acequias that is no longer available to them. Mr. Gibson mentioned that he worked with Ms. Kostelnik on the section on construction and its effect on the subdivision ordinance. He suggested that the district express its concern generally regarding unreported water use rather than focusing solely on

marijuana farms. Discussion followed on the use of water for marijuana farms as opposed to other agricultural uses and other possible sources of harvesting water other than using wells, such as rain water catchment systems. The district manager said that the document will be recorded in all four counties in the district. She mentioned other places where the plan will be disseminated. Mr. Lockridge said that the district is the entity that will get issues on the table to be discussed and hopefully addressed. Ms. Kostelnik would like to be able to finalize the plan in the next 30 days.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay:

Mr. Gibson reported that two bids were received for the dump trailers, one from Four Rivers for \$19,843.02 and the other from TNT Trailers for approximately \$10,900. He asked for a third bid from a company in Bosque Farms, but no bid was received. The trailers are different brands but are supposed to be equivalent trailers. Considering the large difference in price, Mr. Gibson recommended that the board accept the bid from TNT Trailers. The district manager said that she has to request a reauthorization of the funding by the middle of February. Mr. Gibson will verify that the dump trailer can transport the skid steer. **ACTION TAKEN:** Jack Lockridge moved to accept the bid from TNT Trailers. Mr. Cain seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye.

Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:

Jeremy Turner, the director of New Mexico project development for Pattern Energy with Sara McCall, the public engagement manager for Pattern Energy gave a brief quarterly update on progress on construction. The board will continue to hear quarterly reports. The district manager has a meeting with Adam Clark on the following Friday to move forward the project at the ranch in Dripping Springs. The project area on the wind farm is split between two projects, 3 zones in the north and seven in the south. He explained the reason for the division. He explained the location of high voltage stations the transmission lines, the number of workers on each site, the amount and nature of the of power passing through each station, where it is going and the degree of progress and completion on the projects in both the south and north project areas. Mr. Turner described the progress on the construction of wind farms. He finished his presentation by saying that he would be happy to return quarterly to give the board a progress report. He also offered to arrange for board members to tour sites.

Mr. Turner offered to respond to questions. The district manager asked how turbine blades were recycled. Mr. Turner said that all the major blade manufacturers have, in the last seven years, implemented blade recycling programs. Previously the blades ended up in landfills because of patent attorneys who were afraid that someone would steal the technology involved in making the blades. Now the blades that are being replaced are cut up and taken to a plant in Texas where they are recycled, most of it into a fuel source for concrete. If generators are being replaced, all the copper is stripped from them and reused.

The district manager observed that the generators coming off the sites are filthy. She asked whether the oil or grease from the generators gets into the ground. Mr. Turner explained that if any leaks occur, the turbine is shut down, it is reported to the state, and the oil is reclaimed from the soil.

The district manager asked what happens when a bad accident occurs. What procedures are in place to respond. Mr. Turner said that a meeting was held yesterday to talk about how to get adequate responses in place and how to coordinate with other emergency services. Pattern projects are in Torrance and Lincoln counties and Pattern is working to coordinate with both. He said that there have been two serious events on site, one was a fatality because of a heart attack; he explained what was done in response. He also told of a head-on collision that occurred after hours and how that was handled. The district manager talked about the challenges in providing EMT services in Mountainair

and Corona. Mr. Turner said that areas have been prepared so that a helicopter can land in an emergency.

The district manager hopes that Pattern will cooperate with the Claunch-Pinto district in its efforts to control noxious weeds. She described some spraying was done near Scholle which killed everything on the highway right of way because the herbicide was so strong. This die-off contributed to erosion in the area. It has taken perhaps ten years for any vegetation to come back. She would like to be assured that noxious weeds are being appropriately taken care of on private land where there are Pattern projects. Mr. Turner said that Pattern has a full noxious weed plan that he will share with the district manager; plus, he would like to see the district's plan to determine how they compare. They are taking all steps that they can to see that seed transfer is not taking place.

