



MAY 2015– REGULAR MEETING MINUTES—approved 06/18/2015

Regular Board Meeting, Thursday, May 21, 2015, 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Directors Present: B. Jefferson, R. King, E. Paddock, B. Plemmons, L. Ferrasci, J. Devers
Directors Absent: M. Duflock, P. Binsacca (Associate)
Others Present: P. Robins (RCDMC) by phone, J. Warner (NRCS), K. Joy Barge (NRCS) by phone, D. Rao (UCCE)
Recorder: R. King

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Topics</u>	<u>Presented by</u>
10:10 A.M.	<u>Call to Order</u>	<u>B. Jefferson</u>

Comments from the public

D Rao shared a draft needs assessment questionnaire for ranchers and rangeland folks for which she'd like feedback.

President's and Directors' Comments

Directors

R King talked briefly about the Central Coast Livestock group's examination of establishing a more local slaughterhouse and cut-and-wrap facility that's USDA approved

P Robins described the Central Coast Area RCDs meeting held in King City on May 7. Approximately half of the area's RCDs Boards of Directors sent representative board members, which was better than average. At the meeting there was discussion of CARCD and Dept of Conservation impetus for RCD standards of organization. Conservation Strategy Group provided a legislation update on state bills of interest to RCDs.

J Devers and B Plemmons represented the RCDMC board at the meeting. J Devers commented regarding the discussion about making the area meetings more appealing and useful to the RCDs. And that B Plemmons stepped forward to serve as Vice Chair for the area group.

P Robins asked directors to provide feedback regarding the April 17 BBQ, which was the RCD's most successful to date in terms of attendance (~80), funds raised (~\$3,000 net), and Board member engagement and investment. He noted he had sent out a press release to all newspapers, radio stations and tv stations in the county, and followed up with the hosts (Braga Barn), who were pleased with how we treated their facility. His personal comment was that he wished he'd had a better organized presentation for the 'program' portion of the event.

L Ferrasci requested that \$150 be sent to Mission School Athletic Department in appreciation for the volunteer assistance two students provided at the event. R King noted that she paid the musicians \$100 and commented that it would be cancelled out by the same amount of ticket sales she brought in from five of her guests.

Minutes for April Meeting (Review for Approval)

P. Robins/Directors

Minutes from the April 17, 2015 Meeting were presented and reviewed. R King moved to approve the April 2015 meeting minutes as submitted; J Devers seconded the motion for approval of the minutes; A 5-0 vote of directors present approved the motion.

NRCS Update

J. Warner

J Warner noted that R LaFleur left NRCS at the end of April and he is serving as Interim DC until a replacement is hired. He shared that 9 contracts were funded this year so far for EQIP

under the new system of 'batched' deadlines. In the office there are currently only two full-time NRCS staff dedicated to Monterey County. Other staff have time split with the USFWS Partners program and/or with other counties. The next EQIP signup deadline is June 19. The building remodel begins in late April and should take 4 months to complete.

Budget and Finances (Review & Approval)

P. Robins / Directors

Monthly Financial Statements and Bills: P. Robins presented the financial statements regarding Accounts Receivable, Payables and Bank balances for the period ending May 21, 2015. The accrual account balance on May 21, 2015 was \$177,747.48, with \$28,906.21 in the Chase Bank and County Treasury accounts (taking into account checks to be signed at the meeting), \$84,549 in liabilities, and \$233,390.18 due to the RCD as receivables from various grants and outstanding invoices. By comparison, the Accrual accounting balance for District Funds stood at \$174,570.01 on April 17, 2015.

J Devers asked that future accounting reporting distinguish long-term receivables such as WCB grant withholding so that it's more clear which receivables are expected in the near-term rather than several years away.

P. Robins presented the list of detailed expenses to be paid in May including bi-weekly salary through May 10, one-time and recurring miscellaneous expenses, and reimbursement for expenses incurred during the month of May. Approval for the May financial statements and for May expenses from the Chase Bank account was motioned by J. Devers, seconded by E Paddock and passed by a unanimous vote of directors present (5-0).

Continued NRCS Update

K. Joy Barge

Director Plemmons joined the meeting at this time.

