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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES January 14, 2025

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

YCD Supervisors Present: John Deering
YCD Staff Present: Kaci Porter

President Lenz declared a quorum present and convened the meeting of the Yuma County Conservation District at 1:10 p.m. at the Wray NRCS Conference.

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

A motion was made by Supervisor Lenz to modify the agenda by moving the Joint Meeting with the Yuma Conservation District to after the Treasurer's Reports. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw and carried unanimously.

Supervisor Shaw moved to approve the December 27, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously.

The email from Jenna Wieser asking how the Raymond Peters Memorial Scholarship is paid when completing a degree in three years when the scholarship terms was for four years was discussed. A motion was made by Supervisor Shaw that the scholarship be paid as \$500/semester up to a maximum of \$4,000.00. If the degree is completed before four years, the remainder may be applied to graduate school. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously.

The board reviewed the insurance renewal documents from the Colorado Special Districts and Liability Pool. Office Assistant Deason informed the board that the higher renewal rate for 2025 was due to the increased 2025 budget estimates. A motion was made by Supervisor Richards to renew the insurance policy. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw and carried unanimously.

District Manager Fell presented the monthly financials. Supervisor Richards moved to accept the financial report and pay the January bills. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously. The current bills paid are:

- Employee payroll
- Board members – mileage
- Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool
- Wray Gazette
- Yuma Pioneer
- CCTA
- Macy Richards – Scholarship

- Jenna Wieser-scholarship
- Chase Buoy - Scholarship

- Plains Communications

JOINT MEETING WITH THE YUMA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Jake Prather with NRCS joined the meeting at 1:25 p.m.

The 50/50 matching grant for 2025 in the amount of \$50,000 for the benefit of the Yuma Conservation District and the Yuma County Conservation District was discussed. The application deadline was extended until January 10, 2025. Application requests were reviewed by the Yuma County Conservation District and the Yuma Conservation District. Applications were received from Linda J. Evans, Ronald Blach, Darrell & Deanna Webster, Jamie Deterding, Jayden Drager, Jory & Tyra Drager, Alyse Wenstrom, Leroy Deterding, Full House, LLLP, RLS Ranch LLC, and Larry C. Smith. Pre-approval for all applicants with the exception of Linda J. Evans (due to being in CRP Grasslands) was made on a motion by Supervisor Shaw. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously with John Deering of the Yuma Conservation District being in agreement. Ronald Blach has an application in with EQIP also, so it is to be determined whether he will continue with the YCCD grant or the EQIP program. District Manager Fell is to send notices to applicants of the status of their application.

The CSCB Supplemental Matching Grant opportunity was discussed. Suggestions for the grant included replacement of windbreak trees lost due to drought, hail, and fire and also a grasshopper mitigation program. The Yuma County Conservation District offered any help necessary if the Yuma Conservation District wanted to apply. The Yuma Conservation said that they would discuss the grant opportunity at their board meeting that evening.

The Republican River Watershed Association meeting to be held March 4, 2025, and hosted by the Yuma Conservation District was discussed. The Yuma Conservation District will be getting a quote from the caterer in January with menu, cost and date when the count for number of meals needs to be provided. Supervisor Lenz as President of the Republican River Watershed Association advised she would be able to get speakers for the meeting and the Yuma Conservation District was agreeable to this suggestion.

The Yuma Conservation District advised that their annual meeting would be held February 20, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. at the Nazarene Church in Yuma.

At 2:20 p.m., the joint meeting concluded with members of the Yuma Conservation District and Jake Prather with NRCS departing at that time.

OLD BUSINESS:

District Manager Fell gave updates on the following grants:

- 50/50 Matching Grant 2024: All projects for 2024 have been completed with the final report submitted to CSCB and the \$25,000.00 reimbursement received.

