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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
February 7, 2025**

Supervisors Present: Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman
David Cain
Tom Carroll
Gerald Chavez
Aubrey Dunn
Larry Gomez
Dale Rose

Absentees:

Others Present: Dierdre Tarr, District Manager
Emmi Berski, SWCA
Alejandro Collins, SWCA
Roy Gibson, Associate Supervisor
Linda Jaramillo, County Commissioner
Kim Kostelnik, SAKAK Natural Resource Consulting
Katie Mechenbier, NMDA
Crystal Medina, NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute
Codi Stopki, SWCA
Katheryn Taylor, volunteer

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 8:03 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. Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Tom Carroll, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

APPROVAL/ DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The board reviewed the minutes of February 07, 2025. **ACTION TAKEN:** David Cain moved approval of the minutes of the January, 2025 meeting. Tom Carroll seconded the motion. The motion carried as amended by voice vote with one abstention. Change "wind" to "marijuana" on page six: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Tom Carroll, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND APPROVAL/ DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

Board members reviewed the Treasurer's Report for February, 2025, and approval of vouchers with accounts payable for March, 2025 with accounts payable for April.

ACTION TAKEN: David Cain moved to approve the Larry Gomez seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Tom Carroll, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

UPDATE ON GRANTS: SWCC GRANT:

Draft Land Use Plan (Kim Kostelnik):

Kim Kostelnik asked board members whether they had any further comments on the plan. Mr. Carroll said that he read the plan and thought it was a good document. Ms. Kostelnik said that she would include one of the maps that she was waiting for an update on. She intends to finish the plan by the end of June and would present it to the board. The board members indicated their support for the document.

Report on Hub Site (Crystal Medina, Alejandro Collins, Cody Stropki):

Mr. Stropki explained what the content of the web site would consist of. It can serve as a guide for future district managers and board members to access the history of the accomplishments of the Claunch-Pinto District and how they were achieved. It will chronicle the role of the district manager, Dierdre Tarr in achieving them. The hub site can provide a model for future district managers to continue the work of the board. It can also serve as a model for other soil and water conservation districts.

Mr. Collins and Ms. Medina demonstrated various links in the web site and the content that would be available. They indicated the ease of navigating the web site for potential users.

TREASURER'S REPORT and APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

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

ACTION TAKEN: David Cain moved to approve the treasurer's report for January with accounts payable for February. Dale Rose seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Tom Carroll, aye; Aubrey Dunn, aye; Dale Rose, aye; Larry Gomez, aye.

OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The district manager has distributed the quarterly report to board members.

REPORTS:

NMDA Report:

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

- The Healthy Soil Program Grant application period is from January 15 to March 19.
The district manager said that Stephen is working with one landowner on an application.
- The District Opportunities Grant application is from February 3 – to March 14.
- The Noxious Weeds Program Grant application period is from March 3 to April 11.
- The annual mil levy rate resolution is due to the SWCC for approval in April.
- The Water Quality and Conservation Grant application is due on April 4.
- District managers are encouraged to meet with county clerks regarding supervisor elections to find out what is needed from the district and when it is needed.

- Soil and Water Conservation Day in Santa Fe at the Legislature will be held on March 5 at the State Capitol Rotunda.
- The NM Conservation District Employees Association will hold a meeting on March 5th in Santa Fe at 2:30.

FO Report:

The NRCS written reports for January and February are included in board members' packets. Ms. Rose asked whether the spending cuts at the federal level affect NRCS programs. The district manager said she thought that IRA funding may be affected. She also said that the district itself will not be affected concerning NRCS funding.

District Manager's Report:

The district manager reported that she attended a meeting with the Torrance County Assessor and Treasurer concerning Senate Bill 192. A constitutional amendment that increases veterans' property tax exemptions was passed in the last election. This bill implements it. There is a concern that it won't get through the legislature and onto the governor's desk in time for it to be implemented. She will send information to board members to inform them of committee members who have to deal with this bill so that they can help convince them to facilitate the process. Implementation will affect the amount of money that the district receives from the mil levy. There will be a decrease in the funding for the mil levy of about \$6500. There will be an additional exemption for disabled veterans, but the county officials don't know how many there are. That will affect the mil levy, too. It is impossible to know at this time how much the district will be affected.

