RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136
Capitola, California 95010
tel 831.464.2950
www.rcdsantacruz.org

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 10, 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING OF THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

The Regular Meeting of the Resource Conservation District (RCD) of Santa Cruz County Board of Directors was called to order at **6:30PM on January 10, 2024,** the meeting was conducted in person at the City of Capitola Community Room and virtually via Zoom, Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM, 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 absent; Mike Manfre present; Jim McKenna present; John Ricker present.

2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME

Jim McKenna welcomed everyone to the hybrid meeting. Yamindra introduced herself as an interested community member.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were none given.

4. NRCS REPORT

Drew Mather gave highlights from NRCS report. He shared that Rich Casale has been issued a government computer and will be getting an official email address as well. He will continue to complete post storm site visits on behalf of NRCS and RCD. Additionally, Vivian Soffa, the Farm Services Agency County Executive Director for Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Mateo Counties has retired. Drew reported on the Emergency Watershed Protection Program and that of the sixteen sites that have qualified for the program, one of the projects is proceeding with full approval from the State and National Office. Drew explained that the other projects are more permit intensive and took more time to get the paperwork together, he is hopeful that they will proceed to implementation by summer 2024. Staff have been preparing nearly 30 EQIP applications with half of the applications in forested areas and the other half in cropland and or pastureland. Drew said that NRCS will be rolling out a new funding mechanism this spring called ACTNOW. This should help to speed up the funding of projects. The Stormwater Regional Conservation Planning Partnership has had a set-back, but Drew reported that the second phase of the project is now set for summer 2024. He further updated the Board on

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the Conservation Stewardship Program for which NRCS has received an additional application from an apple orchardist in Santa Cruz County; the minimum annual payments have been raised from $1,500 to $4,000. There are two current CSP contract holders in the county. Drew met with the State Executive Team including Carlos Suarez the State Conservationist at the California Association of Resource Conservation District Conference in Sacramento. Drew reported that the Chevy Malibu has been returned and they continue to wait for the delivery of the new truck. He shared that he and Lisa Lurie collaborated on a staff appreciation breakfast before the Holidays.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

John Ricker made a motion to approve the consent agenda items including approval of the November 8, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes, November 8, 2023 Board Tour Minutes, November and December 2023 Vendor Expenditures, FY 2023-2024 Q1 Financials and a communication from Department of Transportation "Notice of Intent to Adopt Opportunity for Virtual Public Hearing regarding Boulder Creek Bridge Scour Repair Project." Kelley Bell seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker; there were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. Review and approve Important Dates Calendar for 2024

Lisa Lurie shared the 2024 Important Dates Calendar with the Board and requested the Board set the Board Meeting recess months and give input on the Christmas to New Years office hibernation. She reminded the Board that employees receive 13.5 holidays each year, which includes the recently added Juneteenth Holiday. She reported that this year staff had the option to work between Christmas and New Years or take the time off, the office was closed, but staff could work on reports and other tasks should they choose. She recommended doing the same for 2024. The Board discussed taking the summer recess in July and winter recess in December, though understood that there may be need to hold a meeting if something important comes up during those months. Additionally, it was requested that the Draft Budget be brought to the Board in June with final approval in September. Robert Ketley moved approval of the Important Dates Calendar with the Board recess in July and December and Office Closure-Hibernation between Christmas and New Years. John Ricker seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker; there were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

6.2. Review staff recommendation memo for two subrecipient awards to the Resource Conservation District of Monterey and San Mateo Resource Conservation District for the California Department of Food and Agriculture SWEEP Block Grant per 1080.4.1 of the Procurement Policy

Lisa presented the Staff Recommendation memo for subrecipient contract with San Mateo and Monterey Resource Conservation Districts for the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program Block Grant with the California Department of Food and Agriculture grant the District was awarded. The contracts are $209,984.50 and $298,616.00 respectively. She explained that the grant is to support regional strategic use of SWEEP funding to address local concerns regarding water conservation and water and energy efficiency. The District will be administering the block grant and collectively the Santa Cruz, San Mateo and Monterey RCDs will facilitate the development, implementation and verification of 30-35 water and energy conservation projects in four counties along the central coast.

