



East Merced Resource Conservation District (RCD)
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, December 14, 2022
In-person, Call in, and Zoom meeting
East Merced RCD - admin@eastmercedrzd.org

**EAST MERCED
RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

REGULAR RCD Board Meeting 3:00 PM - Called to order at 3:09 PM

In Person: Ursula Stock, Jean Okuye, Trevor Hutton

Zoom Attendees: Lynn Sullivan, Reyn Akiona, Shirish Shah, Emma Adest, Bob Bliss, Joe Melo, Sean Murray

Absent: John Vollmar, Jacob Wright, Trina Walley

Oral communications: Wild Farm Alliance Wed. 01/25/23 Field Day

Public Comments: Open to address items on agenda

Oral communications: 6 min

Testimony Corrections and/or additions to the Agenda: (ACTION)

Add Action Item: 4.a.i.d. Pay rate increase as built in the budget for Jan 1.

Add Action Item: 4.e. Support Letter for MIUGSA.

Added Items: F.i, iii, and iv.

1. Consent Agenda (ACTION) 5 min

- a. November 16, 2022 minutes approval and signature. Stock
- b. Treasury Report for November 2022 Stock
 - i. Balance as of November 30 is \$20,485.26.
 - ii. Income Statement - \$118,725.10 (July 1- Nov 30, 2022) (includes County loan – due to be paid back partially in 2023 and part in 2024).
 - iii. Expenses - \$ 92,263.22
 - iv. Net income is - \$26,488.88 (as of Nov. 30).
 - v. Accounts receivable - \$108,221.60.
 - vi. Income and expense presentation, does show County loan and line of credit. 10% hold on MID grant, would be advantageous to close early. WETA grant reimbursement will go to ESRCD and East Madera/Chowchilla partially. Balance is moving in a positive direction.
- c. Governor's Resolution AB 361, allowing for hybrid/virtual meeting. Stock
 - i. Two more hybrid meetings are allowed, then the board must meet in person under current rules.

MSC Motion to approve consent agenda including the Treasurer's Report MSC: (Shirish/Reyn) Passes Unanimously

2. Written and Oral Updates from Partners and Projects - 3 minute each, except guest speaker

- a. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Representative Stock
 - i. NRCS, representative, the New D.C. Pa Yang is in training, will be at the next meeting.
 - ii. Trevor will go on site visits for RCPP grants with NRCS staff
 - iii. NRCS office repairs have been completed except the blinds.

- b. Sustainable Groundwater Agencies (SGA) Representative Okuye
 - i. No news about the last response from DWR for the 2020 watershed plan. Attended East Turlock basin meeting twice now, have very good representation and good event turnouts. Jean will add PowerPoint presentation to file. Plan is to use evaporation transpiration to determine baseline. Meters for wells are planned as well.
- c. East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District (ESRCD) Stock
 - iv. Awarded a 5.5 million CDFA Conservation Planning grant (flat fee per conservation plan, pollinator habitat practice area), CVPIA funds to improve fish habitat along SJ river corridor. Ursula was offered assistance from Dylan Wilder and a consultant to work on the application, but will not meet this year's application date of the end of December.
- d. John Vollmar - Vernal Pool Project update Stock
 - i. EPA grant scheduled to end this month was extended for another 9 months. Vollmar plans to be at the meeting in January. When would be a good time to schedule a presentation by Vollmar of his work? \$5,700 left in EPA grant.
- e. Manager's Report Stock
 - i. No formal report this month.
- f. Trevor Hutton, Irrigation Specialist Hutton
 - i. CARCD Conference review: very helpful and inspiring. Made contacts with people doing Irrigation Evaluations in Santa Cruz County and work in groundwater management for ~10 years. They have means to fund pump tests that are part of the SWEEP application which EMRCD does not have. Pump tests are financial burden for smaller farmers. Attended talk on developing RCDs, and one of the most important things is having a supportive board!
 - ii. WETA in-field evaluations finished for the season, about 50 reports and will finish in the coming weeks. WETA starting to schedule Irrigation Evaluations in the spring, and names are being taken now.
 - iii. Merced Irrigation District plans to put meters on wells and will assess penalties above the allowed amount. SGMA website and County section has information. Wells will be metered to establish the baseline amount being used. Trevor has visited farms in the 3 counties - this will be a reality under SGMA and pumps need to be monitored, all agencies are adopting the practice. We can hopefully assist farmers to change irrigation practices to manage this and become more efficient.

