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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES December 17, 2024

Supervisors Present: Margaret Lenz, Ron Richards, Sonya Shaw, and Darrell Smith
Supervisors Absent: Chester Zwirn
Ex officio Members: Travis Taylor, CSU extension agent and Jake Prather, NRCS
Staff Present: Tanya Fell, Shirley Deason, and Rafael Trejo

President Lenz declared a quorum present and convened the meeting of the Yuma County Conservation District at 9:35 a.m. at the Wray NRCS Conference.

Updates were made by each board member to the mileage calendar.

There were no additions or corrections to the agenda. Approval of the agenda was made on a motion by Supervisor Shaw. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously.

Supervisor Richards moved to approve the November 26, 2024, Budget Hearing meeting minutes and the November 26, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw and carried unanimously.

Clarification on Christmas bonuses approved for district employees at the November 26, 2024, meeting was discussed. A motion was made by Supervisor Richards that the employee's share of social security and Medicare taxes were to be paid on top of the bonus amount approved. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously.

District Manager Fell presented the monthly financials. Supervisor Shaw moved to accept the financial report, pay the December bills and approve the transfer of \$20,000.00 from Wray State Bank to the First Pioneer National Bank general account. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously. The current bills paid from the general fund are:

- Employee bonuses
- Rafael Trejo – mileage
- Tanya Fell – mileage
- Wray Gazette
- Plains Communications

The current bills paid from the grant fund are:

- Aero Applicators Inc.
- Ron Blach (SAFE)
- Tom Jackson (SAFE)
- Reid Canady (SAFE)

OLD BUSINESS:

District Manager Fell gave updates on the following grants:

- 50/50 Matching Grant 2024: to be used for pipeline, new tanks, storage tanks, livestock tank monitoring. Applicants are Alva Deterding, Jamie Deterding, Randall Boden, and the Marjorie Anderson Trust. Leroy Deterding and Alyse Wenstrom have decided not to participate. The Randall Boden, Jamie Deterding, and Marjorie Anderson Trust projects have been completed. The Alva Deterding project has been completed. Invoices and cancelled checks are to be turned into the conservation district office by December 18th.
- 50/50 Matching Grant 2025: The matching grant in the amount of \$50,000 for the benefit of the Yuma Conservation District and the Yuma County Conservation District has been approved. The YCCD will administer grant funding for both conservation districts. The press release has been submitted to area newspapers and posted to various social media sites. The 2025 Matching 50/50 Grant Program application form is now available at the office and also on the conservation districts' website. Applications are due on January 3, 2025. As of the date of the meeting, six application requests have been submitted.
- Bonny Demonstration Grant: District Manager Fell and Travis Taylor, CSU extension agent, attended the teleconference presented by the Colorado Department of Ag Soil Health Program and a teleconference call with "Halter", a company providing virtual fencing solutions using solar powered collars on livestock. Supervisor Richards spoke about the meeting held with Duane Stegner, Bonny Reservoir property manager with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Supervisor Richards indicated that Mr. Stegner was receptive to the idea of virtual fencing with a three-year rotation. Travis Taylor, CSU extension agent with CSU, outlined priorities for the project, with the biggest issue being water availability. Other priorities include the Steering Committee having a planning meeting, a grazing plan, virtual fencing, a new cooperator (possibly the Lengels), and an exit report from cooperator Richards. It was suggested that the South Fork Republican Restoration Coalition may have some input in the project.
- NFWF Grant: \$320,000 grant request for Rejuvra for all of Yuma County is approved. Spraying for cheatgrass occurred during the latter part of September. The conservation district has received reimbursement for activity through October 31, 2024. Another round of spraying is planned for Spring 2025.
- Rocky Mountain Mule Deer Grant: The conservation district has been informed that a grant of \$20,000 has been approved. Spraying for cheatgrass control in conjunction with the NFWF grant occurred in the latter part of September. The Yuma County Conservation District has received reimbursement for activity through October 31, 2024. Another round of spraying is planned for Spring 2025.
- Colorado Soil Health Program – Dustin Wise, Brian Lengel, Nathan Amrine Aaron Waitman, Daniel Ray, and John Kettelson have been approved by the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) for 2024 reimbursement. The conservation district has submitted applications from Sandhill Bloomers and Darrell Smith to the Colorado Department of Agriculture. Dain Wise has decided not to participate in the program. The CPA-52 for producer Kalen McDonald has been received.

A break for lunch was held from 12:15 p.m. until 12:55 p.m.

The AmeriCorps Working Lands Climate Corps (WLCC) position has been posted. The WLCC District Conservation Technician Job Description and Employment Agreement was reviewed by the board. Advertisements for the position have been placed in the newspaper and the conservation district's website.

The conservation district applied for a Friends of NACD Grant in the amount of \$2,500.00. If approved, the project would be a 50/50 matching grant for the purchase of a "Garden in a Box" kit. The "Garden in a Box" are professionally designed, low-water garden kits tailor-made for Colorado yards. The do-it-yourself kits include quart-sized perennial plants, plant-by-number maps, seasonal maintenance suggestions, and watering schedule recommendations. Grant winners will be announced at the NACD annual meeting in February 2025.

District Manager Fell, a representative from the City of Wray, and NRCS engineers conducted tours of all six dam sites in August. The USDA NRCS Dam Inspections 2024 Report was reviewed by the board along with the City of Wray Emergency Action Plan dated October 1, 2024. It was suggested that an article be placed in the newspaper giving educational information about the dams or doing an educational class/project with the local high school about the dams.

