**SAN JUAN ISLANDS CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**Regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Supervisors**

**May 26, 2023**

**Location:** at 530 Guard St., Friday Harbor, WA 98250, and via Zoom

**In Attendance**

**Supervisors:** Vicki Heater, Lynn Bahrych, David Bill,

Carson Sprenger, Claire Crawbuck

**Associates:** James Skoog (absent), Thom Pence

**Staff:** Paul Andersson, Tony Fyrqvist

**Partners:** Jean Fike, WSCC Puget Sound Regional Manager; Alan Chapman, WACD NW Region Representative; Kathryn Smith, NRCS

**Public:** None in attendance

**MEETING SUMMARY – Final**

Vicki Heater convened the regular meeting held in person and via Zoom at 8:30am.

**Welcome and Introductions**

1. **Agenda Approval:**

The agenda was approved by consensus without any changes.

1. **April 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes Approval:**

Claire made a motion to approve the 4/28/23 regular meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by David.

The minutes were approved without discussion or changes.

1. **Financial Officers Report – April 2023 Financials:**

The Financial Manager introduced a new “SJICD Financial Summary 4/30/23” report for presentation and review of District finances (attached).

The items highlighted on the report included:

* The 12-month running Asset and Equity balance graph, which represents month-end numbers. It will provide as an alert to any negative trends in liquidity. It was pointed out that the intra-month balances - after processing payroll, payroll tax, health insurance and retirement payments – can vary by $60-$70,000.
* The report continues to convey stability in account balances.
* It was mentioned that the year-to-date low balance in the operating account was $162,693.12 which occurred on 3/3/23.
* The Statement of Revenues and Expenses showed a monthly surplus of $55,605.87 which primarily reflected the large March/April invoices to DNR and assessment received in April.
* The Credit Card Details Report itemized some of the larger expenses consisting of computer purchases for ICC and project funding on SRF and IMB grants.
* It was also noted that some credit card receipts were lost during the month which has been remedied by new control procedures and scheduled submission of receipts to the District.
* Added payroll expense amount along with number of staff members on Board reports requiring approval. The total expense amount on the Profit & Loss Statement includes the Health Insurance and Retirement amounts which are not shown on the Payroll Summary Report.

Lynn made a motion to approve the financial documents containing:

* The Balance Sheet
* Statement of Revenues and Expenses
* Credit Card Details
* Bank Reconciliation
* Journal Entries
* Payroll

David seconded the motion which carried.

1. **Old Business:**

2023 Supervisor Election updates – review of official results

At its May 18, 2023, meeting, the Washington State Conservation Commission certified and announced the winners of all 45 conservation district elections including Carson Sprenger for the San Juan Islands Conservation District.

It was also confirmed that Lynn Bahrych was reappointed.

State legislative and budget updates

The two-year $69 billion state operating budget has been approved with additional funding for conservation.

Within the context of the budget the District grant pipeline report was discussed. With almost $2 million in new grants requiring some degree of input and processing the District is showing solid growth.

Some of the discussion items within selected grants included:

* Eelgrass – The District will be hiring a Project Manager. Job Description is in process.
* Island Marble Butterfly – Representatives from US Fish and Wildlife Service are on San Juan Island.
* YCC – Recently hired Program Managers for Lopez and San Juan Islands. No Child Left Inside Grant is being funded; and The Washington State Legislature funded the Outdoor Learning Grants program, administered by the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
* At this point there was a discussion about the indirect rate which is currently set at 25% for all Commission Grants and at 10% for the other District Grants. The district intends to negotiate a more realistic rate matching actual administrative costs.
* Forestry – of the $10 million total amount allocated to the Firewise Program, the District is securing $150,000 through WSCC. Another $100,000 Commission grant for forest health management will emphasize outreach to private landowners. The DNR grant for $15,583 for Lopez Burn and Learn has been received and integrated into District invoicing.
* Agriculture – the discussion centered primarily on the $75,000 received under the Commission Sustainable Farms and Fields grant funding. The concentration will be placed on technical assistance regarding biochar particularly with local homeowner associations.
* The existing VSP grant will end on 6/30/23 and the new funding includes $234,000 for continuation of the program and an additional $47,000 for VSP monitoring.
* Riparian – The District is currently anticipating over $200,000 in grant funding for riparian work within the 4 watersheds of
	+ Garrison and False Bay on San Juan Island
	+ Crow Valley and Judd Cover on Orcas Island

At this point there was discussion about possible grant funding for a mobile lumber mill. The conversation topics included:

* Insufficient milling capacity on the Islands.
* Economics of milling.
* Private vs. public sector ownership and operation of a sawmill.
* It was determined that the economics of owning and operating a sawmill consists of multiple complex issues.

Jean Fike provided legislative updates consisting of:

* Conveying disappointment that instead of the $10 million addition to Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) the amount was reduced to $1 million, which will end up at approximately $11,000 in additional funding per district.
* The Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) will pursue supplemental funding over the summer and fall.

Job compensation study updates – review of comparable districts

There was substantial conversation about the side-by-side comparison and presentation of the San Juan Islands Conservation District pay grades with the consultant reports received from the Snohomish and Whidbey Island Conservation Districts.

