

## MINUTES

Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta Resource Conservation District

Regular Board Meeting

Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 4:00 PM

Truax Building  
41923 Second Street, Fourth Floor  
Temecula, CA 92590

### I. PRELIMINARY FUNCTIONS

Call to Order, 4:00 p.m., meeting recorded by Rose Corona

Flag Salute

Roll Call/Establish a Quorum

**Directors Present:** Rose Corona (President), Lisa Battiato (Vice President), Newt Parkes (Secretary/Treasurer), Teri Biancardi (Director)

**Directors Absent:** Randy Feeney

**Associate Directors Present:** Rick Neugebauer

**Associate Directors Absent:** None

**Office Manager:** Deborah Getty – Present

**Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCS):** Robert Hewitt – Absent

**Guest Speakers:** Chris Gray – WRCOG – Deputy Executive Director-Western Regional Council of Governments  
Melissa Cushman – New District Counsel

**Public Guests:** None

### II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President Corona makes a motion to approve the agenda with two deletions: financials to be included next month due to a timing variance and Bob Hewitt not being able to attend today's meeting, consent calendar and correspondence as presented. Director Battiato seconded. **Motion passed unanimously 4-0.**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

### **III. SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Introduction of Chris Gray - Deputy Executive Director of WRCOG (Western Regional Council of Governments) Mr. Gray shares some background in that three (3) years ago WRCOG started a grant writing program. It works with two (2) key elements. First being they put together a compendium where they go through and inventory all possible grants that are possibly of interest to their members which is sent out on a bi-weekly basis. Second, they provide a grant writing service to their members and what that entails is they have a staff of professional full-time grant writers. They prepare the grant, work with the agency that the grant is being submitted for and they complete 99% of the work. Because Mr. Gray states that he believes so much in the TEAM RCD group, he plans to allow TEAM to use their grant writing service for one grant writing opportunity. Setting the following expectations. The grant writers and TEAM RCD will work collaboratively to look for suitable grants and WRCOG will fund one grant on TEAM RCD's behalf. Each grant costs about \$10,000 which will be covered by WRCOG.

Introduction and welcome of Melissa Cushman with the County Counsel's office who previously represented TEAM RCD as District Counsel from 2015 to 2017 and will now be reengaging as District Counsel again. Ms. Cushman's general role will be to complete legal review such as review of contracts as well as available to answer any legal questions that may arise from the Board.

### **IV. ACTION ITEMS/ DISCUSSION CALENDAR**

**Item 1: Discussion and potential approval to increase the current responsibilities and wage reimbursement for current office manager to maintain accounting and bookkeeping.**

With Landmark Business Services closing their doors, there is a need for bookkeeping services. Current Office Manager Deborah Getty offered to step into this role as it goes hand in hand with her current duties and she has the necessary background and experience required. Rates will remain the same and no down time required to train someone new. President Corona moved to increase the current responsibilities and wage reimbursement for current Office Manager Deborah Getty to maintain accounting and bookkeeping at a cost of \$35.00 per hour which is equal to the compensation paid to Landmark Accounting. Director Parkes seconds. General discussion. **Motion passed unanimously 4-0.**

**Item 2: Update on new accounts both general and investment at Chase Bank.**

Director Parkes reports that the Wells Fargo and Union Banc accounts have been closed with new accounts opened at JP Morgan Chase. President Corona, Vice President Battiato and Secretary/Treasurer Newt Parkes have completed the setup and are all signors on the accounts. Two certificates of deposit were created for the Greer Ranch and Benton Channel monies in which the interest that accrues flows into a business checking account. Additionally a third account has been set up as a Flood Control account to keep track of that activity separately. No motion necessary.

**Item 3: Discussion and review of 2021 strategic plan.**

President Corona presented a draft 2021 strategic plan and requested that the Board review and forward any recommendations they would like to see to the Office Manager for further discussion at a later date. No motion necessary.

**Item 4: Discussion and potential approval of yearly District insurance policy.**

Director Parkes reports that we have received our pricing from our current insurance provider SDRMA (Special Districts Risk Management Authority). The cost has increased by approximately \$250.00 for the upcoming renewal period due to credits that were applied in the past no longer being available. Director Parkes recommends that we move forward with the new policy effective June 1, 2021 at a cost of \$2,513.33. President Corona points out that included in this fee we receive additional services such as

education and training for the Board. Director Parkes moved to approve the yearly District insurance policy. Director Biancardi seconds. **Motion passed unanimously 4-0.**

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### **Item 1: Discussion on Cannabis Grant Program.**

Director Biancardi reports on discussion of Cannabis Grant program as it relates to the Anza/Aguanga area. Director Biancardi did an overview of the Cannabis Grant both with cultivation impacts on qualified public lands and enhancing the watersheds or communities. Director Biancardi said that although she knew of a lot of the impacts throughout the watershed she didn't have a project in mind that would fit into the current grant. The overview included an example of a woman who was concerned about the toxicity of her well since her property was between two illegal cannabis grow properties and the two illegal grow property wells had tested positive for toxicity. The woman was concerned her well may also be poisoned but she didn't have the money to do the testing.

