

San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District
Board of Director's Meeting
March 19, 2015

- CALL TO ORDER President Richard Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 12:14 p.m.
- ATTENDANCE Members of the Board present included Richard Rodriguez, Phil Balmat, Jack Hamm, Bill Koster, Molly Watkins, John Herrick and John Thoming. Members absent excused included Diego Olagaray and Marden Wilber. Staff members and contractors present included Ora Van Steyn (NRCS), Mike Wackman, Ruth Mulrooney, and Jonna Spaletta. Guests present included Tim Pelican (Ag Commissioner).
- PUBLIC COMMENTS There were none.
- MEETING AGENDA The meeting agenda was amended to include the following additions: a CRAE invoice for payment under the Treasurer's Report; a letter of recommendation for John Brodie under New Business; and a discussion of CARCD and CDFA SWEEP Irrigation Systems evaluations under New Business. Accept meeting agenda as amended. Motion Mr. Koster, second Mr. Hamm, approved unanimously.
- Approval of February 19, 2015 meeting minutes as presented. Motion Ms. Watkins, second Mr. Hamm, approved unanimously.
- TREASURER'S REPORT Jonna S. presented the list of income and bills to be paid, along with current financial reports generated by QuickBooks. It was noted that Scholarship Fund Activity had been separated from the General Fund, as requested during the last meeting. The revised amount due from the Coalition was presented for consideration. It was discussed that \$12,993.72 should be transferred from the Drain Monitoring Fund (45744) to the General Fund (45701), as the agreed upon 1% membership dues Service Fee covering January 1, 2013 to May 1, 2014, to bring this agreement current. It was noted that the next transfer should occur close to July 1st, 2015 covering membership dues paid May 2, 2014 through June 30, 2015. Ms. Spaletta noted that although the Budget to Actuals Report was included in the meeting packet, it still needed to be revised. There was discussion of how the Board would like to see fund balances and accounts payable reported for future meetings; this request will be accommodated by the next meeting.
- The CRAE invoice was discussed and presented for payment. Motion to pay \$500 in 2015 CRAE membership dues. Motion Mr. Balmat, second Ms. Watkins, approved unanimously.
- Motion to accept the Treasurer's report and pay all the bills (including Coalition transfer). Motion Mr. Balmat, second Mr. Koster, approved unanimously.
- NRCS UPDATE Ms. Van Steyn reiterated NRCS' use of batching periods for signups this year, noting 5 new applications have been received and the next batching period is April 17th. There are a total of approximately 40 tractor replacement applications. The Agency is expected to obligate funds in July. She shared that there is no update on moving; electrical plans are the latest to be discussed. She shared that the Stockton office currently has a soil conservation technician position available. There was discussion of hiring requirements; methods of getting qualified, local applicants to apply were discussed.
- RESOURCES Ag Commissioner Tim Pelican reported that he has a meeting with the USDA, CDFA and the Cherry Commission next week to discuss Fruit Fly finds. He mentioned that this same group will have already met for 2 days preceding his meeting. He reported that by June, there should be a decision on what is happening with Light Brown Apple moth and grapes for crush. Mr. Pelican

concluded by reporting that he will meet with the Board of Supervisor's April 7th to discuss GRAP, and will reference the RCD's letter of opposition.

No San Joaquin Farm Bureau report was given.

Ms. Watkins reported on CRAE, sharing that: the Williamson Act is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year; Audubon has concluded that the best bird habitat is in rice fields and the second best in hedgerows next to orchards; the UC is hiring 20 employees per year, and having 20 retire per year; more CCA's are being trained; and research has concluded that cities emit 60 times more greenhouse gases than farms. The next meeting will focus on Ag myths.

Ms. Spaletta provided an update on her RCD Administrator and Watershed Coordinator activities since the last meeting. She confirmed the RCD was being listed as a restoration partner on The Nature Conservancy's Salmon Snapshots website. She reported on recent progress of MokeWISE, and gave a very brief overview of proposed projects. She shared that she had been working with the Sparrowk Family on getting considered for Lower Mokelumne River Partnership funding for blackberry removal on Murphy Creek. She mentioned the last LMRWSSC meeting included discussion of an Invasive Species Android App that had previously been developed; the Board expressed concern for potential implications of the information collected by this App and asked that more information be provided.

GRANT UPDATES

Ms. Spaletta was instructed to consult with Mr. Brodie on how to proceed with potential grant opportunities.

NEW BUSINESS

There was discussion of the Coalition renting office space from the San Joaquin Farm Bureau office; the RCD would remain co-located with NRCS. Currently, Ruth, Wendy and Jonna all work in one 10' by 10' office; this arrangement will not change with the Service Center's move to Arch Road because there is only one office space available for the RCD/Coalition. This arrangement is not sustainable, as phone conversations and grower visits are impossible to facilitate professionally. Mr. Wackman presented the Board with estimated setup and monthly costs for the new space (approximately \$8,300 and \$1,400 respectively); it was noted that setup costs could very well be lower. Motion for Coalition staff to obtain lease contract from San Joaquin Farm Bureau and present to the Board for consideration at the April meeting. Motion Mr. Herrick, second Mr. Hamm, approved unanimously. Setup costs also to be revisited and determined during April meeting. Move-in date to be May 1st.

The draft June 30, 2014 Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report was presented to the Board. It was noted that the report could not be finalized yet, as the letter from the District's Attorney was still outstanding and the accounting firm cannot finalize until receiving.

