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RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 8, 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING OF THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

The rescheduled Regular Meeting of the Resource Conservation District (RCD) of Santa Cruz County Board of Directors was called to order at **6:32PM on February 8, 2022,** the meeting was conducted virtually per AB 361 and Executive Order N-35-20 via Zoom, Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present:	Kelley Bell Mike Eaton Robert Ketley Howard Liebenberg Jim McKenna, President John Ricker
Directors Absent:	Mike Manfre, Vice President
Associate Director Present:	Vasiliki Vasil
RCD Staff Present:	Tangi Chapman, Recorder Lisa Lurie, Executive Director
NRCS Staff Present:	Drew Mather, Soil Conservationist

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32PM, with a quorum present. Jim McKenna chaired the meeting. Roll was called and connectivity confirmed; Kelley Bell present; Mike Eaton present; Robert Ketley present; Howard Liebenberg present; Mike Manfre absent; Jim McKenna present; John Ricker present.

2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME

Jim McKenna welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. NRCS REPORT

There were no NRCS reports given. Jim McKenna inquired about the District Conservationist position. Lisa replied that there are not updates at this point.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board reviewed the consent agenda items, including the January 2021 Minutes and Resolution RCDSCC 2022-02 to extend remote meetings per AB 361 for an additional 30 days. John Ricker moved approval of the consent agenda items. Mike Eaton seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. Consider approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2022-03 to expand workers compensation coverage to include volunteers

Lisa presented the Board with Resolution RCDSCC 2022-03 to expand workers compensation coverage to volunteers. Tangi Chapman reminded the Board that the cost to coverage is nominal. She shared that BBK, the counsel reviewing the Employee Handbook and the Resolution, suggested that the District should

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consider further review before including the Board of Directors as volunteers for the purpose of workers compensation coverage. Therefore, this resolution only considers volunteers and not Board members. After review, Kelli Bell moved to approve Resolution RCDSCC 2022-03 as presented. John Ricker seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6.2. Consider approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2022-04 granting authority to apply for and enter into agreement with CalFire for direct award funding in support of the Summit Road Shaded Fuel Break Project

Lisa shared that CalFire approached the District for a Direct Award to supplement the Fire Prevention grant they awarded for the Summit Road Shaded Fuel Break Project last year. Resolution RCDSCC 2022-04 authorizes the District to apply for, negotiate, enter into agreement, as well as appoint a signatory for the Direct Award. Lisa explained that while the specific details of the budget are still under negotiation, she anticipates the award to be around $300,000. The goal is to provide fuel load reduction along the length of the Summit Road corridor; treatment will include removal of trees smaller than 8 inches diameter at breast height and removal of latter fuels within 100" on either side of the road. Ultimately the goal is to treat as much of the 5.6 mile corridor as possible, based on level of voluntary landowner participation (there are 170 parcels) and funding. CalFire is funding and advising on the scope of work and the Santa Cruz Mountain Alliance has been coordinating with landowners who have indicated to interest to sign on to the project. Implementation is expected in 2022. Robert Ketley moved approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2022-04 as presented. Mike Eaton seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6.3. Consider approval of a Cost-of-Living Adjustment for RCD staff starting pay period 04

Lisa presented the Board with the Consumer Price Index that was released for the San Francisco Bay Area. The January 2022 report by the Department of Labor and Statistics calculates a CPI increase over the past year of 4.2%; the report the Board typically uses for the annual Cost of Living Adjustment for staff salaries. Lisa reminded the Board that several years ago they directed the Director of Finance to include 4.5% COLA increase in the annual salary budget and in the billable rates. The calculation provided by Arianne Rettinger, that accompanied the DLS report, shows the increase in cost to the District of approximately $40,000 in salaries when applying the 4.2% COLA. John Ricker moved approval of the 4.2% Cost-of-Living Adjustment. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. John Ricker asked about the frequency of regular staff reviews and merit increases. Lisa reported that she has been getting into a regular pattern of annual reviews aligned with each staff member's anniversary date. Merit increases she said are based on performance rather than a set time schedule, but on average occur on a roughly three-year cycle. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6.4. Consider approval of the revised 100 Employee Policy Handbook