Discussed:

* The justifiable bottom and top salary ranges for District employees.
* Potential COLA and other increases in July with the annual performance evaluations.
* New staff salaries.
* Comparison confirming that the current ranges seem realistic being in the middle as Snohomish is a larger district and Whidbey is smaller. Cost of living is higher on San Juan Island.
* Ordering a specific consultant report for San Juan Islands Conservation District is not deemed necessary at this point.
* The District has also access to federal employee pay scale with will be examined at a later date.
* The District has prepared a new “Organization Chart” showing future potential growth of payroll to up to 16-18 staff members.

It was also confirmed that the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and the Islands Conservation Corps (ICC) are integral parts of the District identity. Advantages of these programs include:

* Outreach and education in conservation training which can lead into finding qualified future employees.
* It was also verified that hiring trained staff is in compliance with District hiring policies, which are aligned with state and federal mandates.

1-Year Plan

David made a motion to approve the 1-Year Plan.

Lynn seconded the motion.

The discussion covered:

* The fact that now many agency partners have now become landowners which necessitates the removal of the statement: “in collaboration with” agencies and other organization from page 1 of the preliminary copy.
* It was also agreed to have Climate Change as Goal 1.

The motion passed.

5-Year Plan

Lynn made a motion to approve the 5-Year Plan.

David seconded the motion.

The discussion covered:

* Largely built on 1-Year plan.
* Does not contain a budget feature.
* Can be updated at any time.
* Needs to be submitted with the 1-Year Plan by 5/30/23

The motion passed.

Office and property acquisition – Discussion of financial analysis of potential property purchase

Discussion centered around the potential purchase of the former San Juan County Public Works building at 915 Spring St. in Friday Harbor. The main topics were:

* San Juan County would like to see a formal offer on the property.
* Possibility by County to carry a loan on the building.
* Some agency partners have seen the building.
* Interest by agency partners and others in leasing space in the building.
* Turnkey location.
* Display of spreadsheet determining the potential costs and value of the building.
* Extensive conversation about the desirability of a capital fundraiser by the District:
	+ Resulting in increased outreach and ability for the District to “Tell our Story”.
	+ District’s capacity to raise fund would be tested.
	+ Brickworks and Mullis Center have conducted successful fundraisers
	+ Western Washington University Foundation has 480 local alumni and will be holding a fundraiser in June which be directed toward supporting the District.
* The subcommittee will meet to further evaluate the proposed purchase.
1. **New Business:**

SJICD Office – 1 year and 5-year Lease Options – discussion of lease terms for continued use of current office space

The current landlord has presented the District with 2 lease options:

* 1 year lease with a monthly payment of $1,850.00
* 5-year lease with a monthly payment of $2,100.00

Discussed reorganizing existing space to achieve maximum efficiency and to accommodate growth in staff. Desks will be downsized and offices moved.

1. **Staff and Program Reports:**

Staff and Program Reports – Document attached

* Staff members were able to attend a tour of Mitchell Bay Farm in a more casual setting. The goal is to have additional get togethers.
* A humorous video was posted of ICC installing plant protectors.
* Island Marble Butterfly (IMB):
	+ 9 butterfly eggs were observed at Eagle Cove site (not build by District).
	+ 31 eggs at another site.
	+ Movement toward establishment of 1-5 acre lots as “Anchor Sites” instead of multiple satellite plots.
* Ecosystem Coordination Board held a quarterly meeting discussing:
	+ The need of oil spill prevention.
	+ Need for an assist vessel in Sydney or Roche Harbor to rapidly mobilize resources when needed.
	+ Tugs are currently required for oil tankers but not for container ships.
	+ The strong currents in the Salish Sea would rapidly spread any oil spill over a large area, which could be even more disastrous that the Exxon Valdez spill in Prince William Sound in Alaska.

At this point were also positive comments mentioned about the YCC Coordinator hired for Lopez which has reinvigorated YCC participation on Lopez.

There was also a short discussion about the ranking process of Cost Share applicants:

* While the Cost Share Policy is approved by the Board each individual Cost Share project does not need Board approval.
1. **Subcommittees** – did not meet.
2. **Upcoming Trainings/Webinars/Events:**

June 12-14 – WADE Annual Conference, Leavenworth, WA.

* 2 board members are participating.

Recap of Trainings/Webinars/Events

* 5/18 – Ecosystem Coordination Board in Friday Harbor
* 5/19 Lopez Island Learn & Burn on Lopez Island
	+ Received DNR funding for prescribed burns.
	+ Worked in partnership with Lopez Fire District.
	+ ICC created piles which were burned within the allowable weather window.
	+ Attended by 15 people.
	+ Educational components included forest health, pile creation, burn plan and burn management.
* 5/26 – Forestry Presentation to SJC Council, Friday Harbor and online
	+ The District Manager presentation to County Council was commended to be informative, to the point, nonpolitical and well received.

Discussed DNR support of “Prescribed Burn Associations” which are private non-profit entities composed of teams with equipment moving to various areas for burn treatment.

Ecostudies Institute performs prescribed and cultural burning, primarily in the Willamette Valley of Oregon.

1. **Idea Pot**
2. **Partner Reports**
3. **Public Comments:**

None.

1. **Adjourn:**

Meeting adjourned by Vicki Heater at 10:30am.

**Next Regular Monthly Meeting: Friday, June 23, 2023 from 8:30 am to 10:30 am.**