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 SEPTEMBER 11, 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 September 11, 2024,** the meeting was conducted in person at the District Office 820 Bay Ave Suite 136, Capitola, 95010 and virtually via Zoom, Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present:	Mike Eaton
	Howard Liebenberg
	Mike Manfre, Vice President
	Jim McKenna, President
	John Ricker
Directors Absent:	Kelley Bell
	Robert Ketley
RCD Staff Present:	Tangi Chapman, Recorder
	Lisa Lurie, Executive Director
	Arianne Rettinger, Director of Finance
NRCS Present:	Drew Mather, District Conservationist
	Allen Curry, Area Conservationist

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM, with a quorum present; Jim McKenna chaired the meeting. The role was called; Kelley Bell absent; Mike Eaton present; Robert Ketley absent; 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

Drew Mather gave a report on NRCS activities. He shared that he has been out due to personal matters. He updated the Board on current staffing; Alanna Burhans has accepted a promotion in Area 2 as a Business Tools Coordinator and Natural Resources Coordinator; Jeff Kelley the Area Forester will remain available through October while he awaits his transfer to the USFS; Jose Flores the Earth Team Volunteer has completed his summer internship and hopes to return in the spring; Lauren Sullivan is stepping down as the area biologist, and Jackie Charboneau will be acting area biologist.

Drew said that currently one of the Emergency Watershed Protection projects will be moving forward. The other two projects encountered delays due to findings for which National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will need to be consulted. Additionally, the final stormwater project

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funded through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program project is on hold. Drew his hopeful that the project can be resumed before the rains come. NRCS has obligated a total of 18 out of 18 approved projects for the year, Drew said that Alanna has been instrumental in moving these projects through to contracting.

Alan Curry expressed his gratitude to the RCD for their partnership with NRCS. He shared that he is hopeful there will be a replacement Soil Conservationist hired to split time between Santa Cruz and San Mateo offices since Alanna's promotion to the Area office. Additionally, he hopes to get a shared Forester who would split time regionally. Alan discussed that there are efforts to promote the Conservation Stewardship Program and to fund the collaborations between NRCS and RCDs. Additionally, he would like to provide technical training for District employees to help with outreach for NRCS programs.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board considered the Consent Agenda. The consent agenda items included the August 14, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes, the August 21, 2024 special meeting minutes, and August 2024 Vendor Expenditures. John Ricker moved approval of the Consent Agenda Items. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The ayes included Mike Eaton, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. Review and consider approval of FY 24-25 Final Budget

Arianne Rettinger presented the Board with the FY 24-25 Final Budget. Ari shared that the overall budget increased $600,000 since the draft was approved in June. This change is the result of additional funding sources being awarded and or received since June, reclassification of a staff member and cleanup after the June 30 invoices were completed. John Ricker shared that he, Lisa and Ari reviewed the budget at length. He said that the budget is complex and that Ari has done an excellent job in preparing. Lisa pointed out that the current $14 Million budget marks a large increase from prior years, and that calculates to a return on investment of $175 dollars for every local tax dollar received. Factoring in that actual expenditures generally is about 40% less than the budget, the return on investment is $100 for every local tax dollar received. After discussion, Howard Liebenberg moved to adopt the FY 24-25 Final Budget as presented. Mike Eaton seconded the motion. The ayes included Mike Eaton, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6.2. Review and consider approval of Staff Recommendation of an exemption to the informal bid process for Camara Environmental Consulting, Inc., per section 1080.8.3 of the Procurement Policy and approve entering into contract for Fiscal Year 24-25

Lisa presented the Board with a Staff Recommendation memo to enter into contract with Camara Environmental Consulting, Inc per an exception to the informal bid process. CEC contract for FY 24-25 is for a total not to exceed $230,000.00, and provides technical advising, permitting

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assistance and project oversight on watershed restoration and species recovery. Lisa pointed out that no individual work program funding source exceeds the threshold for competitive bidding and that an exemption to the informal procurement process is appropriate under section 1080.8.3, proprietary contracts as the work is unique due to the specialized skill and experience of the consultant. After discussion John Ricker moved to approve the Staff Recommendation to enter into contract with CEC per 1080.8.3 Procurement Policy exemption to the informal bid process for FY 24-25. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The ayes included Mike Eaton, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

