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**Harney Soil & Water Conservation District Regular Monthly Meeting
July 27, 2023
Harney County Courthouse Basement Conference Room**

Present: Board Chair (BC) Jeff Hussey, Vice Chair (VC) Scott Franklin, Board Director (BD) Stacy Davies; CWMA Coordinator Tyler Goss; HSWCD District Manager (DM) Jason Kesling, Admin Assist (AA) Barbara Pearson

Remote: Secretary/Treasurer (S/T) Ryan Peila, BD Carol Dunten

Absent: BD Susan Doverspike, BD Ken Bentz

BC Hussey called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm

Note: At the time when the meeting was called to order BD Peila was the only remote participant. He was asked if there was anyone else present. There was not.

Item #1: Approval of Meeting Agenda

VC Franklin moved, and BD Davies seconded approving the meeting agenda as presented, without additions. BC Hussey, VC Franklin, S/T Peila, and BD Davies were all in favor and the motion passed.

Item #2: June Financial Report Approval

DM Kesling said there were no concerns. He said it was the end of the quarter and typically funds are not requested during this time. Of note: Senate Bill funds were received and paid out. That was the biggest expense noted apart from staff salary. It has been a quiet month, a lot of field work. BD Davies moved, and VC Franklin seconded approval of the June financial report. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

At 3:33 pm BD Dunten arrived at the meeting, via remote.

Item #3: June Meeting Minutes Approval

There were no additions or corrections. BD Davies moved, and VC Franklin seconded approving the June Meeting Minutes as presented. BC Hussey, VC Franklin, S/T Peila, and BD Davies were in favor and the motion was approved. BD Dunten abstained as she had not read the minutes.

Item#4: Baker Corral Juniper Cut

Bid packets were sent to the board via email prior to the meeting and were also included in their notebooks. DM Kesling explained the process: he said five contractors came to the bid tour and four submitted bids. All bids submitted were under the budget amount. DM Kesling met with the landowner to get his opinion and preference, but DM Kesling would let the board review the submitted bids prior to him providing the contractor's name.

S/T Peila said he had read through the bids. He did not have the bid score sheets which were provided in the packet but had made notes and scored (note: S/T Peila's scoring was on a 1-5 ranking basis).

VC Franklin asked if this bid would involve stacking pine. DM Kesling said the contractor would as the property borders USFS land. VC Franklin asked if the district has previously had a contract involving pine and DM Kesling said he thought so but not recently. The landowner will cut everything below 10 DBH (this would be a precommercial thin). O-O Contracting has committed to return after piling and cut it again (the other contractors did not). DM Kesling said the first cutting is never 100%. The contractor added this in his bid. O-O Contracting is prepared to complete the project in the fall and will return in 2024 before (decomposition) gets too far. O-O will attempt to time this with the landowner, giving the landowner time to pile. The pile area is about 500 acres.

DM Kesling said he advised all contractors of the budget. He did discuss a side agreement on piling; depending on which contractor was selected, there could be additional funds for piling. VC Franklin asked if this is all cutting, no lopping and DM Kesling said lopping will happen on approximal half the property. He advised the board he has "zero concerns for any of them". One contractor listed himself as the sole employee. DM Kesling felt the contractor capable, but the timeline may make a difference. BD Dunten asked if any contractor aside from O-O has worked on an HSWCD project, and VC Franklin said while the contractor himself may not have the contractor's staff may have.

The scoring procedure was explained to BD Davies, as this was his first time selecting a bid.

BD Dunten said she only saw one submitted bid with a complete staffing plan and asked if this was correct. DM Kesling agreed (O-O Contracting). BD Davies said that Gruber's bid indicated he would do the work on his own and perhaps hire another and the others contractors list staff. There was more discussion on previous work done by the contractors (for private owners and NRCS) even if contractors had not yet worked with the district. In general, the conversation toward all the contractors was favorable and the board saw the need to include or encourage all of the contractors with district projects at some point.

Scoring was also discussed, including landowner preference. The scoring sheets for the directors present are included in the meeting record. BD Dunten's bid score was received over the phone. S/T Peila's was not included in the tabulation as he ranked the contractors. DM Kesling said the board does not have to go with the winning score; it is a way to track what leads to the award.

O-O Contracting had the highest score; he is also the landowner's preference. VC Franklin moved and BD Davies and Dunten seconded offering O-O Contracting the contract for the Baker Corral Juniper cut at the submitted bid rate of \$128,728.

BC Hussey suggested the scoring sheet in the future include experience. DM Kesling said including experience would be a discussion for the board. The board suggested awarding contracts of a lesser amount to the other contractors in the future so they may be able to cite

experience for future larger contracts. VC Franklin in particular said he would like to see this happen with Gruber.

