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April 15, 2021– MEETING MINUTES—*Approved 5/20/2021*

Regular Board Meeting, Thursday, April 15, 2021, 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 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), A. DeLara (NRCS), J. Booth (NRCS)

Recorder: 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 10:00 am

Public Comment: None

Consent Items

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

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

Reports

Executive Director Report:

Paul Robins provided an update on recent grant applications and notifications:

- The October 2020 \$2.9M submission for Wildlife Conservation Board funding of Phase 5 of the Salinas River arundo program was not approved. Staff will resubmit for a future round after receiving comments from the grant reviewers
- A March 2021 \$34k submission for CA Association of RCDs was approved for providing local monarch habitat project technical assistance and coordinating the Monterey Regional Monarch Alliance. Work will start in May.
- A March 2021 \$187k submission for CA Dept of Food & Ag 'Technical Assistance Provider' funding is still under review.
- The RCD was included for a \$34k portion of a Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program proposal submitted by CA FarmLink along with other partners (RCD Santa Cruz among them), with results anticipated in summer 2021.

NRCS Report:

James Booth noted that a new Xerces Society 'Partner Biologist' has been hired in Hollister to assist with pollinator projects in the region. He then introduced the incoming District Conservationist for the Salinas Field Office, Ariel DeLara.

DeLara described some of his work background with NRCS: most recently a Range Conservationist in Santa Maria, but also worked in Sonoma and Marin Counties before that. He will arrive for work in the Salinas Field Office on May 24. DeLara announced that interviews have been conducted for a new GS-11 Soil Conservationist for the Salinas Field Office and that they are advertising for a more entry-level agronomist position as well.

Regarding EQIP funding, the first 2021 batch period has passed, for which a relatively small number of contracts were awarded due to funding limitations. The next batch period ends in June. He expects a special release of drought-relief funding to be coming this year, which will augment the number of contracts that can be funded in future rounds.

Directors Reports:

Director Doud mentioned a private fund-raising resource for farmer and rancher projects named Farm Raise. They can assist with grant and EQIP applications for a fee.

Old or Standing Business

P. Robins / Directors

No items pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Fiscal Year 2019-20 Financial Records Annual Audit Report: Travis Hole of Moss, Levy & Hartzheim LLP presented the final audit report of the RCD's prior fiscal year financial statements. The document was previously reviewed and discussed in a meeting with the Finance Committee a week prior. Mr. Hole described the audit as exceptional and having proceeded very smoothly. In the audit letter they provided an unqualified opinion regarding the RCD's fiscal management and oversight procedures and had zero findings regarding RCD financial controls. After brief discussion, Director Plemmons moved to accept the report as submitted. Director Lipe seconded the motion. All present voted to approve the motion.

Monthly Financial Statements: M. Errea presented the financial statements regarding Accounts Receivable, Payables and Bank balances for the period ending April 15, 2021. The accrual account balance on April 15, 2021 was \$237,997.74 with \$381, 223.55 in the Chase Bank and County Treasury accounts (taking into account checks to be signed at the meeting), \$417,429 in liabilities, and \$256,948.93 due to the RCD as receivables from various grants and outstanding invoices. For comparison, the Accrual accounting balance for District Funds stood at \$237,997.74 on March 18, 2021. The remaining \$100,000 of fiscal year dry-period loan funds will be refunded to the County on April 26.

Expenses: Errea presented the list of detailed expenses to be paid on April 15, including bi-weekly salary through April 11, one-time and recurring miscellaneous expenses, and reimbursement for expenses incurred during the months of March and April, totaling \$95,186.55.

Director Lipe moved to approve the April financial statements and the March and April expenses. Director Clarke seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

Strategic Plan Update draft: Robins briefly reviewed a reformatted version of the draft Strategic Plan update that incorporated changes recommended and accepted by Board members at the March meeting, along with a proposed introductory section with a list of Guiding Principles. Board members proposed minor changes and organization to the Principles section and generally considered it ready for approval at the next board meeting with those edits incorporated. Robins added that he would schedule an ad hoc plan review committee to meet in

the coming weeks to complete this task.

Resolution 2021-01 Requesting \$300,000 Dry Period Loan from County of Monterey for Fiscal Year 2021-22: Robins briefly reviewed this topic with Board members, with Finance Committee members noting they had discussed this during their most recent meeting and supported the staff recommendation of a slightly increased request relative to 2020-21. Given the RCD budget of over \$3M, the RCD could be eligible for a much larger loan up to 85% of that budget, but the RCD only needs \$300,000 at most to assist with cash flow during the loan period. Director Clarke moved to approve the Resolution 2021-01 authorizing the request as proposed. Director Plemmons seconded the motion and all voted to approve.

Salinas River Management Unit Association and Monterey County Water Resources Agency permit oversight for Stream Maintenance Program: Robins informed directors that negotiation with MCWRA in development of a funded, 3-year agreement now in process to support RCDMC assumption of the management of the Water Quality and Army Corps permits (401 and 404) for the Stream Maintenance Program.

New Business

Board Member Reappointments:

According to RCDMC records, Directors King, Gularte, Jefferson and Plemmons have reached the ends of their respective terms and need to be re-appointed for subsequent 4-year terms if they wish to continue to serve on the Board. Directors Gularte, Jefferson and Plemmons all indicated they would like to be considered for re-appointment at the next Board Meeting. Director King indicated that she would not seek re-appointment and agreed to assist in locating others interested in Board service if no Associate Directors were. She is taking on more duties with the Dairy Sheep Association and needs to be able to devote more time to that, but she would like to remain as an Associate Director, just with a reduced level of involvement. Robins offered to reach out to current Associate Directors for this purpose, and Director King mentioned one colleague that she considered a good potential board candidate.

Announcements

Directors/ Robins

None.

12:00 P.M. Meeting Adjourned

Next Regular RCD meeting:

Thursday, May 20, 10am. Meeting will be held by Zoom conference.