



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

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December 17, 2020– MEETING MINUTES--APPROVED 1/21/2021

Regular Board Meeting, Thursday, December 17, 2020, 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Directors Present: R. King, B. Plemmons, J. Clarke, B. Lipe, J. Doud, J. Gularte, M. Ritter (Associate)

Directors Absent: I. Mendoza (Associate), B. Jefferson

Others Present: P. Robins (RCDMC), M. Barker (RCDMC), M. Errea (RCDMC), N. Solares (RCDMC), L. Murphy (RCDMC), J. Booth (NRCS)

Recorders: M. Barker, P. Robins

Because of shelter-in-place orders for the COVID-19 outbreak, the meeting was held by Zoom conference.

Open Session: Director King called the meeting to Order at 10:04 am

Public Comment: None

Consent Items

- *Approval of Draft Meeting Agenda*
- *Approval of Minutes from the November 24, 2020 Regular Board Meeting*
- *Accept Staff Activities Report for November 2020.*

Director Clarke moved to approve the Consent Items. Director Doud seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

Reports

NRCS Report: Interim District Conservationist J. Booth from the Hollister Office shared that there was a secondary level COVID exposure at the Salinas Office. Disinfectant wipes should be placed in all vehicles. Booth confirmed that Robins has received a copy of the Salinas Service Center Reopening plan.

The Guadalupe-Coyote RCD (GCRCD) in Santa Clara County has a job opening for a Natural Resources Program Manager. NRCS is currently seeking a new District Conservationist (DC) and will be relisting the DC posting in the next 2-3 weeks due to a lack of qualified applicants to the first round. The NRCS Hollister Office is currently seeking a partner biologist for the pollinator program. NRCS EQIP ranking deadlines are approaching so all applications should be submitted by end of January.

Executive Director Report: Robins shared that RCDMC Ecologist Emily Zefferman is on maternity leave and is due in one week. Robins and Errea will be updating the RCD personnel handbook to incorporate recent changes in the law related to family leave and will present the updated policy to the board for review in the near future. Robins had a discussion with Senator Ana Caballero's office and Joanna Devers from the Salinas RMU Association about on-going Stream Maintenance Program and CDFW annual permit

reviews. Senator Caballero has expressed her full support for the endeavor. Robins and Director Lipe met with Community Foundation of Monterey County for setting up a protocol for donations of stock to the RCDMC through the Community Foundation.

Directors' Updates: None.

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 December 17, 2020. The accrual account balance on December 17, 2020 was \$216,832.32 with \$433,144.26 in the Chase Bank and County Treasury accounts (taking into account checks to be signed at the meeting), \$956,404 in liabilities, and \$740,091.72 due to the RCD as receivables from various grants and outstanding invoices. For comparison, the Accrual accounting balance for District Funds stood at \$199,583.97 on November 24, 2020.

Expenses: Errea presented the list of detailed expenses to be paid on December 17, including bi-weekly salary through December 6, one-time and recurring miscellaneous expenses, and reimbursement for expenses incurred during the months of November and December, totaling \$252,967.30.

Director Plemmons moved to approve the December financial statements and the November and December expenses. Director Doud seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

Review of New Independent Contractor Agreement ICA 2020-08 with Durden Construction for an amount NTE \$187,250 for construction of a woodchip denitrification bioreactor. For the project located adjacent to Blanco Drain just upstream of the culvert under McFadden Road, the contractor will construct a 8,319 square-foot surface area vertical-flow woodchip bioreactor as designed by FlowWest Engineering and permitted by all the relevant resource agencies. Durden Construction is the selected contractor based on the August solicitation for proposals, in response to which we had three contractors attend the site meeting and two actual submissions. Durden Construction was the lowest, responsible bidder, and RCDMC staff have negotiated a project budget within the grant budget to fit within the NTE of \$187,250. Approximately 25% of the project grant cost will be offset by in-kind and financial contributions from Tanimura and Antle Company. The anticipated work period is June 2021.

Director Lipe moved to approve the independent contractor agreement with Durden Construction. Director Plemmons seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

Approval for entry into agreements with MCWRA for two Integrated Regional Water Management projects: Farm Nutrient Management and Water Quality Assistance Program (\$315,063.00) and Salinas River Multi-Benefit Stream Maintenance and Habitat Stewardship Program (\$526,525 in partnership with River Management Unit Association).

The Monterey County Farm Nutrient Management and Water Quality Assistance Program will include regional grower education, 75 individual on-farm consultations, over 25 detailed irrigation and nutrient management assessments with recommendations, and corresponding implementation assistance and effectiveness tracking at a subset of approximately 12 farm sites. This program will complement existing agreements with NRCS.

The Salinas River Multi-Benefit Stream Maintenance and Habitat Stewardship Program will development of up to 10 new secondary channels for flood risk reduction on on the Salinas River and upper watershed treatment of *Arundo donax* and tamarisk in the Salinas River.

Director Plemmons moved to approve both agreements. Director Doud seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

Strategic Plan discussion: Robins shared the information provided by Board and Staff about the third 2021 RCDMC Strategic Plan Update Preparatory Question. The prompt was “*Where should the RCD be looking to expand our ability to meet current needs and/or be more responsive to the community?*” Robins received responses from nine board members and staff and expressed that more feedback is welcome. Board members and meeting attendees reviewed the document for several minutes before continuing with a brief discussion bulleted below:

- More volunteer opportunities in the post-fire realm could better engage and educate the public about RCDMC’s work.
- It would be helpful to have a list or number of projects for the NRCS Emergency Watershed Program.

The board planning retreat will be held via Zoom sessions on January 19th and January 21st from 9am-12pm to further discuss the strategic plan responses.

New Business

Directors/ Staff

Staff presentation by Ag Technical Specialist Natalie Solares and Soil Scientist Laura Murphy regarding *Technical Assistance to Small Farmers*. The Agricultural and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) is located on a 100-acre parcel south of Salinas where beginning farmers can lease agricultural plots. ALBA is the nexus for much of the RCD’s current small farmer work and it offers two primary programs: a Beginning Farmer Education Course (PEPA) and an Organic Farm Incubator. The major activities that RCDMC staff carry out include technical assistance directly to farmers, high tunnel work, education/outreach efforts and data collection, and connecting farmers with NRCS EQIP funds.

Annual Newsletter report: Barker provided an update on the status of the 2020 annual newsletter and asked for board member contributions. Director King agreed to write the introduction again this year. Some of the topics to be covered in the newsletter will include COVID updates, special events, education and outreach, forest and fire fuels management, post-fire site assessments, engineering assistance, technical assistance for the healthy soils program, winter cover cropping and organic amendments, the Salinas River Arundo Control Program and Stream Maintenance Program, and the Monarch Butterfly Working Group. Financial information from the Fiscal Year 2019-20 annual audit will also be included. The newsletter will be released via Mailchimp by February.

Fundraising Efforts: Robins raised the question to the board about how to approach donors for sponsorships, given that the Annual BBQ was not held this year or will not be held next Spring due to COVID considerations. One suggestion was that the auction could potentially be held online to raise funds. Sponsors could be thanked publicly via social media or provide a thank you gift such as DoorDash or a reduced rate wine membership. Tax-deductible donations are another option.

Announcements

Directors/ Robins

None.

11:58 A.M. Meeting Adjourned

Next Regular RCD meeting: Tuesday, January 19, 9am. Meeting will be held by Zoom.