CWMA Goss suggested the contractors be encouraged to speak to the landowners. DM Kesling agreed, particularly with northern Steens projects. BC Hussey said he saw some contractors note experience with BLM projects. There was further discussion as to how to include the contractors, how other contractors could obtain experience in working with the district so the district could witness their work, and how their work might reflect on the district. BD Davies said that if a contractor showed up for the meeting, "It might go a long way," "...and a staffing plan," added BD Dunten. DM Kesling said he has not yet had a contractor be angry at not being awarded a bid. BC Hussey was encouraged the contractors were under the cap, "Get some of those guys out on smaller jobs."

AA Pearson suggested showing a mockup of a good bid on the website.

Item #5: CWMA Drone Work/Video Demonstration

The CWMA purchased a drone with the board's approval, and CWMA Coordinator Tyler Goss presented a video for those present at the meeting; he offered to send a YouTube link to those attending remotely. The video featured an herbicide test plot at Jerry Miller's property using Plateau and Rejuvra, a patch of medusahead requiring treatment, and before and after juniper treatment of Pine Creek. The video's purpose is to show how the drone can survey an area in a timely and safe manner. CWMA Goss said he can provide GIS locations to share with contractors to show an area that requires further attention.

Item#6: SWCD/CWMA Project by Project Overview

DM Kesling provided a report of the district's projects to give an overview to the board of the district's work. DM Kesling offered to go line by line on the report.

At about 4:20 pm BD Dunten may have fallen off the call.

- 1) Marching down the Malheur: This grant the district may just forego due to information requested. BC Hussey asked how the district could forego and DM Kesling said when the time of completion is reached the district would write a report and return funds.
- 2) Harney Basin Water Conservation: This grant was designed for landowners to convert watering systems from MESA to LESA. DM Kesling and Rangeland and Ag Water Specialist Breanna O'Connor will attempt to work on this by the due date of October 31st. Many landowners went through the Bonneville Power and other energy companies already.
- 3) ODA TA and Op: This grant is for admin salaries (DM and AA), the audit, and some water quality. The funding for FY '23-25 should be received in August.
- 4) Title II: This grant is from the Forest Service for funding medusahead and any other noxious weed. The grant will pay for half the chemical as long as related to forest service.
- 5) Addressing the Gaps: This grant is from OWEB for the purpose of writing site specific plans.
- 6) NACD 22: Funds from NRCS will support specific work that helps the NRCS complete projects. The 2023 application has been submitted. This grant is for the NRCS program and CCAA site specific plans.
- 7) SONEC: This funding is for irrigation improvement and infrastructure. It funds Sam Artaiz's position. The report shows negative, but the funds are fine. DM Kesling explained why. The new contract will be in place in September.
- 8) Joint Admin Continued: This funds AA Pearson's position. This portion of the report had a typo, which DM Kesling will correct. DM Kesling also explained how her salary will be charged in the future.

- 9) SB Juniper: the totals on this also need correction. All of the groundwork has been completed.
- 10) Baker Corral Large: was previously discussed in the meeting.
- 11) CCAA Grants are funded through OWEB.
- 12) Forest Service infrastructure: The district serves as the fiscal agent for these projects, funds are passed through for other districts.
- 13) RCPP Steens grants funds salary. It involves working on certifying contracts for NRCS and writing SSPs. Salaries for the DM and AA salaries could be charged to this.
- 14) USFWS Pepperweed is a CWMA project, covering Sodhouse Lane to Sodhouse to the refuge will be treated. It involves three different landowners on private land. CWMA Goss discussed further treatments.
- 15) NRCS Partner Biologist: This grant funds NRCS Sage-grouse Partner Biologist Danielle Reynolds' role, through Pheasants Forever. PF will fund three positions in eastern Oregon. This will cover her entire salary and travel. DM Kesling will know more about this following this week.
- 16) Poison Creek/ Med Sage/Purple Loosestrife: CWMA Goss elaborated on these projects.

BD Davies praised the district for obtaining funding through the BLM for BLM rangeland (noted on report). This will be for fencing, pipeline and well drilling near Krumbo Reservoir. The BLM/ CWMA grant is not on the report (amount \$65K).

Small grants that are still active were discussed. Soldier Creek is to be completed by the end of winter. Soldier Creek/Aspen has been completed; the landowner has not yet submitted information.

Item #7: No Public Comment

Item #8: Meeting adjournment

VC Franklin moved, and BD Davies seconded adjourning the meeting. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor and the meeting adjourned 4:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Pearson, Admin Assist

District Representative

Date