

MINUTES
Uintah County Conservation District
Regular Meeting, February 26, 2025
Location: USU Uintah Basin Campus
320 Aggie Boulevard, Vernal, Utah

ATTENDANCE:

Conservation District Chair Bryan Bell

Conservation District (CD) Supervisor

Johnathan McKee, Supervisor

Todd Thacker, Vice Chair

Conservation District Supervisors, Absent:

Jim Slaugh, Treasurer

Steve Hanberg, Supervisor

Conservation Partners Representatives:

Cortney Borer, Sage Grouse Initiative
Range & Wildlife Conservationist

Department of Agriculture and Food:

Darrell Gillman, UDAF

Conservation District Staff:

Andrea Merrell, Clerk

Guests:

UINTAH BASIN CROP SCHOOL

The Uintah Basin Crop School started at 10 am with a presentation about forages by Earl Creech, USU Agronomy Specialist. He discussed how to do a visual survey of a field to determine the health of the alfalfa stand, and when to replant. He also discussed factors for success.

Burdette Barker, USU Irrigation Specialist gave a presentation about crop consumptive use and ways to optimize irrigation water application. He discussed research they are conducting on subsurface drip systems.

Matt Yost, USU Agroclimate Specialist, gave a presentation on Cover Crops. He discussed successes and failures he observed as he has worked with producers. He discussed different species and factors to improve the outcomes for the producer.

Grant Cardon, USU Soil Specialist, gave a presentation on Soil Health practices.

The Crop School ended at 2:00 pm.

SUMMARY OF CONSERVATION DISTRICT ACTION

MEETING – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bryan Bell called the meeting to order at 2:15 pm.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Action Item: Andrea Merrell passed out copies of the minutes for the January 15, 2025 Uintah Conservation District (UCD) Board Meeting. The Supervisors reviewed and discussed the minutes. **Action Item: Johnathan McKee made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Todd Thacker seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous, and the motion passed.**

UINTAH COUNTY EXTENSION BUSINESS

Cheyenne was unable to attend today's meeting.

NRCS BUSINESS

Jeremy Maycock, District Conservationist, was unable to attend today's meeting. Cortney Borer introduced herself to the Supervisors. She recently joined the Vernal NRCS office as a Range and Wildlife Conservationist. She oversees Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) contracts for Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah counties. She touched on some practices that fall under the Sage Grouse Initiative such as removal of Junipers where they are encroaching into Sage Brush ecosystems. She mainly works with private landowners, but can work with producers who have federal and state grazing allotments.

ZONE 6 ANNUAL MEETING, MARCH 26

- A. **Action Item: Choose lunch menu and caterer.** Darrell told the Supervisors a room is reserved for the meeting at the Uintah Conference Center. UDAF will pay for the room if Uintah County doesn't waive the fee.

Darrell outlined the preliminary agenda and speakers. The broader interest topics will be presented in the morning to accommodate the schedules of presenters and attendees. District-specific topics will be presented in the afternoon.

Lunch will be provided as part of the meeting. Costs for the lunch will be split between Daggett CD, Duchesne CD, and Uintah CD. The Supervisors discussed different restaurants that can cater meals. **Action Item: Johnathan made a motion to have lunch catered by Café Rio as first choice, and then Jimmy Johns for second choice. Maximum cost for lunch of \$15 per person, and total costs to be split between three conservation districts. Todd seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous, and the motion passed.**

UINTAH COUNTY WORKING GROUP MEETING

- A. **Date to attend:** Andrea reminded the Supervisors that during the December Board meeting they had discussed meeting with the Uintah County Commissioners in March after the Legislative session. However, with the Zone 6 meeting scheduled for March, the Supervisors decided to consider April dates at their next Board meeting.
- B. **Topics for presentation:** Darrell and the Supervisors discussed projects and topics they want to highlight during their meeting with the commissioners. Following is the list of topics: Pot Creek Watershed Plan, Joint Chief's Initiative, Rental program for Esch No-Till Drill and Dew Drop Drill, and highlight accomplishments from 2024 Annual Report.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- A. **Action Item: Balance Sheet/Bank Statement Review.** Andrea gave each Supervisor a copy of the January MACU bank statement and a Balance Sheet dated February 25. For the savings account Andrea reported the interest earned and the balance as of January 31.

For the checking account, she reported three checks cleared during January. She reported the check number, the amount, and the payee for each check. Then she reported there were no deposits made in January. She compared the ending balances for the savings and checking accounts as shown on the January bank statement with the ending balances shown on the February 25 Balance Sheet, and noted the ending balances match.

- B. **Action Item: Comparison of Actual Expenses to Budget.** Andrea reported that she is trying free accounting software with Wave accounting and was not able to produce a report comparing the budget to actual expenses. She handed out a Cash Flow Report to help the Supervisors increase their awareness of the amount of income the District gets, and from what sources. This report also tracks spending and will help them evaluate spending compared to income.

Action Item: Todd made a motion to approve the financial report as presented. Johnathan seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous, and the motion passed.

FUTURE PURCHASES AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

- A. **Action Item: 2026 Calendar/Recordkeeping Books.** Andrea reported she received a phone call from a Myron Corporation representative stating that if the District orders calendar/recordkeeping books for 2026 at this time, the price is the same as last year. The books will not be shipped until September 2025, and payment will not be required until the books are delivered. Andrea reported the price the District paid for the 2025 calendar/recordkeeping books. The Supervisors discussed the benefits of the calendar/recordkeeping books. **Action Item: Todd made a motion to approve purchase of 2026 Calendar/Recordkeeping books. Johnathan seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous, and the motion passed.**

- B. Expenses:** Darrell presented a receipt from The Sloppy Pig for lunch for today's Uintah Basin Crop School participants. At the January 15, 2025 Uintah CD Board Meeting the Supervisors agreed to pay half of the expenses for lunch during the Crop School. Duchesne Conservation District paid the entire cost of lunch with their credit card. A check was issued to DCD to reimburse them for half of the invoice.

SERA

- A. Attendance at Hay Symposium, St George; NACD Convention, Salt Lake City.** Andrea asked the Supervisors if they attended the Hay Symposium and/or the NACD Convention and wrote down their answers to fill out their third quarter SERA worksheets.

Darrell told the Supervisors the State Auditor's office has directed UACD to make changes in how SERA expenses are reimbursed. For the remainder of the fiscal year, UDAF will determine a dollar amount to be added to the District's grant. The District will determine the amount to pay each Supervisor for their third and fourth quarter SERA expenses. The District will make a check to each Supervisor for SERA reimbursement. The District will add these expenses to the form they use to request payments from their UDAF grant.

For next fiscal year, the District needs to include a line item in their budget for SERA expenses.

ARDL PROPOSAL

Darrell presented an ARDL application for Cody Evans. He purchased property in the Jensen area and is upgrading the irrigation system. He has been awarded a Water Optimization grant for this project. He is requesting an ARDL loan to pay costs not covered with the Water Optimization grant. The Supervisors discussed the project. **Action Item: Johnathan made a motion to approve the application for an Agriculture Resource Development Loan and for it to be forwarded to UDAF for further processing. Todd seconded the motion. The voting was unanimous, and the motion passed.**

OTHER BUSINESS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Darrell told the Supervisors the application period for Water Optimization Grants will end February 28. There is a lot of interest in these grants. He related the number of applications submitted to date. He also gave preliminary amounts of funding for on-farm projects and for irrigation companies' projects.

Darrell then provided an update on some of the bills moving through the Legislative session that affect the agricultural community.

Meeting adjourned by Chair Bell at 3:30 p.m.

Motion by Johnathan and Seconded by Todd