3. Financial and Project Review

- a. Transactions and Invoices for approval of payment (**ACTION**) Stock
 - i. \$447.00 Wells Fargo: \$423 CARCD Conference, \$24 Google Suite.
 - ii. \$556.76: CalChoice insurance Jan.
 - iii. \$350.00 Reimbursement to Trevor, WETA receipts, mileage.
 - iv. \$320.00 for CARCD membership, equal to 20% of unrestricted funds. Ursula would like to verify this number and repay the correct amount.
 - v. \$17,315.38 Madera/Chowchilla RCD for WETA work, as soon as it comes in.
Payment to MCRCD will be submitted after WETA invoice 1 has been deposited.
 - vi. \$17,668.27 East Stanislaus RCD for WETA work, as soon as it comes in.
Payment to ESRCD will be submitted after WETA invoice 1 has been deposited.
 - vii. \$179.99 for purchase of new desk chair for office, ELFA Bungee chair with height adjuster, no arms

- viii. Consent to pay Elite Card in advance of Board meeting to avoid late fees through 2023 year.
- b. EPA Invoice for submission through wire transfer and payment.
 - i. Project has been extended from Dec 2022 to Sept 2023, with 0 funding.
 - ii. EPA has \$5,977 unclaimed of original \$240,583.
- c. \$ WCB Invoice for submission for payment (**ACTION**)
 - i. Retention is \$10,456.00 for a total grant amount to date of \$103,500 (approx).
 - ii. \$10,296.00 Deposit not yet received.
 - iii. \$10,940 will pay Vollmar invoice 2022 10, as soon as deposit arrives.

MSC Motion to approve paying invoices MSC: (Bob/Jean), Passes Unanimously

- d. CARCD Loan status:
 - i. If EMRCD hung up its hat on November 30, with all the bills paid and all the receivables collected, we'd have \$78,192, up from last month's \$72,000 in the bank. Loan is in use covering grant expenditures until invoices are paid.
- e. CDFA SWEEP Grant - Update Stock
 - i. SWEEP Invoice #4 has been sent in this month for \$7,081.33.
 - ii. Trevor trained with Caddie (paid for by SWEEP) and believes he can both promote the grant and begin Technical Assistance on applications. EMRCD is listed on the SWEEP website as a Technical Assistance provider.
 - iii. Trevor is beginning to bill some of his hours to SWEEP doing site visits with NRCS.
 - iv. Waiting to hear if CDFA will permit us to use unclaimed app assistance of 200 hours in new application window to be announced. Converting to block grant format with minimum award of 2.5 million dollars.
- f. USDA - NRCS RCPP grant (**ACTION**) Stock
 - i. \$1,696.93 receivable now, the check has arrived today.
 - ii. Hedgerow Farm Day on 01/25/23 by Wild Farm Alliance in Livingston with \$15 ticket, hours billable to RCPP. Table space available at Farm Day.
 - iii. NRCS has offered Trevor Conservation Desktop training needed to assist with this grant (RCPP will not pay for his hours). Trevor has all necessary prereqs. to attend - LincPass and federal computer. The dates are Jan 24-26, and Jan 31-Feb 2. Total cost is \$540.36. Trevor can attend during Jan 31-Feb 2nd.
 - iv. The application sign-up deadline for RCPP is moved back to Feb 3.

MSC Motion to approve paying Trevor's attendance for Farm Day with a \$15 charge and to accept NRCS offer for Conservation Desktop Training in January MSC: (Shirish/Jean), Passes Unanimously

- g. WETA (Mobile Irrigation Lab begun in July 2022) Stock
 - i. First invoice of \$58,887.34 sent in this month.
 - ii. Owe Madera/Chowchilla RCD \$17,315.68.
 - iii. Owe ESRCD \$17,668.27.
 - iv. EMRCD's part is \$25,863.
 - v. We will be billing for a similar amount in the Jan-March timeframe.
- h. MID Water Trailer Okuye
 - i. Awaiting reimbursement of MID grant for \$15,500. Invoice submitted in October, hoping for December reimbursement. Ursula needs to break out administration costs.
 - ii. Recommendation to Ursula to circulate a plan document for Trevor's training.

i. Bookkeeping and Audit Updates **(ACTION)**

Stock

- i. Sean has done the reports for us on a volunteer basis.
- ii. Accruals for 21-22 are not yet up to date after numerous attempted meetings since July
- iii. QB solutions: Needed to track receivables and separate grants for account.
 - a. Shared bookkeeper with East Stan whose board has approved rates below.
 - i. Contract at 32/hour, EACH RCD pays separately.
 - 1. Hourly wage poses an internal control problem.
 - ii. Hire on East Stan payroll at \$25/hour. Trina bills us.
 - iii. Trina thinks job is no more than 10 hrs/month for EMRCD.
 - iv. EMRCD has County reports to work from, East Stan does not.
 - v. Trina has three candidates, and has not posted a job yet. Will try to hire in Jan.
 - b. Abandon QB-
 - i. Have contacts for all Merced SD's to see how they do it, find someone that way.
 - ii. Would be familiar with county reports.
 - c. Give Trevor initial training and let him take this on- he is interested (his review is below). Trevor would be a helper/backup option.

Need to make decision about doing QB through Trina or not - could potentially hire the same bookkeeper as Madera Chowchilla. About 10 hours - what is the rate? It's a subcontracted role. Ursula's recommended action is to look at Amy's bookkeeper. Options: 1. Have Trina do it through ESRCD - part-time employee or subcontract. 2. Hire same contractor as Amy from M/Ch (use M/Ch contract as baseline, Trina's job description is not the same. Ursula needs to find: update on Trina's hiring, see if Amy's person is interested.