- **Bonny Demonstration Grant:** District Manager Fell has sent an email to the steering committee members to schedule a meeting to discuss various aspects of the project. It was suggested that the meeting may be conducted via zoom with a meeting Owl from CSCB for those unable to attend in person.
- **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. District Manager Fell stated the Mule Deer Foundation may have more money for projects in 2025.
- **Colorado Soil Health Program –** The Colorado Department of Agriculture advised that the soil analysis reports should be coming to the conservation districts in the coming weeks. The conservation district will be forwarding these reports to the producers and encouraging them to complete the STAR field evaluations for the 2023 crop year.

The administrative assistant for the Republican River Water Conservation District called during the meeting to ask whether the Yuma County Conservation District would consider applying for a \$120,000 grant for research and development of a recreation area at the Bonny Reservoir site. The conservation district agreed to research whether we meet the eligibility requirements for applying for the grant but was later informed by email that the conservation district does not meet the eligibility.

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 sent an email to Clint Evans with NRCS to set up a meeting to discuss funding a targeted project for cheatgrass control.

Conservation district highway signs were tabled for a future meeting.

Supervisor Smith stated that he had not found any vehicles to purchase on the government websites. Supervisor Smith talked to several local car dealers and found a 2004 Ford in Akron with around 87,000 miles for approximately \$8500 - \$9000. Supervisor Shaw made a motion for Supervisor Smith to purchase the vehicle if it passes his inspection. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Richards and carried unanimously.

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. The conservation district sent a letter to the City of Wray with a carbon copy to the Yuma County Commissioners noting the conservation district's concerns and availability to provide guidance should the project come to fruition.

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, at the Kirk, CO Lions Hall. The Keeping Land Productive with Less or No Water flyers are to be sent to members of the Republican River Watershed Association and Deb Daniel. 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.

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 sale is ongoing.

The High Plains No-Till Conference is scheduled for February 4-5, 2025. District Manager Fell and District Conservation Technician Trejo are scheduled to attend.

NEW BUSINESS:

Envirothon, which is a high school quiz bowl competition consisting of a team of four with the subject being natural resources, was discussed. District Manager Fell is to get more information about the event.

A motion was made by Supervisor Richards that the YCCD offer The Raymond Peters Memorial Scholarship. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously. An application packet is to be sent to each school and a notice placed on the YCCD Facebook page about the availability of the scholarship.

Supervisors discussed changes to be made to the Workgroup Survey form for 2025.

Applications for the Working Lands job were reviewed. District Manager Fell is to send out a short questionnaire to candidates confirming willingness to relocate to Wray and verifying they understand that this is a grant program funded for one year only. Interviews are to be conducted on January 28-29, 2025.

The Yuma County Conservation District Long Range Plan for 2025-2027 was reviewed. Supervisor Richards made a motion to approve the YCCD Long Range Plan for 2025-2027. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw and carried unanimously.

The cost of changing to QuickBooks payroll from having the local accountant perform this service was discussed. No further action was taken.

The Yuma County Conservation District has two District Supervisor positions that are expiring this term. The expiring positions are Supervisor Lenz and Supervisor Richards. Supervisor Shaw moved to approve the Election Resolution for 2025 Regular District Election. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Smith and carried unanimously. Supervisor Richards moved to appoint District Manager Fell as the Designated Election official in the Resolution Appointing a Designated Election Official and Authorizing Designated Election Official to Cancel Election. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Shaw and carried unanimously. A Call for Nominations needs to be published in the local newspaper (Wray Gazette). Self-nomination forms were distributed to the two supervisors whose terms were expiring.

The press releases for the Agricultural Stewardship Tax Credit Informational Webinars, the Matching Grant Rangeland Improvement Project Completed, the Keeping Land Productive with Less or No Water workshops, and the YCCD 2024 Annual Poster Contest Winners Announced were reviewed by the board.

Supervisor Smith gave a report on the cost of a portable corral system for use at the Bonny project. Supervisor Smith stated that the conservation district could expect to pay between \$50,000 and \$60,000 for a portable corral system.

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:

President Lenz adjourning the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

The next YCCD meeting has been scheduled for February 25, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the NRCS conference room in Wray.

The annual meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Wray movie theater.

Minutes submitted by: Shirley Deason, Office Assistant

Don Richards (vice president)

Sonya Shaw, Secretary/Treasurer

2/25/25

Date