It was reported that Spaletta Law had been contacted and agreed to provide the RCD with General Counsel by drafting a contracting policy and reviewing existing contract language. There was discussion about the potential for tape recording meetings; it was determined that this would be of no benefit since official meeting minutes are compiled.

A draft letter of recommendation for John Brodie was reviewed. Motion to accept and endorse letter of recommendation as presented. Motion Mr. Koster, second Mr. Thoming, approved unanimously.

Ms. Spaletta reported that she had been contacted by CARCD about conducting at least one SWEEP pump/irrigation system efficiency evaluation in San Joaquin County for CDFA. Ms. Spaletta explained that since the SJCRCD does not have a mobile irrigation efficiency lab to conduct the evaluation, CARCD suggested that East Stanislaus RCD could conduct the

evaluation. CARCD has an agreement with CDFA for local RCD's to conduct the evaluations, and therefore prefers RCD's be utilized where possible. Ms. Van Steyn was able to provide the Board with greater details of this agreement and the reasoning as to why the SJCRCD does not have a mobile irrigation efficiency lab. At this time, allow East Stanislaus RCD to conduct the one known San Joaquin County SWEEP irrigation efficiency evaluation. Motion Mr. Hamm, second Mr. Koster, approved unanimously. It was noted that if future requests arise, details as to how many projects, what is being evaluated and the cost should be collected, so this decision can be reevaluated.

COMMUNICATIONS

Jonna S. called the attention of the Directors to communication items in the meeting packet. A refund request submitted by Robert C. Fowler, on behalf of RB Fowler Trust was reviewed. The request was for the refund of membership dues paid from 2011 to 2014, totaling \$1,825.62. The premise for the refund was that both the property owners and lessee (Jack Hamm, under Lima & Hamm Dairy) had paid dues on the same property. Honor the request and refund the dues paid. Motion Mr. Koster, second Mr. Balmat, approved unanimously; Mr. Hamm abstained. It was subsequently clarified that the lessee paid to cover this acreage under their dairy permit, whereas the owners paid as a member of the SJCDWQC. Concern was expressed that honoring this refund request may set a precedent for future refund requests of this same nature. Rescind motion to refund. Motion Mr. Thoming, second Mr. Koster, all in favor; Mr. Hamm abstained. The Board came to final conclusion: Reject request for refund received from Robert C Fowler on behalf of RB Fowler Trust, and send a letter explaining why and the difference between the two programs. Motion Mr. Balmat, second Mr. Koster, approved unanimously; Mr. Hamm abstained.

IRRIGATED LANDS

Mr. Wackman presented the Board with a request made by the State Water Resources Control/Regional Board for the Coalition to collect an extra sample at the French Camp Slough and Airport monitoring site. This sample will be sent off to USGS; additional costs associated with the sampling will be reimbursed. It was the recommendation of Mike W., Mike Johnson, and the SJCDWQC Steering Committee that the Coalition agree to conduct the sampling at the same time as monitoring samples are conducted by MLJ LLC so that test results can be compared if necessary. Accept proposal from the Regional Board for MLJ LLC on behalf of the Coalition, to collect one extra sample at the French Camp Slough and Airport monitoring site. Motion Mr. Hamm, second Ms. Watkins, approved unanimously.

Mike W. described to the Board MPEP matching funds study opportunities available through FREP grants. Five coalitions have joined together; four crops will be studied including walnuts, processing tomatoes, field corn and table grapes. The agreement between the Coalitions requires the SJCRCD to match funds; \$5,000 per commodity for the first two years (so \$20K each year, for two years, totaling \$40K). This will make the 5 Coalition group eligible for approximately \$250K per commodity, per year, for 3 years. It was noted that the Coalition budget has funds set aside for this type of work, and it is a requirement of the Coalition to pursue these types of opportunities/studies. It was also the recommendation of the SJCDWQC Steering Committee that this expense be incurred and the grant/MPEP study opportunity pursued. Agree to pay \$20,000 as initial matching funds to pursue FREP grant. Motion Mr. Hamm, second Mr. Thoming, approved unanimously.

Mike W. presented the Coalition QuickBooks financial reports to the Board. He noted that the stationary and printing costs on the budget-to-actual report would exceed what was budgeted. He also recommended that this year's Coalition surplus not be transferred to the Contingency Fund until the year is closed out. He drew specific attention to the 2015-2016 budget. There was discussion of some line items. He also presented the Board with budget comparisons with membership dues at \$4.75/acre, \$5.00/acre and \$5.50/acre, with their respective end-of-year revenue that could be transferred to the contingency fund. There was discussion by the Board

as to the different options and each of their implications. It was noted that setting a price now would be of a great help as member invoicing begins May 1st. Set SJCDWQC 2015-2016 membership dues at \$5.00/acre. Motion Ms. Watkins, second Mr. Koster, approved unanimously.

Mr. Wackman reported that he has a meeting with the Regional Board next week to discuss the Groundwater Assessment Report. He also noted that the map had been changed to identify high and low vulnerable areas parcel by parcel, as requested by the Board at their last meeting. There was discussion of the implications of high and low vulnerability designations on farm evaluation and nitrogen management plans.

Mr. Herrick added a drought update.

EXECUTIVE SESSION Executive session was not held.

ADJOURNMENT The next meeting of the San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District Board is scheduled for Thursday, April 16th, 2015 at the USDA Stockton Service Center at 12:00 noon. Adjourn meeting at 2:20 p.m. Motion Mr. Koster, second Mr. Herrick, approved unanimously.