The district's new employ will begin on February 18. She will attend the next meeting and meet the board.

CORRESPONDENCE:

No report.

UPDATE ON GRANTS:

Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board:

The district manager said that the Water Trust Board funding is state money and has nothing to do with the federal actions. Projects are being completed. Now work will begin on projects that are due to be finished by next year.

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

The district manager said that according to Lawrence Crane from NM State Forestry, this funding is not affected by actions being taken at the federal level. The Highway 55 and 337 are funded by state money. He has been told to start working on the work plan for the 2023 NFL grant.

The district contracted with the NM Forest Industry Association. She will turn in her final request for reimbursement by the end of the month.

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

Victoria Sedillo will take on some of the work on this project as the district manager is busy with training the new employee.

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

The district manager met with a representative of Pattern Energy. A land owner agreement will be signed for the Dripping Springs Ranch, so the salt cedar can be removed. She expects that \$75,000 will be paid for the work.

She congratulated the board because it is the only SWCD in New Mexico and Arizona to make Pattern Energy aware of its obligation to work with the district and to keep board members informed of its activities. Another report on Pattern Energy activities will be given at the April board meeting.

The district manager said that Shawn Martin, the acting district ranger for the Mountainair Ranger District told her that the district would be paid for the balance of Pablo Romero's work on the Bartolo project, but the payment will be delayed.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program Grant (RCPP):

This funding is federal money, so the district manager doesn't know what effects activities at the federal level will affect this funding. The district needs to sign a contract with SWCA for the 2023 funding to complete one cultural resource survey.

FEMA Project:

The district manager said that there were site visits on the Aceves project, the Chilili project and at the Bear Cat project (a state land project). Seven contractors participated. Their proposals are due on February 20th.

SWCC Grant (6/30/2025):

Draft Land Use Plan – Kim Kostelnik:

Report on Hub Site – Crystal Medina, Alejandro Collins, Cody Stropki:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Capital Outlay – FY2022/2023 Remaining Capital Outlay Funding -- \$49,475.60:

The district manager said that she will submit the request for reauthorization for the balance of the \$49,475.60 as well as a letter describing the rationale for the request to Senator Stefanics. She will include pictures of the rocky terrain on a project site visit that she drove over in her personal vehicle to illustrate why new vehicles are needed.

Mr. Gibson talked with Todd Gibson from the TNT Trailer Sales who said that their trailer meets the district's specifications and would easily handle the skid steer. The district manager says that she has found an operator for the skid steer.

The district manager said that she has tried to contact Representative Lord who represents the district, but the representative has never responded to her calls or emails.

Torrance and Lincoln County Wind Energy:

Ms. Rose reported that the company has finally done something to mitigate the effects of the annoying flashing red lights in the Corona area.

Personnel:

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

REPORTS:

South Central Mountain RC&D:

No report.

EBWPC:

The district manager said that the committee will meet this coming Thursday. The committee will start getting live updates on the monitoring of the depth of the well now that the contractor has received the necessary equipment.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:

Mr. Gibson said that he would be in Santa Fe and he would be happy to speak to any representatives or senators if needed. The district manager asked for his help on monitoring a possible bill to put the Estancia Closed Basin in with the Rio Grande Basin. That would allow Albuquerque and Santa Fe to draw water from the Estancia Basin. Mr. Gibson said that he would make sure that his lobbyist through the engineering councils watches for such a bill. Commissioner Jaramillo said that she would cooperate in any way that she could to protect the area's water and land.

OTHER:

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:

Regular meeting: Friday, 8:00 a.m. on March 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. **ACTION TAKEN:** Mr. Chavez moved to adjourn. Ms. Rose seconded the motion.

FELIPE LOVATO, CHAIRMAN

GERALD CHAVEZ, SECRETARY