6.3. Nominate a delegate Board member to attend the 2024 CARCD Conference held December 10-12 in Sacramento and Business Meeting on December 10, 2024

Lisa requested Board participation in the 2024 Annual CARCD Conference to be held in Sacramento December 10-12, 2024. She shared that staff will be attending and presenting at the conference and that there will be a Business meeting held on December 10th. Jim McKenna said that he will look at his schedule and report back about his availability.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1. Ad hoc Policy Committee Report

Lisa shared that the Compensation and Benefit Study is nearing the final stages of completion. The team is in the final review of comparable organizations. Program Managers have been reviewing job descriptions and identifying the levels within each job classification. The ad hoc Policy Committee will be reviewing October 1st and recommendations will be brought to the October Board Meeting for review and approval.

7.2. Executive Director's Report

Lisa said that she has received the CARCD bylaws and summary of the main areas of proposed changes and alternatives. She pointed out that the dense document is being reviewed by attorneys of CARCD. Lisa summarized her main comments which will be submitted. She noted that CARCD is accepting comments through September 30th. They will finalize the recommendations and the item will be placed on the December 10th Business Meeting for review and approval.

Lisa shared that she is tracking several policy measures that will be on the ballot in November. The first of which is Measure Q, Lisa will mail out to the Board the basic talking points. Additionally, at the state level, Proposition 4 is much aligned with the RCDs mission. Many Land Trusts are also organizing around this effort.

Lisa reported that staff have been working on many different funding proposals, including Specialty Crop Block Grant funding for conservation tillage, Food Waste Reduction, compost collaborations with San Mateo, Conservation Innovation grants. Additionally, the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program funding will go before the Coastal Conservancy in November for approval and the Cooperative Agreement with NRCS is in process as well.

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The RCD is close to awarding the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement on-farm grant beneficiary contracts. This includes 35 projects across four RCDs; Santa Cruz, San Mateo, Monterey and San Benito. The Fall Neighborhood Chipping Program is currently accepting applications for chipping rebates. Lastly, Lisa shred that the Administrative Assistant job announcement will be posted on September 17.

7.3. Director/Associate Director Reports

Jim McKenna reported that he will be out of town from September 15 through September 30, any contracts will need to be signed by Mike Manfre in his absence.

John Ricker said that he was approached by Measure Q organizers to be a resource person for water issues related to the measure, he will be on the voter pamphlet and signature statement as a Retired County Resource Manager. Lisa shared that according to her communications with BBK, the Districts legal counsel on these matters, and there is no conflict. The RCD can speak to the issue and the facts behind the effort.

8. CALENDAR DATES

September 18, 2024, 5PM to 6:30PM Home Hardening Event at the Felton Library
October 5, 2024, 10AM to 3PM Central Coast Good Fire Fair, Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park
October 6, 2024 11AM to 2PM Resource Fair at Davenport Elementary School
October 17, 2024, Central Coast Area RCD Meeting at Piacines Ranch, San Benito
October 23, 2024, Executive Session Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network
October 29-30, 2024 CalCAN Summit in Davis
First week of November Technical Training and Tour of Roads Projects in Boulder Creek
November 13, 2024 (morning) RCD Board Tour
November 19-20, 2024, Latino Farmer Conference in Monterey
December 10-12, 2024 CARCD Annual Conference in Sacramento

9. COMMUNICATIONS

9.1. CARCD Request for volunteers to serve on the CARCD Policy Committee

9.2. LAFCO Referral letter to affected/interested agencies

John pointed out that the LAFCO letter erroneously lists the RCD as an affected agency, but the City of Capitola is within the RCDs boundaries and thus should not be affected by the annexation.

10. ADJOURN

The next regular meeting of the RCD Board will be held at the at the District Office, 820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136, Capitola and via Zoom on October 9, 2024, at 6:30PM. John Ricker moved to adjourn. Howard Liebenberg seconded the motion. All were in favor, the meeting adjourned at 8:04PM.

(TC:JM)

James J. McKenna