



SLOUGHHOUSE

Resource Conservation District

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Meeting of the Board - MINUTES Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District

When: Wednesday, August 9, 2023
Where: Rancho Murieta Community Services
15160 Jackson Rd.
Rancho Murieta, CA 95683

Time: 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Board Members: Barbara Washburn, Herb Garms, Gary Silva Jr., Lindsay Carter, Jay Schneider
Associate Directors: Teresa Flewellyn
Staff: Austin Miller, Brittany Friedman

OPENING

Chairman Garms called the meeting to order at 12:37pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Any member of the public may address the Board concerning any matter not on the Agenda within the Board/District's jurisdiction.

Public member Tish made a comment on clarification of when the RCD is acting in the capacity of an RCD and when they are acting in the capacity of a GSA because it can be confusing in terms of outreach and email lists via Mailchimp. Staff clarified how these subsets are broken down via Mailchimp and that there will be increased outreach in the future.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

- a. Agenda – August 9, 2023
- b. Minutes – July 12, 2023
- c. Financial Report – August 2023

Director Sliva Jr. moved to approve the consent calendar.

Director Carter seconded the motion.

The motion passed with all in favor.

REPORTS

- a. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Report
District Conservationist Tony Tillman provided an update on NRCS programs.
Currently, 12 contracts for 1.4 million dollars have been approved for various fund

Approved on:
09/13/2023

pools. There are 10 additional applications that they are working on for other programs. Applications are accepted year round and can be accepted at any time. There is currently no deadline set for the 2024 application period. Staff will be reaching out to Tony to schedule a meeting on grant programs and further opportunities to provide funding to folks who may need it.

b. Sacramento County Ag. Commissioners Report

None.

c. SRCD Board Member Reports

Director Washburn shared an update on a recent staff evaluation for District Manager Austin Miller with herself and Chair Herb Garms at the meeting. There were no noted objections to the feedback or recommendations and the overall evaluation reflected the consensus of the Board. The final evaluation will be signed by both Austin and the Board and filed accordingly.

GENERAL BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS

1. SRCD Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Final Budget

The Board adopted the preliminary 23-24 FY budget in July 2023. Staff is now presenting a Final Budget with the addition of the recently awarded Water Efficiency Technical Assistance Grant (WETA). No other changes were made to the overall budget. Staff is now presenting a Resolution to adopt the Final Budget for the 23-24 Fiscal Year. Director Washburn pointed out the contract for the WETA grant has not been signed as of yet although there is a rough start date of November 1, 2023. Staff will be meeting with Rick Wood from CSDA to ensure that the grants funds are being allocated correctly in accordance with the budget. Staff explained the section of the budget that shows the total gain and loss for the overall budget and its specific targeted areas (grants, GSA funds, general funds, etc.).

Director Schneider was opposed to the title of the Groundwater Sustainability Fee and suggested it be reworded to Irrigated Land Fee. The Groundwater Sustainability Fee title was also listed on the 22-23 Fiscal Year budget and so it will not be changed at this time. Director Schenider also asked for clarification on the Program Coordinator to be hired for the WETA grant. Staff explained that this individual will most likely be a local hire with the proper qualifications but they have yet to begin the hiring process. Director Silva Jr. suggested that perhaps it might be fruitful to break this role down into two hires rather than one.

Director Carter moved to adopt the 23-24 FY Final Budget.

Director Washburn seconded the motion.

The motion passed with four in favor (Garms, Washburn, Liebig, Silva Jr.) and one opposed (Schneider).

2. California Association of Resource Conservation Districts Staffing Contract

The CARCD/SRCD contract expired June 30, 2023 and a new contract is needed to continue the employment of SRCD Staff with benefits, wages, insurance and time off. This contract would go into effect, retroactively, as of July 1, 2023. The contract has been

updated to include a Program or Communications Coordinator position, a possible increase of wages up to 10% per year and a 401K match CARCD has now made optional for RCD's to participate in, up to 5% match. Staff explained the overview on the Compensation section of the contract and why the new changes have been made.

Director Washburn noted that a 5% match may be a good idea for staff as it ensures security and also may attract qualified candidates in the future. However, she is hesitant on the yearly raises up to 10% per year based on employment evaluation. Director Carter seconded these thoughts and noted that 3% seems to be the average going rate of industry standards at this time. She also suggested dropping the match to 3% for the 401K.

