

MINUTES
Uintah County Conservation District
Regular Meeting, February 12, 2024
Location: USU Extension Office
328 East 200 South, Vernal, Utah

ATTENDANCE:

Conservation District Chair Bryan Bell

Conservation District (CD) Supervisor

Todd Thacker, Vice Chair

Jim Slaugh, Treasurer

Johnathan McKee, Supervisor

Steve Hanberg, Supervisor

Conservation District Supervisors, Absent:

Conservation Partners Representatives:

Jeremy Maycock, NRCS

Cheyenne Reed, USU Extension

Department of Agriculture and Food:

Darrell Gillman, UDAF

Conservation District Staff:

Andrea Merrell, Clerk

Guests:

SUMMARY OF CONSERVATION DISTRICT ACTION

MEETING – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bryan Bell called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The Supervisors reviewed the January 8 Local Work Group Meeting and Board Meeting Minutes. **Action Item: Steve Hanberg made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Todd Thacker seconded the motion. Voting unanimously approved the motion.**

SUPERVISORS REPORTS

The Supervisors asked about the Soil Health Workshop held February 6 to 8 in St. George. Jeremy attended the workshop and told them key points from the conference.

UINTAH COUNTY EXTENSION BUSINESS UPDATE

- A. **Action Item: lunch for February 21 Crop School.** Cheyenne Reid passed out a handout for the Crop & Livestock School. She asked the Supervisors for help with the cost of the lunch for the workshop. Darrell told the Supervisors he and Cheyenne are also going to present a request to Duchesne Conservation District for help with the lunch costs. If they agree to help with the lunch, the District will be paying half the cost. **Action Item: Steve made a motion for Uintah CD to split lunch costs for the Crop & Livestock School with Duchesne Conservation District. Johnathan seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.**

NRCS BUSINESS

Jeremy Maycock, District Conservationist, passed out a handout with the results from the January 8 Local Work Group Meeting. The meeting participants identified the following top five resource concerns: 1. Invasive weeds cheatgrass, Russian Olive, thistle (County Wide), 2. Grazing Improvement/Water on Rangeland/Pastureland, 3. Sediment Erosion Control (Pelican/Green River), 4. Wildlife on private lands, depredation. Create habitat on public land, and 5. Water metering and McConkie Ranch Easement. Additional resource concerns were listed on the handout in no order. The Supervisors can use this information to guide recommendations to NRCS for strategic fund pools and conservation practices to promote.

Jeremy then discussed recent snow and rainstorms and reviewed the charts on the back of his handout. One chart shows percentage of storage capacity in three reservoirs and the other chart records the trend in the snow water equivalent for the northeastern Uinta mountains.

REQUEST FOR DONATION TO UINTAH HIGH ENVIROTHON TEAM

David Wilson, the Future Farmers of America (FAA) Advisor for Uintah High School contacted Andrea. He is working with a team of students preparing to compete in the 2024 Envirothon competition. He requested time to meet with the District and request a donation, but they were not able to attend today's meeting. This item is tabled until the March Board meeting.

SOIL HEALTH EQUIPMENT GRANT

- A. **Report on Esch no-till drill.** Bryan reported he mailed payment for the drill to Lifetime Ag LLC. Due to recent winter storms, he has not been able to travel to Loma, Colorado to bring the drill back to Vernal.
- B. **Vernal Hay Company agreement.** Johnathan reported he talked to Jeff McKee, representative of Vernal Hay Company about an agreement with them to store, rent, and maintain the Esch No-till Drill. He said the storage cost will be included in the maintenance cost. Maintenance will be at the going shop rate. Rental proceeds will be split 50/50 between Vernal Hay Company and the District. For off season storage, the drill would be taken to covered storage.
- C. **Develop equipment rental fee and agreement.** As the group began discussing rental rates, Darrell stated he will check with other zones for information on their rates. As the group discussed this subject, they thought the District needed to charge a day rate that is high enough to reduce the likelihood that a producer will rent the equipment and then let it sit around idle for an extended time. It is critical that we keep rental periods as short as possible, especially during the critical planting times. Preliminary rental charges are a day rate of \$150 to \$200 and \$5 per acre.

The group looked at several examples of rental agreements including the Vernal Hay Company equipment rental agreement. The group liked the Vernal Hay Company equipment rental agreement with the addition of a liability waiver. Johnathan will relate the information we discussed to Jeff McKee and invite him to attend the March meeting.

Insurance for the drill: Darrell called Darren with Utah Local Governments Insurance Trust for information on available insurance and rates. Darren recommended general liability insurance with a two-million-dollar limit per occurrence, and an annual cost of \$3600. Cost to insure the drill will be sixty dollars per year as part of the general liability package.

The group discussed alternative sources of insurance coverage. We will discuss with Vernal Hay Company their insurance coverage when meeting with Jeff McKee at the March UCD Board Meeting. Andrea will contact Uintah County about how Uintah County insures the equipment and operations of other special services districts in the County.