Lisa presented the Board with the revised employee handbook (both the clean and red-lined version) that she, Tangi and BBK have been working to update. The policy had not been updated since it was completed in 2014 and needed much updating. At the request of the Board, she had staff work up the numbers on how changing the Personal Time Off cap from the blanket 240 hours for all staff to a 1.5% and 1.25% cap based on the annual accrual rate and regular hours worked. Based on those numbers and the nominal increase in liability to the district she recommends the Board adopt the PTO cap at 1.5% of the pro rata annual accrual. This change in the PTO cap will more equitably allow staff to accrue more than a years' worth of PTO without penalizing staff that are in the highest accrual rate tier. Additional updates include

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gender neutral language, workers compensation coverage for volunteers, updates to the Leave of Absence policies and the legal language for the "for cause" employees among other items. Lisa confirmed that the entire document has been reviewed by BBK.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1. Memorial Planning for Director Roberta Smith

Vasiliki Vasil shared that she would like to spearhead an effort to memorialize Roberta Smith, who passed away last spring. She said that Kathryn Tobisch has volunteered to help in the effort. Given the pandemic, a large gathering may not be the best option, but she wanted to get a sense from the Board how they would like to honor her. She has reached out to some in Roberta's circle and found out that there was a small memorial for her last summer in Pescadaro. Jim McKenna mentioned that Ward Hastings passed away recently as well. Both were instrumental at various times in moving the District forward. The Board offered several ideas including a rock, or rock garden at Davenport Elementary, CalPoly Swanton Pacific Ranch or Big Creek Lumber. The Board appreciated Vasiliki's volunteering for the effort and will connect with Tangi and or Lisa to discuss further.

7.2. Brown Act training report out (Tangi Chapman)

Tangi Chapman shared the slide deck from the recent training she attended. The meeting was sponsored by LAFCO and given by California Special District Association. Highlights from the training included the importance of transparency and public oversight. It was pointed out that communications with the Board via emails should be done using the bcc, to prevent communication on a business item. Additionally, Board members are discouraged from responding to or making comments (including liking, disliking, or using emoji's) on the District's social media posts. Finally, keep in mind that texts, social media, emails are all part of the public record so be mindful.

7.3. Executive Director Report

Lisa gave highlights from the Executive Directors Report. The District along with consultants at Ascent Environmental are finalizing the documentation to permit two Forest Health Projects, Last Chance Road and the Skylark Girl Scout Camp, through the Santa Cruz County Forest Health and Fire Resilience Public Works Plan. Once complete they will be released for public review, then brought to the District Board for review and consideration of approval on March 15. The meeting will be held separate from the Regular Board meeting due to timing. If approved, it will then go to the Coastal Commission for public hearing and final approval in April.

Lisa shared that she and Mike Eaton attended a North Coast multi-agency working group meeting hosted by the County (Supervisor Coonerty and County Parks). There the RCD together with CalTrans provided an update on the Scott Creek Coastal Resiliency Project.

Finally, Lisa informed the Board that there are many significant staff milestones coming up. This spring and summer will mark the 40th anniversary that Sharon has worked at the RCD. Additional milestones include Tangi Chapman, 20 years, Arianne Rettinger and Angie Gruys nearly 20 years and Sacha Lozano 10 years with the District.

Kelley Bell asked about the District's Cannabis program she saw on the website. Lisa shared that both Erin McCarthy and Kelli Camara have been conducting site visits and providing information and assistance when

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requested. Additionally, the District has worked on introductory brochures for county permitting. They have also been making irrigation and nutrient management services available.

7.4. Director/Associate Director Reports

Jim McKenna expressed condolences to Angie Gruys at the passing of her step-son and wished to send their regards to her during this challenging time.

Mike Eaton shared that Sara Barth of Sempervirens Fund announced that they were seeking the transfer of San Vicente Redwoods to California State Parks and that in that announcement she asked if there were any groups interested in working on pursuing alternate water supply for Davenport. He said that the Davenport North Coast Association Would be happy to participate. Lisa said that she has followed up with Sara about that issue and has not yet heard back.

8. ADJOURN

The next meeting of the RCD Board will be March 9, 2022, at 6:30PM via Zoom. Mike Eaton moved to adjourn. Howard Liebenberg seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:44PM.

(TC:JM)

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Jim McKenna
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