RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136
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MINUTES OF THE APRIL 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 **6:31PM on April 10, 2024,** the meeting was conducted in person at the Capitola Community Room, 420 Capitola Rd, Capitola, 95010 and virtually via Zoom, Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present:	Kelley Bell
	Robert Ketley
	Mike Manfre, Vice President
	Jim McKenna, President
	John Ricker
Directors Absent:	Mike Eaton
	Howard Liebenberg
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 6:31PM, with a quorum present. Jim McKenna chaired the meeting. Roll was called; Kelley Bell present; Mike Eaton absent; 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, though there was none in attendance on zoom.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were none given.

4. NRCS REPORT

Drew Mather gave a report on NRCS activities. He shared that Ariel DeLara, NRCS District Conservationist in Salinas has taken a promotion to the NRCS State Office in Reno; NRCS is looking for an acting DC until this position is filled. Additionally, there was a retirement at the Farm Services Agency and they are looking for a new Executive Director to fill the position. Alana Burhans, the Capitola Soil Conservationist has started her Leadership Development Program and he said that she will have frequent assignments outside of the area for this program. Dillon Beatty has been attending a training for a new engineering tool for surveying. Updates for technical and financial assistance for the month included the continued progression of the Emergency Watershed Program projects moving forward towards implementation, total federal funding for these projects to date are approximately $3 million and implementation is anticipated to start in May and June. Drew shared that 16 Environmental Quality Incentives Program contracts have been preapproved for funding. One of two Regional Conservation Planning Partnership projects has been completed; the project was a collaboration between the RCD of Santa Cruz County, RCD of Monterey County and NRCS. The second project is in the permitting phase and completion is anticipated for later this year. Drew shared that his goal of completing an Emergency Conservation Program contract has been met. Finally, he was approached by Carlos Suarez the State Conservationist to provide information to House of Representative Jimmy Panetta's office regarding local services provided and any potential areas of concern. Drew attended a student symposium at CSU Monterey

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Bay; one of the professors there is hoping to make an agriculture technology hub at the school and is hoping to get student recruits for the summer.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board considered the Consent Agenda items which included the Regular Minutes from March 13, 2024 and the Special Meeting Minutes from March 25, 2024, the Vendor Expenditures for March and the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Q2 Financials. John Ricker moved approval of the Consent Agenda Items. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously. Lisa passed on a request from Arianne Rettinger the Director of Finance who prepares the quarterly financials. Ari said that preparing the Grant list on the last page is onerous to synthesize, takes several hours to prepare and wanted to determine how helpful this was to the Board. The Board recognized the amount of information on that page and suggested that perhaps of more use would be a short narrative in the Executive Director Report highlighting any concerns with grants and payments that would need special attention and review by the Board.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. Vote for Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer officers to the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts Board

Jim McKenna reported that he attended the online CARCD business meeting where the vote was originally going to take place. At that meeting it came to light that according to the By-Laws a written ballot was required. Therefore, a ballot was sent to each RCD with a statement for each candidate. After discussion of the merits of each of the candidates. Robert Ketley moved to elect Peter Braudrick for president and Harold Singer for Treasurer. John Ricker seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. There were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

6.2. Review and consider approval of the Regular Meeting Agenda Calendar

Lisa Lurie presented the Board with the Regular Meeting Agenda Calendar. Robert Ketley requested that a conversation with the City of Capitola should be scheduled in light of recent news of future development on the Rispin property. Mike Manfre requested that staff presentations be scheduled on the calendar and March and May were suggested as lighter months. On a side note, Lisa said that she would like to schedule Board Supervisor meetings in the next months and the RCD needs to update the 5 year strategic plan and will start planning for this effort in the fall/winter. It was suggested that the agenda calendar be reviewed with the important dates calendar in October. There was discussion on various ways the Board could interact more with the staff. No action was taken as the Board suggested the Meeting Agenda Calendar be more of a living document.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1. Strategy Session – RCD Culture and Values

Lisa introduced the strategy session to use the Board meetings as a way to delve into various topics and get input. In this session Lisa requested the Board examine the RCD culture and values and ways to infuse this into every aspect of the RCD both within the organization and projecting out into the community. This is an opportunity to look at strengths and weaknesses.

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Values that were discussed included science based, nimble, open to adaptation and creative in solutions, collaborating with partners, trust, and transparency balanced with confidentiality. Additionally, it was discussed that the RCD is the "greatest agency that nobody knows about." Asking questions about what are we, what do we want to be, help to focus our energy. Defining our values and who we are helps to evaluate funding and program/project opportunities as they come. Making sure they fall within our mission, and the needs of our constituents. The Board highlighted the RCD's nimbleness following both the CZU Lightning Fire and the Storms of 2023. The RCD was able to quickly respond to the disasters with technical assistance services and channeling donations from other agencies to meet critical needs in the aftermath of the disasters. It was pointed out that 90 percent of what we do is connecting with people, listening, and providing technical advice when needed. The Board suggested that there could be benefit to trainings on communications and interpersonal skills.

7.2. Ad hoc Policy Committee Report

Lisa shared that BBK has done a legal review of the Employee Handbook. The RCD needs to have a workplace violence prevention plan in place by July 1. Lisa hopes to have the Employee Handbook ready for Board approval by the May meeting. The policy committee met in March to review and score the requests for proposals to complete the compensation and benefit study. She reported that Fortress and Flourish was awarded the contract and that effort is currently underway. The goal is to have the draft, preliminary findings in July and the final report and presentation to the Board in September.

7.3. Ad hoc Youth Engagement Committee Report

Lisa said that there is nothing to report at this time.

7.4. Executive Director's Report

Lisa reported that the State Water Efficiency & Enhancement Program grant through California Department of Agriculture is now online and solicitations to fund projects opened this week. This is a 4-county wide effort that includes efforts in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito counties. San Mateo RCD, RCD of Monterey County and RCD of Santa Cruz County each are providing technical and financial assistance to farmers to implement on-farm projects. RCDSCC will be administering the grant as well as activities within Santa Cruz County, with the sub-awarding RCDs administering the cost share and contracts for their respective counties. Lisa also shared that next month the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County will be providing an informational presentation on the "Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction & Wildlife Protection Act" and the Board will be considering a resolution to support.

7.5. Director/Associate Director Reports

There were none given.

8. CALENDAR DATES

April 13, 2024 State of the San Lorenzo River Symposium at the Felton Community Hall

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April 20, 2024 Earth Day, downtown Santa Cruz
May 7, 2024 CARCD Area RCD meeting in Ventura
June 6, 2024 Fire Safe Summit

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 May 8, 2024, at 6:30PM. John Ricker moved to adjourn. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. All were in favor, the meeting adjourned.

(TC:JM) James J. McKenna

AGENDA

Final Audit Report 2024-05-13

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