



744 La Guardia Street, Building A, Salinas, CA 93905

(831) 975-7775

### March 19, 2020– MEETING MINUTES—DRAFT

Regular Board Meeting, Thursday, March 19, 2020, 10:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Directors Present: B. Jefferson, J. Gularte, R. King, J. Doud, B. Lipe, B. Plemmons

Directors Absent: J. Clarke

Others Present: P. Robins (RCDMC), M. Barker (RCDMC), M. Errea (RCDMC), E. Zefferman (RCDMC), E. Boyland (NRCS), Devii Rao (UCCE), M. Ritter (guest)

Recorders: M. Barker, P. Robins

Location: Because of shelter-in-place orders for the COVID-19 outbreak, the meeting was held by teleconference at <https://www.uberconference.com/rcdmonterey>. Participants also had the option to call in to 831-278-5140.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Topics</u>	<u>Presented by</u>
10:04 A.M.	Call to Order	<u>B. Jefferson</u>

Public Comment: Devii Rao from UCCE congratulated RCDMC on recently receiving a large CalFire grant. UCCE also received a grant for establishing a Prescribed Burn Association in San Benito and Monterey Counties. Rao thanked RCDMC Forest Health Coordinator Jamie Tuitele-Lewis for his assistance throughout the grant application process.

#### Consent Agenda

- *Approval of Draft Meeting Agenda*
- *Approval of Minutes from the February 20, 2020 Regular Board Meeting*
- *Accept Staff Activities Report for February 2020.*

Director Lipe moved to approve all items on the Consent Agenda. Director Gularte seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

#### Reports

*Executive Director Report:* Robins reported that RCDMC staff have been working remotely because of the shelter-in-place order from Monterey County Health in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Paul has been in communication with CARCD and fellow RCDs about guidelines for how local RCDs can best function during this challenging time. NRCS has recommended discontinuing site visits for the time-being. The Salinas NRCS Office is for the most part vacant with the exception of 1-2 Rural Development or Farm Services Agency staff. The Monterey County Treasury and Auditor-Controller are maintaining skeleton crews in their office as well.

*NRCS Comments:* NRCS District Conservationist Erika Boyland shared an update about how NRCS is handling the COVID-19 outbreak. The Salinas Office has been deemed “Level 2”, which means the office is physically closed but staff are working remotely and conducting field visits by appointment only. Erika shared that the Salinas Office is headed towards a “Level 3”, which involves total office closure and discontinuation of field visits. The Farm

Service Agency (FSA) has been deemed 'essential' by their national office and are still going to remain open for select staff to come in and FSA will take customers on a phone appointment only basis. Most people in the office will be teleworking. While at level 2, NRCS vehicles are still available. Livermore, San Mateo, and Half Moon Bay offices are all considered Level 3. She confirmed that a California NRCS Office has already been exposed to COVID-19 because of an infected customer visiting the office.

Boyland provided an update on NRCS programs and explained that RCPP and EQIP deadlines will be extended due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The final EQIP and RCPP deadlines will be June 26, 2020. Interested applicants can still contact Tonya Linares in FSA. Boyland will continue to provide updates to RCDMC as things develop. Mail will still be received at the NRCS office with a contractor coming in to pick up mail 1-2 times per week.

*Directors' Updates & Committee Reports:* Director Jynel Gularte shared that the agricultural industry is exempt from any COVID-19 shelter-in-place restrictions at this time. Director King shared that the direct marketing of produce providers has been impacted as farmer's markets have been closed down. She asked how the RCD might be able to help impacted farmers. Errea shared that there might be a reduced earnings unemployment form that might be able to assist farm employers during this time. Director Lipe shared that it is possible that a large stimulus package may be passed in Congress to help companies to receive a payroll advance to help them keep their employees on payroll. Director Gularte also shared there is expected to be additional paid sick leave available to employees.

Old or Standing Business

P. Robins / Directors

No items pulled from the Consent Agenda.

*Monthly Financial Statements:* M. Errea presented the financial statements regarding Accounts Receivable, Payables and Bank balances for the period ending March 19, 2020. The accrual account balance on March 19, 2020 was \$194,567.89 with \$79,417.46 in the Chase Bank and County Treasury accounts (taking into account checks to be signed at the meeting), \$410,926 in liabilities, and \$526,076.91 due to the RCD as receivables from various grants and outstanding invoices. For comparison, the Accrual accounting balance for District Funds stood at \$201,237.86 on February 20, 2020.

*Expenses:* Errea presented the list of detailed expenses to be paid in March including bi-weekly salary through March 15, one-time and recurring miscellaneous expenses, and reimbursement for expenses incurred during the months of February and March, totaling \$172,739.10.

Director King moved to approve the March financial statements and the February and March expenses as presented. Director Plemmons seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

*Review of New or Revised Independent Contractor Agreements:* none

*Annual BBQ planning:* The Board agreed that postponing the BBQ until October will be most appropriate course of action given the COVID-19 outbreak and the current shelter-in-place advisory. Robins will reach out to sponsors to see if they elect to have their sponsor checks returned to them or if they would like the RCD to hold onto them for the rescheduled event.

New Business

Directors/ Staff

*Consideration of NRCS-RCD Memorandum of Agreement:* The Board reviewed a Memorandum of Agreement between USDA-NRCS, RCDMC and CARCD. The purpose of the memorandum is to confirm shared common objectives for the conservation partnership between the parties.

After brief discussion, Director Plemmons moved to approve the NRCS-RCDMC-CARCD Memorandum of Agreement as presented. Director Lipe seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

*Staff presentation:* RCDMC Ecologist Emily Zefferman presented a review of the Salinas River Arundo Control Program 2019 work season. Zefferman began the presentation with a brief overview about the program, which started in 2014. The primary funding sources for the program are three Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grants and the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner. RCDMC holds all permits for the programs and to-date has managed Arundo treatment by spraying and mowing across 657 acres. One of the key challenges about the 2019 Arundo work season was that over 1 acre of Arundo had to be treated by hand-cutting or stump-treating due to dense vegetation, hazards and access issues. Included in the Arundo Control Program is wildlife monitoring along the Salinas River in the treated areas. RCDMC has partnered with Pathways for Wildlife to monitor wildlife response to Arundo treatment with wildlife cameras and CSUMB to monitor bats and aerial and aquatic invertebrates.

Announcements

Directors/ Robins

None to report.

11:18 A.M. Meeting Adjourned

Next Regular RCD meeting:

Date: Thursday, April 16, 10am

Location: TBD



4/20/2020

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Minutes approved