- iv. Intro to Grant Tracking spreadsheet - updated, needs 2nd tab with WCB and EPA. Bottom half shows details of invoices. Shows cash flow overview.
- v. Status of '20-21 Audit - not underway, accountant is AWOL. Ursula will compile all needed documents.

(No Action Needed)

j. Pending Grant Applications

Stock

- i. IRWMP outreach \$60,000 - close to coming through.
- ii. WCB/CARCD CFP & Habitat Implementation block grant
- iii. SWEEP request to use funding for new cycle TA
- iv. Two suggestions for Grant Applications that Trevor could use in the grant writing class to begin.
 - a. NACD - they pay upfront, Trina says the app. is easy.
 - b. WCB - Rep at Conf. said they have excess funds, and applications are open.

k. Pending Contracts with Partners **(ACTION)**

Stock

(No Action Needed)

4. Requirements of the Board 10 min

a. Review and consideration of projects, meetings and webinars **(ACTION)**

Stock

- i. Next steps for Trevor: three training options.
 - a. Trevor on QuickBooks training findings.
 - b. Sierra Nevada conservancy/CARCD grant writing workshop, Jan. – free.
 - 1. Requires 22 hours of his time = \$600.
 - 2. Wages paid in Jan.
 - 3. Flyer sent to board for review, Ursula attended in November.
 - 4. Good news: anonymous donor offered to pay \$300,

5. Would any of you care to offer the other half? YES: Bob - \$100.
 6. Trevor and Ursula would be main grant writers - know and believe in the project, ownership.
 7. Course will not be offered indefinitely; the window of time is now.
 8. The game EMRCD is playing is grant funding and distribution.
 9. Excellent overview with real grant app worked on course and reviewed by inst.
- c. Conservation desktop training, discussed above.
 - d. Pay raise for Trevor, which was built into our budget starting Jan 1 that was already approved.
 1. RCPP has asked for new rates.
 - e. Support Letter from today for MIUGSA. Circulated over email to board members before meeting. Would have farmers use 1 acre to make recharge basins on their land.

MSC Motion to write a letter of support for MIUGSA MSC: (Reyn/Bob), Passes Unanimously

MSC Motion to send Trevor to grant writing workshop with donations of \$400 MSC: (Jean/Reyn), Passes Unanimously

MSC Motion to approve a planned \$2 pay increase for Trevor starting Jan 1 MSC: (Reyn/Shirish), Passes Unanimously

- ii. Planning for Hire and Training of FT DM by July 2023 per 5 year plan
 - a. Job description review. – see 5 yr plan for reason
 1. See one year plan for jobs, Grants take up 20% of GM's time
 2. See Madera job description
 - b. Hiring plan. Do you want to be in a position for my replacement? That is only 6 months away, and there are many steps. What is your priority in the six months we go forward?
 - c. Decide Full Time or Part Time,.
 1. FT- need to apply to 1-2 more grants in Jan (this is time aps are being taken).
 2. Plan had that in it before I even began.
 3. PT- Get workload under control.
 - i. Options: board get more involved.
 - ii. Cut back job description.
 - iii. Subcontract out more tasks.
 - d. Decide if you want me to train or not.
 - e. Figure out funding steps.
 - f. Job posting written by January.
 - g. Post job in Jan/March.
 - h. Hire in March/April.
 - i. Train, May/June/July.
- iii. Grants take up 20% of GM's time.
- iv. Multiple options - thinking about grants and hiring FT by July, or cut job description back and hire a PT person, or PT person and contract out web design and bookkeeping. Could hire an additional PT person as well to make up FT work.
- v. Manager hours currently 20/week, proposal to work up to 30 hours per week as discussed last meeting, approved on a month to month basis as needed. Will be \$1440/month and 80% will be billable against grants. Ursula assigns tasks to the general fund only if she can't bill it to any grant. Jean would like to see spreadsheet separating grant time.
- vi. Proposal to hire a part-time accountant at 2 hrs/week.

MSC Motion to increase Ursula's hours to up to 30 hours a week for the month of January (Shirish/Bob), Passes Unanimously

b. Review and consideration of correspondence (ACTION)

Stock

- i. In person meeting requirement will resume in March 2023, per Governor.
- ii. US Dept of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation to improve habitat for Fed endangered species.
- iii. Stanislaus Intern opportunity, letter of commitment.
- iv. RP has contacted Jean and would like to meet, they have lots of funding they would like to spend on projects like invasive removal.

River Partners (b)

5. Adjournment at 5:07 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: January 18, 2023, 3:00pm-5:00pm

Board Signature: _____

Jean Okune

Date: _____

1/18/2023

Name: _____

Jean Okune

Title: _____

V-President

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Board Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Name: _____ **Title:** _____