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 FEBRUARY 21, 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 February 21, 2024,** the meeting was conducted in person at the RCD Office conference 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
	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

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 on Zoom due to illness, Mike Eaton present; Robert Ketley present; Howard Liebenberg present; Mike Manfre present; Jim McKenna present; John Ricker present.

2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME

Jim McKenna welcomed everyone to the hybrid meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were none given.

4. NRCS REPORT

(Mike Manfre entered)

Drew Mather reported that he was in Davis until this afternoon. He noted that there had been several issues with the vehicle this past month; there was a leak in the Jeep that has been fixed and the Jeep had to get a tow after being high centered on a rural road; there was no damage to the vehicle. Drew shared that there has been some shuffling of administrative staff after filling vacant positions. Jenna Swenson is the new acting County Director for the Farm Services Agency. He updated the Board on funding opportunities including that the Environmental Quality Incentives Program application deadline was extended to March 6th. There were two applications submitted for the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Emergency Watershed Protection program has been approved for 15 projects in Santa Cruz County for around $2.5 million for all sites. Drew has been working with Dave Reid of the County OR3 Department to implement the EWP projects. Further, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program is making progress on implementation of new and existing projects sites. Rich continues to support NRCS and RCD staff with post storm site visits with 4 site visits last month. Drew

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

has been invited to attend a Watsonville community garden press event which received funding through USDA Urban Garden program, Zoe Lofgren, US Representative will be in attendance.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

John Ricker requested that an update be made to the January 2024 minutes. He requested that in Action Item 6.1 Important Calendar Dates discussion reflect the Boards request for the Draft Budget to be done at the June meeting; the minutes were pulled from the Consent Agenda and will be corrected and brought back to the March meeting for approval. Additionally, John commented on the Expenditures related to the Credit Card charges lacked any detail about the charges. He requested that at a minimum future expenditure to be reviewed have a legend of the account object. John Ricker moved approval of the Consent Agenda which included the December 15, 2023, thru January 26, 2024 Vendor Expenditures; the Communications from LAFCO regarding the Porter Gulch Road Parcel Annexation and the County of Santa Cruz Mosquito and Vector Control Notice to Interested Agencies. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. Consider and approval of a 2024 Cost of Living Adjustment for staff starting pay period 05

Lisa Lurie shared the US Bureau of Labor and Statistics annual Consumer Price Index report from January 2024. The CPI for the past year for the San Francisco Bay Area was 2.6%. Lisa reported that the CPI changes from year to year and has been on average around 3.5%. The Board has used the CPI for the COLA for at least the last 10 years, with rare exceptions as one year the CPI was greater than the amount included in the budget for the year. Adjustments have been made since then to incorporate 4.5% COLA in to the budget. Lisa requested that since the Board meeting was delayed a week, the start of the COLA be PP 06 to give time to complete all of the paperwork. After discussion, Robert Ketley moved approval of a 2.6% Cost of Living Adjustment for staff as of pay period 06. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6.2. Consider and select candidates for officer to the California Association of Resource Conservation District Board

Lisa shared that she had hoped to have a statement of qualifications for each of the candidates to serve officer positions on the CARCD Board, but CARCD will not be providing those in advance. Candidates will be voted on at the March 7, 2024 Business Meeting. Positions are open for President, Vice President, and Treasurer. Given no information on the candidates, the Board said they trusted Jim McKenna to make the best decision based on qualifications given at the Business Meeting. No motion was made.

6.3. Consider and approve Resolution RCDCSCC 2024-01 for the RCD to apply for and if awarded enter into agreement for a grant from the California Department of Conservation Climate Smart Land Management Program

Lisa explained that the Resolution before the Board is a resubmittal of a proposal for which the RCD was previously not awarded but only narrowly missed the award. This submittal addresses the feedback from that proposal. This is a state grant that has not been paused due to the budget shortfall. The collaborative grant will include partnerships across the central coast region and will include Santa Cruz, San Mateo, Loma Prieta, San Benito, and Monterey County RCDs. Our District

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

will be the lead agency and it will support 20% of a full-time employee to conduct carbon farm planning and technical assistance for carbon sequestration in agricultural lands. John Ricker moved approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2024-01 as presented. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6.4. Consider and approve resolution RCDSCC 2024-02 approving the revised Memorandum of Understanding for the Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Water Management Program and Complementary Efforts