Mr. Lockridge said that reports from California say that it has a lot of wind energy is being stored in batteries. How will that affect down-stream people who are waiting for energy to come to them. Mr. Turner said that California is benefiting mainly from solar energy. He also said that 60 % of the wind energy has already been contracted in California markets, so interest in wind energy is still high in California and western markets and prices are increasing. Second, Mr. Lockridge said that the incoming president has said that there will be no more wind farms built. Mr. Turner said 80 % of the west is aligned on its decarbonization goals. Those state level mandates are already in place. Perhaps there would be an effect on wind energy if any projects were on federal land, but Pattern's projects are all on state trust land and private land. The transmission lines cross about 171 miles of federal property, so Pattern will be monitoring these agreements. Ms. McCall said that efforts to protect what is already in place and to defend what is coming have been started by the national industry advocacy group so that havoc doesn't descend on the industry. Mr. Turner said that even if something happens so that a slow-down occurs, it will be temporary.

Personnel:

The district manager said that the personnel committee met and that a candidate was chosen to fill the position. She is waiting for the agreement to be finalized between the New Mexico Foundation and the Central Tri-county SWCD because the SWCD will handle the reimbursements to Claunch-Pinto SWCD for the new employee's wages up to \$30,000..

NEW BUSINESS:

Fill position No. 5 – at large position:

Mr. Lovato said that Mr. Lockridge is attending his last meeting and that Mr. Lockridge has been an asset to the board and will be missed. He thanked Mr. Lockridge for his service to the board. He is appointing Tom Carroll, also from Deer Canyon who will also be an asset to the board. Mr. Lockridge said that the board will love Tom Carroll. He also related how fast events happened after he and Ms. Lockridge decided that they must move to Texas. The closing on their house is next week and they will leave for Texas on the afternoon of January 16. They will live in Arlington, Texas where their two daughters live.

Mr. Carroll said that he has lived in Deer Canyon for 14 years. He has worked with Mr. Lovato and Mr. Cain. He has been the liaison to the Claunch-Pinto district for 12 years. He related his experience with and service to the community in Deer Canyon. He looks forward to working with the board. The district manager explained that his position as well as Mr. Cain's position are elected positions and will be on the ballot in November. She explained what is involved in getting names on the ballot.

Re-organization of the board:

ACTION TAKEN: Mr. Cain moved to maintain the current officers of the board: chairman – Felipe Lovato; vice chairman -- David Cain; secretary – Gerald Chavez; treasurer – Aubrey Dunn. Mr. Chavez seconded the motion. Mr. Lockridge moved to amend the motion to include the appointment of the new

board member, Tom Carroll, Mr. Cain seconded the motion to amend. The motions carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye.

Approval of the IRS mileage reimbursement Rate -- \$.67 a mile:

Aubrey Dunn moved to approve the IRS mileage reimbursement rate of \$.67 a mile. Mr. Cain seconded the motion. Motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Jack Lockridge, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye.

REPORTS:

South Central Mountain RC&D:

No report.

EBWPC:

The district manager said that the committee continues to meet. Members of the committee are concerned that the Interstate Streams Commission will put the Estancia Closed Basin into the Upper Rio Grande Water Basin during the updating of the Regional Water Plans. The committee wants to maintain the Estancia Closed Basin as an entity of its own. The issue is that if the Estancia Closed Basin is included in the Upper Rio Grande Water Basin, its water could go to Albuquerque and Santa Fe.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

OTHER:

The district manager said that the county determined that the downed plastic from the green houses on marijuana farms is hazardous waste and must be removed by companies that specialize in the removal of hazardous plastic waste.

In addition, the electricity on the big marijuana farm on HWY 41 between Wilard and Estancia was turned off because of non-payment, so now generators are being used.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

Regular meeting: Friday, 8:00 a.m. on February 7, 2025 at the Natural Resource Conservation Center, located at 1206 South Highway 5, Mountainair, NM.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the board, the regular meeting of the Claunch-Pinto Board, Mr. Cain moved to adjourn. Mr. Chavez seconded the motion.

FELIPE LOVATO, CHAIRMAN

GERALD CHAVEZ, SECRETARY