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Lisa further explained that the RCDs will be setting up a Technical Advisory Committee who will set the priorities for funding projects with growers. This will allow for local priorities to be set and initial scoping revealed that there is much demand for these projects. After discussion, Robert Ketley moved approval of the staff recommendation to enter into contract with San Mateo and Monterey RCDs per 1080.4.1 of the procurement policy. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker; there were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

6.3. Nominate and approve a California Association of Resource Conservation District Delegate and Alternate for 2024 Business Meetings.

Lisa requested the Board nominate a Director delegate to the 2024 California Association of Resource Conservation District business meetings. CARCD was unable to vote on at the December Conference due to technical difficulties and the lack of participation. They rescheduled the business meeting to March 7th at 4:00PM via zoom and requested each RCD nominate a delegate to serve and attend. Jim McKenna volunteered to serve as delegate and Mike Manfre volunteered as alternate. Robert Ketley moved to approve Jim McKenna as delegate and Mike Manfre as alternate delegate for the 2024 CARCD business meetings. Kelley Bell seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker; there were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

6.4. Consider formation of an ad hoc committee on RCD Policy and Governance Review

Lisa requests the formation of an ad hoc committee to review RCD Policy and Governance. She shared that the Employee Handbook was overhauled in 2022, but there have been many legal updates, additionally she requests taking a closer look at policies, many need to be reviewed, and others need to be developed. Additionally, she requested to look at compensation and benefits among other items to make sure the District remains competitive and retains staff. John Ricker and Robert Ketley volunteered to participate in the ad hoc committee and there was consensus from the Board that they represent and report back to the Board regularly and submit policies for review and approval to the full Board as they are ready.

6.5. Consider formation of an ad hoc committee for youth engagement and Karen Christensen Fund planning

Lisa reported that staff have been participating in speaking events at UCSC and CSUMB and there are many opportunities to partner with different internship programs. Staff is very interested in working with students interested in resource conservation and stewardship. Lisa is requesting Board participation in an ad hoc committee to generate ideas for youth engagement and Karen Christensen Fund planning. Robert Ketley, Kelley Bell and Vasiliki Vasil volunteered to participate in the ad hoc youth engagement and Karen Christensen Fund planning effort. There was consensus with the board that this was an important effort and thanked those that volunteered to participate.

6.6. Review and approve the North Rispin Property Checklist

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The Board reviewed the completed North Rispin Property Checklist that was completed on December 22, 2023. The property showed signs of encampments at several locations as well as the continued growth of non-native invasive plants. The checklist will be submitted to the City of Capitola. Robert Ketley moved to approve the North Rispin Property Checklist and submit it to the City of Capitola. Mike Eaton seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1. Executive Director Report

Lisa gave legislative updates to the Board. There is an effort that may make it on the November ballot for a State Climate Resilience Bond. Additionally, AB 338 was passed in October 2023 that affects payment of prevailing wage on fuel load reduction projects; there are many exceptions and caveats to the bill much of which will not be effective immediately. She shared that many state funders are or will be allowing advance payments in funding agreements and there continues to be discussions around application of indirect costs on grants. Lisa has been tracking the state budget deficit and how that affects current and future funding from the state; some of which has already effected state funding programs that have been paused as well as contracts not yet awarded but under development and now suspended.

Lisa reported that the County OR3 is seeking partnership and grant funding to develop a multi-jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. RCDSCC has signed on in support and intends to be a participating jurisdiction if the planning process goes forward. San Mateo County just completed this multi-jurisdictional planning effort and engaged San Mateo RCD, which can serve as a roadmap to inform the process. A multi-jurisdictional LHMP can improve interagency coordination and help with funding from FEMA when disasters occur.

7.2. Director/Associate Director Reports

Mike Eaton shared that he and Vasiliki Vasil have been communicating and should have some progress to report regarding honoring Roberta Smith.

Appreciations was given to Alfred for his help in Spanish languish interpretation. Rich Casale was also recognized for his storm response efforts.

8. CALENDAR DATES

January 15, 2024 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
March 7, 2024 CARCD Business meeting via Zoom

9. ADJOURN

The next regular meeting of the RCD Board will be held at the at the City of Capitola Community Room and via Zoom on February 14, 2024, at 6:30PM. Kelley Bell moved to adjourn the meeting. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned.

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(TC:JM)

James J. McKenna