ZONE 6 MEETING

Darrell passed out a flyer giving details on the upcoming Zone 6 Meeting. This year it will be a combined meeting with Zone 3 and held in Heber, Utah on March 6. He reviewed all pertinent details and told the Supervisors we need to RSVP to Desiree Vandyke by March 1 so she can give an accurate count for lunch to the caterer. Andrea will follow up with the Supervisors closer to March 1 to get that count and relay the information to Desiree. **Action Item: Todd made a motion to approve travel expenses for Andrea to attend the Zone 3 & 6 meeting on March 6. Jim seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.**

FARM FIELD DAY SUPPORT

Andrea passed out a letter she received from Uintah County Farm Bureau requesting financial support for their annual Farm Field Day. The Farm Field Day is an opportunity for all 4th grade students in the Uintah School District to be educated on the importance of agriculture in our community. The Supervisors discussed the positive benefits to the community from the program. The Farm Bureau uses the funds to pay for expenses of preparing packets for the educators to help them teach the importance of agriculture as part of their curriculum. In addition, the funds help pay for items such as cookies, cheese sticks, pencils, and honey sticks that are given to the children as part of the lessons taught at the different stations. **Action Item: Jim made a motion to approve a donation of \$500 to the Uintah County Farm Bureau in support of the 2024 Farm Field Day. Johnathan seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.**

RENEWAL OF CONTRACT FOR CLERK

Andrea passed out a copy of a proposed 2024 Contract for Clerk Services. The Supervisors reviewed and discussed the proposed contract. **Action Item: Todd made a motion to approve the 2024 contract for clerk services for Andrea as presented. Jim seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.**

CAPITOL PROJECTS FUND

Andrea passed out a worksheet detailing projected income and expenses the District will have from now until the end of the fiscal year. In addition, she gave the Supervisors a handout with current rates for MACU Certificates of Deposit. Now that the purchase of the Esch No-Till Drill is completed, the Supervisors discussed how much to transfer back to a Capitol Projects Fund. The Supervisors determined they could transfer twenty thousand dollars. **Action Item: Johnathan made a motion to approve investing one-half or \$10,000 in to a 6-month MACU Growth Certificate of Deposit (CD) and one-half or \$10,000 in to a 12-month MACU Growth CD. Steve seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.**

RENEWAL OF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Andrea told the Supervisors when she spoke with David Wilson, Uintah High School FFA Advisor about the Envirothon competition, he also asked if the Uintah CD would consider renewing their scholarship program. Darrell reiterated that the State Legislature has asked the conservation districts not to do scholarship programs. The UACD Auxiliary does a scholarship program each year. Information on how his students can apply for the UACD scholarship will be provided to David Wilson.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- A. Balance Sheet/Bank Statement Review. Andrea passed out to the Supervisors a Balance Sheet dated February 8, the January Bank Statement, and the MACU Checking Account Reconciliation for period ending December 31. Andrea reported the interest earned in January for the MACU savings account.

For the checking account, she reviewed the bank statement and reconciliation details for January. She reported three checks cleared the account. She informed the Supervisors the data related to each cleared check, including the check number, payee, and amount of each check. Then she reported there was one deposit made in January and two in February prior to today's meeting. She reported the date, source, and amount of each deposit. There was one uncleared check. She compared the checking account ending balance on each financial statement and explained differences.

- B. Comparison of Actual Expenses to Budget. Andrea passed out a Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual worksheet for the period July 1 to February 8, 2024. She compared the figures for actual total income and actual total expenses to the budgeted amounts for those items. The actual amounts were less than the budgeted amounts. No adjustments to the budget are needed.

Action Item: Steve made a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Todd seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.

INCOME AND EXPENSE REPORT

- A. **Income:** Andrea reported income from receipt of first disbursement from the 2024 UDAF Grant and from the sale of one roll of weed barrier.
- B. **Expenses:** Andrea passed out a copy of the statement she received from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and a copy of the newsletter that accompanied the statement. She directed the Supervisors' attention to the back side of the billing statement and asked them to update their contact information and indicate if they still wanted to receive emails from NACD. The Supervisors discussed the purpose of NACD and the value the District receives from this organization. **Action Item: Todd made a motion to approve the request to renew the District's membership in NACD at the same level as last year. Steve seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.**

SERA

- A. **Report on meeting attendance.** To help the Supervisors put together meeting attendance for their third quarter SERA worksheet, Andrea asked the Supervisors to report their attendance at the January 11 Uintah Basin Water Summit and the February 6 to 8 Soil Health Workshop in St. George, Utah. None of the Supervisors were able to attend these meetings.
- B. **Upcoming Workshops:** The Supervisors discussed the upcoming February 21 Crop and Livestock School. Two Supervisors are tentatively planning to attend this workshop. **Action Item: Steve made a motion to approve SERA expenses for all Supervisors who attend the February 21 Crop and Livestock School. Todd seconded the motion. Voting unanimously approved this motion.**

ARDL PROPOSAL

There were no ARDL applications to present at this meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Darrell reported that the application period for the Water Optimization Grants is closed. He reported there were approximately 400 applications submitted. The request for funds exceeds the amount available.

ADJOURNMENT

Todd made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous and the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned by Chair Bell at 3:15 p.m.