Director Biancardi included a discussion with President Corona who suggested that maybe there were grants out there (similar to the Crop Swap and AEIP projects TEAM presently works on) that may prove to be advantageous to the community and for others for general data collection as to the impacts of the chemicals they are using in their illegal grows. Although the current Cannabis Grant may not apply to this particular endeavor. AD Neugebauer suggested maybe a test program to build confidence from the community and Director Battiato added that she felt that it would be a good idea to get a groundwater characterization whose records might be available at the county level that might reflect an understanding of the aquifer, how the groundwater flows, where its going and similar facts that would be vital to nailing down more information so the Board could be better informed as to a direction to take. Director Battiato suggested that something that picks up on what is known at the county level for Anza/Aguanga which allows one to characterize it first because one would have to understand where things are going. That would include testing so that the Board can form a database and then link that to a GIS system in order for TEAM to move forward on some sort of clean up.

Director Biancardi mentioned a couple of other issues regarding recharge and indicating that the cannabis farmers and others are concerned about the withdrawal rates and how to handle it. She also mentions that RCAC (Rural Communities Assistance Corporation) had a call which she had many water masters on it. Water masters are private businesses that do well work in the Anza/Aguanga area. Director Battiato indicated that there was still a lot of information to gather and much of that was at the County level and possibly even at the State level that needed to be collected with AD Neugebauer mentioning that if the wells are permitted, there is additional information to be gathered there.

President Corona asked Director Biancardi to circle back with her to discuss that more information was necessary to be gathered before calling any other partners or people to make sure TEAM RCD had the needed information to enable TEAM RCD to narrow the focus and be more informed before going on a call. Director Biancardi said that she would be reaching out to the RCA. No further discussion and no motion necessary.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

### **Item 1: Update on Homeless Task Force.**

Director Parkes reports that there is some small, single person activity reported at the Temecula Creek Channel. He has reported this activity to the homeless coordinator for Temecula. Director Parkes reports in regards to the homeless task force in Lake Elsinore that he received an email from Nicole Daley that they are one of the group of cities and organizations that are being honored in October for the work that they have done in Project Homekey. Specifics on how they are being honored and what it means is still being developed. It is quite an accomplishment for them as they are a very dedicated group of people. No motion necessary.

**Item 2: Update and discussion on AEIP and CropSwap reports.**

Director Battiato reports that due to the rootstock replacement our audits have gone through the roof. We are now issuing dates by which the water audits need to be completed and the conversion reports handed in. Director Battiato was also informed that USDA has some programs which will reimburse homeowners who decide to chip their trees that they are pulling out instead of leaving them in a pile or throwing them away. The program renews in October and they can contact Bob Hewitt. Director Battiato is providing Mr. Hewitt's contact information to the CropSwap and AEIP participants. No motion necessary.

**Item 3: Update on Anza/Aguanga area.**

Director Biancardi reports that some high school students in the area have reached out with an interest to do some quick clean ups of the area. She will provide an update if anything develops. President Corona notes that she will check with Melissa Cushman as to what TEAM's liability would be if any for young students. No motion necessary.

**Item 4: Update on Board policy updates.**

Associate Director Neugebauer has no new update. General discussion in regards to current policies beingsomewhat vague and outdated. No motion necessary.

**Item 5: Update and discussion of the TEAMRCD website progress.**

Director Battiato reports the Streamline platform that powers the new website has been put in place. It requires formatting, design and all documents moved over prior to going live. Director Battiao makes a motion to have Office Manager Deborah Getty be reimbursed from the website grant money and go ahead and begin moving everything over to the new platform. President Corona seconds. **Motion passed unanimously 4-0**

**VII. ORAL/WITTEN REPORTS**

**DIRECTOR REPORTS**

None

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR REPORTS**

None

**VIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, President Corona made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Battiato seconded. **Motion passed unanimously 4-0.** Meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.



**Secretary/Treasurer**