Staff recommended that we adjust the amount of the increase of employee wages on an annual basis of up to 7%, subject to increases of up to 3% based on employee evaluation and the COLA inclusion specifically written out as a separate bullet item.

Director Garms noted that these increases do have to be written into the budget each year as a possibility to ensure that we have the available funds to accommodate these changes.

Director Schneider noted that this is a two year contract so language would need to explain that any raise would be broken down on an annual basis, regardless of the two year contract.

Staff made the suggested adjustments in real time to the Contract so the Board may be able sign off the agreement.

Director Carter moved to approve the updated CARCD/SRCD contract.

Director Washburn seconded the motion.

The motion passed with all in favor.

3. CDFA Conservation Ag Planning Grant Implementation

SRCD was awarded \$199,800 from CDFA for the CAPGP Grant Program. The contract has already been approved by the Sloughhouse board. Staff is now looking to begin the grant work with planners from Innovative Ag Services (Harold Gallardo) and Molly Taylor. Agreements with these planners must be signed before staff can begin the outreach to identify partner landowners. Remaining agreements with other planners in September for the Board's consideration and approval. Interested parties and planners are still able to be considered for inclusion on this grant, as of now. There are only three plans that have been allocated at this point, that Molly had approved when she was brought on as a planner.

Director Washburn noted that the hiring process for these planners should include past plans the individual has put together so we can vet them before an agreement is entered into. Public member Teresa Flewellyn does not think staff should have final say over the hiring process of these planners and would like staff to look towards more local planners. Public member Delores Gregorio also wanted to know what the criteria for hiring these planners is and how the positions are advertised. Staff explained that CDFA advertises and signs off on the positions and applicants must align with their criteria (various training, resume, cover letter, etc.). The names that staff are currently working to provide agreements with were sent to us from CARCD. Director Schneider was curious if additional plans may be able to be added or if plans can be altered (ex: soil health plan to

a carbon farm plan). CDFA can adjust plans if necessary but the exact process of this is unknown at this time. Overall, the Board would like to review the planners via their resumes and work and if they find something objectionable, staff may be able to dismiss the planner.

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY ACTION ITEMS

4. Cosumnes Groundwater Authority

Staff provided updates on the CGA recent meetings including the Regular Board Meeting, O & E committee meeting and PMA committee meeting. Regular dates have been decided for all of these committees for the 23-24 Fiscal year and a possible workshop may take place in early November. Director Washburn reported on the Farmer's Survey feedback from the committees and noted that we may improve the survey through rewording of questions, additional questions, receiving input from the GSA's and a third party for unbiased questions, etc. There is also a plan to have a bbq or similar event to reach more farmers and ranchers who can then provide opinions and/or take the survey themselves. Director Schneider recommended that we turn towards social media options or various websites to display the research and start a dialogue among a wider audience that cannot or do not attend the meetings.

By common consent, the Board reappointed Director Carter to reassume her role as the CGA representative for SRCD while. Director Garms would serve as the SRCD alternate representative on the CGA Board.

5. South American Subbasin GSP Implementation

This item was tabled.

6. Executive Order N-3-23 Compliance (Well Permitting)

This item was tabled.

7. Operational Policies

The Board has discussed the possibility of adjusting the minutes going forward whether through a more detailed accounting of the minutes or through recording and posting the meetings to the SRCD website for at least 6 months. Staff will amend our policies to include this update on the minutes at the September Meeting.

INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. SRCD Staff Report

Sloughhouse RCD Staff provided a written report with updates regarding the CDFA Water Efficiency Technical Assistance Grant, in which SRCD was awarded \$432,153. The grant contract start date is expected to be November 1, 2023. Staff also shared information on the Feasibility Study for RCD Stewardship of DWR Lands in Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The primary research question for this study is: How

might DWR partner with local RCDs to provide habitat management services on DLP habitat sites across the full breadth of DWR-owned lands in the Delta?

IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board approved the following future agenda items by consensus:

- Board Policy Review

ADJOURNMENT

Director Garms adjourned the meeting at 3:38pm.