Conservation district highway signs were tabled for a future meeting.

The 2008 Ford Pickup located at the Wray office which is owned by NRCS has not gone up for auction yet and may be transferred to another location instead. Supervisor Smith is continuing to monitor the government auction site to place a bid on a vehicle as authorized in the September 2024 board meeting.

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) annual meeting was held December 2-4, at Colorado Springs. Supervisors Lenz, Richards, Smith and Zwirn attended along with District Manager Fell and District Conservation Technician Trejo. Margaret Lenz received the Supervisor of the Year award and Chester Zwirn received the Hall of Fame award. The Yuma County Conservation District received the Earth Team Award. Kevin Glenn, the reserve grand winner in the YCCD poster contest, placed third overall in the CACD contest. A copy of the press release detailing these awards was reviewed. Supervisors Smith and Richards gave a report on the breakout sessions they attended. At the meeting, District Manager Fell spoke with Clint Evans, NRCS State Conservationist, about the RCPP-Rejuvra project. Mr. Evans is planning to meet further with District Manager Fell about funding a targeted project.

The CSCB Matching Grant Opportunity was discussed at the CACD meeting. One possible idea for the grant request was replacing windbreak trees damaged by the 2024 hailstorm in Yuma County. A grasshopper education project was also discussed. The Yuma County Conservation District will contact the Yuma Conservation District to see if their conservation district is planning to apply for this additional grant funding opportunity. If the Yuma Conservation District does not apply for a matching grant and would be willing to sign a memorandum of agreement to that effect, the Yuma County Conservation District will apply for matching grants for both districts, with any grants received to be administered by YCCD.

The emergency resolution submitted to CACD by the Yuma County Conservation District requesting that no business meetings be held on Sundays unless an emergency situation makes it unavoidable did not pass.

On October 16, 2024, there was a newspaper article about the City of Wray and Solar Construction Lending, LLC. According to the article, SE Municipal intends to place a solar array on the city owned property south of Hillcrest Care Center, provided loan funding is approved. Ex-officio Jeff Wingfield is researching to find further information about the project. There is also a pending project in Yuma. District Manager Fell is to follow up with ex-officio Jeff Wingfield.

Greg Peterson with the Colorado Ag Water Alliance has agreed to co-sponsor two producer meetings this winter. The first meeting has been scheduled for January 22, 2025, with the topic of "What to do after the well is turned off". The meeting location has been changed to the Lions Hall in Kirk, CO. The second meeting to be held in March 2025, would cover estate/succession planning. Other possible workshop ideas include drone precision application with Ryan Schmidt and/or Chad Godsey.

Supervisors discussed holding the YCCD Annual Meeting on February 25, 2025, at the Wray movie theater with a showing of the Colorado Department of Agriculture's "Hold our Ground" film series.

A pesticide applicator workshop has been scheduled for March 20, 2025. The conservation district will contact the Laird Ladies about availability and cost. The conservation district pays for the attendee's lunch.

The 2025 Tree Order Form and press release was reviewed by the board.

NEW BUSINESS:

The board discussed the departure of Kaci Porter from the Yuma Conservation District and how our conservation district might be able to assist them.

The High Plains No-Till Conference to be held February 4-5, 2025, in Burlington, Colorado was discussed. The Yuma County Conservation District has been asked to help sponsor the FFA Day during the conference. A motion was made by Supervisor Richards to donate \$300.00 to the sponsorship. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously. A motion was made by Supervisor Richards to provide a scholarship of \$75.00 to YCCD producers wishing to attend the conference. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously.

A discussion was held about giving Yuma County Conservation District staff, and local NRCS staff, a discount for any orders placed during the tree, flowers, shrubs and supplies annual sale. A motion was made by Supervisor Shaw that YCCD staff and local NRCS staff receive a 25% discount on trees, potted fruit plants, and shrubs purchased. This discount would not apply to perennial flowers or irrigation and landscape supplies. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture is hosting webinars in January 2025 to gather feedback and provide further information for the Tax Credit Agricultural Stewardship Practices Bill. The

conservation district will provide a media release about stakeholder input into the rulemaking process.

Jake Prather gave the NRCS report stating the 78 contracts for CRP Grasslands had been completed, 2 renewal contracts for CSP had been completed and EQIP funding has already started for 2025. Mr. Prather also spoke about the possibility of a government shutdown on December 20, 2024.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the board learned of the passing of Chester Zwirn's sister. It was a consensus decision of the board to provide Chester with a tree from the YCCD annual tree sale in memory of his sister.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

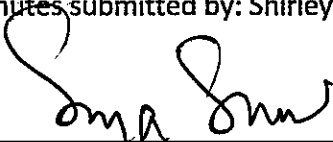
A motion was made by Supervisor Richards to dispense with the executive session. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

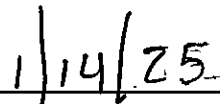
A motion was made by Supervisor Shaw to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Supervisors Richards and carried unanimously with President Lenz adjourning the meeting at 2:55 p.m.

The next regular YCCD meeting has been scheduled for January 14, 2025, with the time and place dependent on the Yuma Conservation District's availability for a joint meeting.

Minutes submitted by: Shirley Deason, Office Assistant



Sonya Shaw, Secretary/Treasurer



Date