



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

(831) 975-7775

March 18, 2021– MEETING MINUTES—*Approved 4/15/2021*

Regular Board Meeting, Thursday, March 18, 2021, 12:30 P.M. – 2:30 P.M.

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

Directors Absent: M. Ritter (Associate), I. Mendoza (Associate)

Others Present: P. Robins (RCDMC), M. Errea (RCDMC), B. Bates (RCDMC), J. Tuitele-Lewis (RCDMC), A. Carter (RCDMC),

Recorders: B. Bates, P. Robins

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

Open Session: Director Jefferson called the meeting to Order at 12:30 pm

Public Comment: None

Consent Items

- *Approval of Draft Meeting Agenda*
- *Approval of Minutes from the February 24, 2021 Special Board Meeting*
- *Approval of Minutes from the February 18, 2021 Regular Board Meeting*
- *Accept Staff Activities Report for February 2021.*

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

Reports

NRCS Report: none

Executive Director Report:

Robins noted that NRCS is awaiting a final approval and acceptance of a job offer for a new District Conservationist for Monterey County. NRCS is also interviewing for the Soil Conservationist position that has been vacant since John Warner's retirement in 2020. Robins described the Durable Collaboration under development with Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD, San Mateo RCD and the RCD of Santa Cruz County. He described the purpose of the effort as being to not only build upon and formalize their ongoing collaborative work and information-sharing, but to also develop a stronger voice as a group regarding natural resource management in the region and funding opportunities. The group will meet bimonthly, engaging Board Members and staff from each district in alternating meetings.

Paul is working with staff on several different grant proposals: 1) the CDFA Climate Smart Ag program's Technical Assistance Providers grant for supporting farmers' applying for Healthy Soils Program (HSP) and State Water Efficiency Enhancement Program (SWEEP) funds; 2) a

CARCD 'mini-grant' to support monarch butterfly projects and planning; 3) a partnership with FarmLink and RCD Santa Cruz to support small, Spanish language producers with Ag Order water quality compliance; 4) a CDFW Fisheries Restoration Grant Program proposal to fund the implementation of the fish-passage barrier removal project currently in design on Cachagua Creek (midway between Cachagua store and Tassajara Rd); and MAYBE 5) submission to host a 'Grizzly Corps' fellow to focus on forest and soil health projects and education in partnership with UC Cooperative Extension.

Directors Reports: 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 March 18, 2021. The accrual account balance on March 18, 2021 was \$237,997.74 with \$390,341.73 in the Chase Bank and County Treasury accounts (taking into account checks to be signed at the meeting), \$354,368 in liabilities, and \$202,024.17 due to the RCD as receivables from various grants and outstanding invoices. For comparison, the Accrual accounting balance for District Funds stood at \$299,304.60 on February 18, 2021.

Expenses: Errea presented the list of detailed expenses to be paid on March 18, including bi-weekly salary through March 5, one-time and recurring miscellaneous expenses, and reimbursement for expenses incurred during the months of February and January, totaling \$223,135.77

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

Mid-Fiscal Year budget update: Paul walked the board through changes to the Mid-Fiscal Year budget to accommodate a ~\$6k increase in personnel expenses to support increased Finance Manager time. Funds underspent in other categories were available to offset the change so that the budget remained balanced. After brief discussion, Director Lipe moved to approve the Mid-Fiscal Year Budget update as presented. Director King seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

Strategic Plan Update recommendations review from Special Meeting: Advanced copy was sent out to the board for comment. Paul reminded the board that this strategic plan update is not a complete revision, but rather an update to cover the 2-year period before a revision with community input could be conducted. Board Members generally accepted the updates made thus far in the goals and associated outcomes and requested that Robins return with a clean draft for the April Meeting after accepting all changes proposed.

Highlights from the discussion include the following:

Under Goal 2: Additional strategies--to help extend/communicate current science to growers for adoption; connect farmers and eligible land managers with USDA resources/programs; pursue partnership, funding and projects to promote forest health and fire safety; collaborate with farmer service organizations for more comprehensive and consistent outreach to farmers of all scales, incorporating diverse models of outreach to ensure equitable access to RCD information; and strengthen existing and create new partnerships.

Under Goal 3: Addition – to engage with environmental and social justice groups to educate them about ag and conservation work.

Under Goal 4: New proposed outcome is for growers and community members know RCD staff and programs. New potential strategies: Reach out to and engage underrepresented groups; and include community and partner information gathering.

A Modified Goal 6 to incorporate staff development and capacity along with existing board member-related strategies. Goal could be restated as 'RCDMC functions as a model organization and workplace that maintains high-quality staff and provides consistent expertise'.

Robins noted that all of the other RCD strategic plans that he reviewed recently identify their guiding principles or values, and he proposed to develop guiding principles and values for future consideration. Director Lipe echoed the value for developing guiding principles specific to the RCDMC.

Salinas River Management Unit Association and Monterey County Water Resources Agency permit oversight for Stream Maintenance Program: Robins followed up on the RMU Assoc's request to take on more tasks related to the SMP. Along those same lines, MCWRA has asked that RCDMC to take on the management of their permits (401 and 404). Robins and Christopher Bunn have been working together to create an agreement with MCWRA.

New Business

Staff presentation: Jasmine Ruvalcaba regarding Salinas River floodplain revegetation projects

Ruvalcaba presented a powerpoint summary of revegetation activities that she led in January and February. Ruvalcaba and her crew planted a variety of native forb seeds and plugs on four separate 1 acre plots near the Salinas River in Greenfield and Soledad per Emily Zefferman's experimental design with various treatments. Ruvalcaba described different means for dealing with interspecific competition, herbivory and water needs. Seeds and plugs were provided though a contract with Return of the Natives at CSU Monterey Bay.

Compliance training and requirements:

Robins confirmed that Sexual Harassment Prevention Training and AB 123 Ethics Training will best be completed through on-demand webinars on each Board member's own accord and time. Robins will send weblinks and information for Board Members and provide assistance as needed. Robins also reminded Board members that Form 700 forms are due by April 1 and that he would be sending regular reminders as needed.

Announcements

Directors/ Robins

None.

2:12 P.M. Meeting Adjourned

Next Regular RCD meeting:

Thursday, April 15, 10am. Meeting will be held by Zoom conference.