K Joy Barge called in to the meeting to describe the hiring process for the next District Conservationist and solicit input from directors regarding desirable qualifications. The goal is to hire within 80 days using on-line, internal application process. Barge described her responsibilities as overseeing 15 counties in NRCS 'Area 2', supervising DCs being one of her specific duties. Director Jefferson commented that the current backlog on project assistance (esp. engineering) due to apparent understaffing discourages grower participation. Barge said she would work to address workload concerns before new DC is hired. Cooperative Agreement with RCDMC should help address this by tapping B Burgoa's engineering skills, but there is no plan to increase NRCS personnel in office otherwise.

Board members discussed desired qualifications and qualities of a DC: some engineering and ag background; managerial skills and drive; connection with RCD on practices and projects beyond numbers and money; good communication and multi-tasking; someone who gets stuff done but has good people skills and promotes positive work environment.

New Business

Directors

Draft Budget:

Robins noted that there are still several contracts pending that affect the draft budget, so it will not be presented until the June Board Meeting. He also noted that numbers in the budget for personnel and overhead are based on annual pay adjustments and indirect cost allocation methods that the Board needs to revisit to ensure that budget assumptions and planning are more effectively guided by board-directed policy. The Finance Committee's task in the coming months will be to develop the Accounting Policies Handbook as advocated by Grace and Associates. Among these is an updated Compensation Policy. The current standard practice takes into account annual cost of living increases and merit increases, but may be out of date. Director Jefferson emphasized that it is the Board that bears the responsibility and ultimate decision-making and authority about budget and policy.

Draft Workplan:

For reference, Robins color-coded the current year's (2014-15) Work Plan to indicate which tasks were Complete, Nearly Complete, In Progress, and Incomplete. He noted that most of the Incomplete items were either not feasible because of funding or level of staffing, and some were very low-priority and postponed to accommodate other tasks. He requested a meeting with the Executive Committee in order to prepare the 2015-16 plan, which will also inform his Annual Performance Review. Incomplete items that should remain priorities include an RCD Newsletter, press releases/stories, and annual progress reporting to the County Board of Supervisors. The RCD Business Planning process needs to resume as well. Another incomplete item noted was work with cities, which have been more difficult to engage during the drought and low perceived flood risk. Robins noted that the Salinas River work may provide a nexus for city engagement, at least for those cities located near the river.

Director Paddock noted the incomplete Agralogics item in the Plan and commented that Driscolls is working on a project with them and could share information with the RCD. Robins clarified that the Agralogics project that was full-steam (on Agralogics side) in summer 2014 was apparently dropped when Agralogics determined that RCDs were not a priority market for their services.

Finance Committee members committed to meet at 8:15 on June 2. Executive Committee members committed to meet the same day at 10am.

Program UpdatesP. Robins

Robins informed directors that the next phase of arundo treatment (herbicide) begins May 27 on lands mowed in fall 2014, and will run 7 days a week until approximately June 20, and then resume on unmowed acreage during July and August. He will hire two new seasonal biologists in order to properly staff the project.

Robins informed the board of a new part-to-full time biologist hired via a pass-through agreement with State Parks to assist with their Western snowy plover monitoring State Beaches from Ford Ord Dunes to Zmudowski State Beach. Director Jefferson commented that he'd like to learn more about the project and requested that the biologist come to a future board meeting to report on her work. His observation at the beaches has been that coyotes are attracted to the flagging that is meant to protect the plovers' nests.

Robins described meeting with TreeTop Web Design as the most likely candidate for the RCD's website update. TreeTop designed websites for RCD of Santa Cruz Co and Waterways Engineering, both of which have design features very desirable to RCDMC, including forms for engaging visitors on each page: such as for making information requests, signing up for newsletters, and making donations.

Closed Session (postponed)

Director Jefferson requested postponing Executive Director performance review until the June meeting.

Closing DiscussionDirectors

Director King offered to present ideas for a late summer/ fall dinner fundraiser at the next meeting. Directors set a tentative date of June 17 (Wednesday) for the June meeting, unless more directors can attend on June 18. Director King noted that she would have to call in to the meeting if it were held on the 18th.

12:15 P.M.

Meeting AdjournedB. Jefferson

The next Regular RCD meeting will be held:

Date: **June 17, 2015, 10 A.M.**

Location: **RCDMC Office, 744-A LaGuardia St., Salinas, CA**