Lisa explained that the MOU for IRWM was last updated in 2016. The update to the MOU incorporates new and different signatories and reframes the scope of the IRWM to connect to other relevant state efforts. The goal is to keep the IRWM relevant and aligned with climate resiliency and groundwater management and consistent with local needs. There are new funding mechanisms and collaborations with multiple benefits are increasingly important and will allow the collaborators to cast a wider net of funding relevant to water resources management that includes opportunities provided by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. After discussion, Robert Ketley moved approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2024-02 as presented. Howard Liebenberg seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6.5. Consider and approve Resolution RCDSCC 2024-03 for the RCD to adopt the Santa Cruz County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Addendum

Lisa explained that Resolution RCDSCC 2024-03 is a housekeeping item. She shared that in 2019 IRWM was amended to bring it up to the Department of Water Resources standards with the key changes being the addition of climate change and its effects on water resources. This addendum updates the priorities to address, the project list, and includes tribal engagement and disadvantage communities. After discussion, Robert Ketley moved approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2024-03. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1. Ad hoc Policy Committee Report

Lisa shared that the Ad hoc Policy Committee met last month. Lisa has met with staff to get a sense of their priorities. The committee identified that the Employee Handbook was an immediate priority since there have been updates to many of the employment laws and was sent to BBK for review. Additionally, staff have procured the CSDA Sample Policy Templates which will allow the committee to consider what the District is currently missing. Additionally, it was identified that a Compensation and Benefit Study would be important to gauge how the Districts compensation and benefits practices compare to other agencies and comparable organizations. This will help to align the District compensation and benefits to attract and retain staff. Lisa has reached out to other RCDs and received the names of several consultants

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

whom she will be reaching out to for information. The Board discussed different aspects of conducting a Compensation and Benefit study and suggested that who we benchmark with will be very important. Lisa shared that many RCDs have completed these types of studies so there are other examples and data to leverage.

7.2. Executive Director's Report

Lisa will be meeting with the Youth Engagement ad hoc committee tomorrow. Additionally, the annual report is set to be emailed on Monday; there will be some copies printed as well. Lisa would like to meet with Supervisors soon and will share the annual report to illustrate the RCD's efforts. Lisa said that the City's Habitat Conservation Plan for water operations and associated non-flow conservation fund to work with the City of Santa Cruz is in its final stages before implementation. The fund will go to the RCD for project development, implementation, monitoring and maintenance and will include $375,000 per year over the next 30 years (and adjusted annually for inflation). The HCP requires the city to outline all their impacts from water operations on creek flow and how they plan to mitigate the impacts. Any residual impacts will require the city to pay into the fund which will support the RCD to implement projects to mitigate for salmonids impacts.

Lisa shared preliminary numbers on the two recharge basins from water year 2023. It is estimated that 188-acre feet was recharged at one basin and 371-acre feet at the other site last year. These are draft numbers, but the data indicate that the basins exceeded the targets set for each basin last year. Lisa said that there will be a presentation soon to PV Water, in collaboration with UCSC.

7.3. Director/Associate Director Reports

Vasiliki Vasil requested input from the Board regarding a memorial plaque to honor Robert Smith. The plaque will be mounted at the Pacific School Garden. Vasiliki has done a couple of mockups online and found that for less than $300 a 16"x16" would allow for several lines of text. Mike Eaton said that the new outdoor classroom and garden will be completed by the end of June and the garden could hold around 100 people.

Vasiliki shared that Frank Perry, a local geologist that was mentored by Roberta Smith, will be having a book signing event on March 15. The book is dedicated to both Roberta and Gerry Webber.

8. CALENDAR DATES

March 7, 2024 Crop Manage Training
March 7, 2024 CARCD Business meeting via Zoom
March 15, 2024 Frank Perry Geology of Santa Cruz Book Event
April 13, 2024 State of the San Lorenzo River Symposium at the Felton Library

9. CLOSED SESSION

9.1. Personnel Matters per Government Code Section 54957

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

10. OPEN SESSION

10.1. Report Out Closed Session Motion

Ad hoc committee was formed to review the Executive Director performance review process. No motion was taken.

11. 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 March 13, 2024, at 6:30PM.

(TC:JM) James J. McKenna