

MINUTES

Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta Resource Conservation District

Regular Board Meeting

Thursday, October 13, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

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), Newt Parkes (Secretary-Treasurer), Randy Feeney (Director), Teri Biancardi (Director), Pablo Bryant-(Director)

Directors Absent-None

Associate Directors Present: None

Associate Directors Absent: Rick Neugebauer

Office Manager: Darlene Gilbert-Present

Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCS)

District Counsel: Melissa Cushman-Absent

Guest Speakers: Lindsey Sisti and Brian Ambrose-Murrieta Special Service and Homeless Task Force Coordinator

Guest: Sebastian Valente

Approval of Agenda

President Corona asks for a motion to approve the agenda and minutes with one exception, Item 2a in Action items-Review of Audit be removed since the incorrect audit was scanned and put in the packet. President Corona apologized and noted that the audit will be in the packet at the next meeting. Director Biancardi seconded. With no further discussion, President Corona calls for a vote. Unanimous vote-5-0.

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Discussion and potential update for Regional RCD meeting**-President Corona noted that she had spoken with Executive Director Mandy Parkes about a variety of options for the Regional Meeting however, it appeared that due to a variety of reasons (booking space, costs) it appeared that it might be better to wait to have such a large meeting until 2023. President Corona asked the Board if that worked for them and basically everyone agreed it would be best to wait. No motion necessary.

2. **Discussion and potential approval of updated pricing for Crop/Swap/AEIP to Rancho Water District**-President Corona reported on a conference call that had taken place with Justin Haessley and Kyle Jeffries of the Rancho California Water District regarding updating pricing for the New Year due to inflation and the fact that no increases had been seen in billing to Rancho Water since 2015. Justin Haessley mentioned that since Lance Anderson had left, they were not getting any GIS information and would like to see that happen since it meant that they had to do more work. Along with a couple of other suggestions, President Corona noted that she would discuss their concerns with Mission and make sure they were receiving the information in the format that RCWD needed. RCWD also voiced concerns about making sure that TEAM had enough people to do the audits etc. to which Ms. Corona responded that she would like to see SAWA be a backup for the audit and CropSwap programs since they are very familiar with GIS and reporting in case additional staff was needed. RCWD noted that this would be a good idea and that they wanted to put together a scope of work first. The only other issue that needs to be addressed is the timing. RCWD would prefer to wait until their fiscal year end and TEAM RCD needs to have it addressed by the first of the year.-No Motion Necessary.

3. **Discussion and Potential approval of new associate Director-Randy Feeney**-Director Feeney asked that the Board consider appointing Sebastian Valente as an Associate Director to the Board and made a motion to do so. The motion was seconded by Newt Parkes subject to Discussion. President Corona opened the discussion and asked Mr. Valente if he would like to speak on his own behalf. Mr. Valente noted that he had been coming to the meetings for around 8 months and has found them very interesting. He said he was a property owner in the area and he owns a farm with animals and raises horses. He also has a c-57 well drillers license and is also a realtor dealing with buying and selling most all the areas in the District which gives him a rounded perspective. He lives in the Sage area and has been there since 1982.

Director Parkes asked if there was a time limit for an Associate Director and President Corona noted that historically there has not been because Associate Director's don't have a vote on the Board. They simply volunteer and provide welcomed expertise and their time. Director Biancardi asked what his conservation concerns or interest were. Mr. Valente answered that his primary interests were with land and water usage and particularly with people who have wells and how they use their water with those wells. He is particularly fond of nature and preserving that kind of habitat and since he has Tualota Creek going through his property he is particularly sensitive to the protection of Watersheds and trespassers who dump all sorts of things in the Creek.

He also mentioned that he had attended the Sage community meeting and many of the attendees were discussing contamination and much of the stuff in the watershed that goes on with the illegal marijuana operations. He had mentioned the Cal-Recycle grants that TEAM RCD was involved in but said that no one had heard about the program and that he was thinking of

getting together with Director Biancardi who is in charge of the Cal-Recycle grant in her area to get that information to this particular group. After further discussion, President Corona asked if anyone else had any further questions and called for the vote. Motion passed unanimously 5-0

4. **Update and Discussion on CD rates -Newt Parkes** – Director Parkes reported on the most recent rate opportunities since the CD's were due to mature. At this time the 12 month CD was going at an interest rate of 2.46% but a 6 month CD was going at 3.13%. This would give TEAM RCD more interest and also provide time in March to review the rates in case they had increased. The Board was in agreement with this recommendation.
5. **Update on AB 1902 and AB1776**-President Corona noted that AB 1902 and AB 1776 had passed the state legislature and had been signed by Governor Newsom. She noted particular interest for TEAM RCD, is that now it would be possible to obtain funds to build capacity for TEAM RCD. This was solely a report for the benefit of the Board and President Corona noted that when she had more information on how AB1902 was going to be implemented she would report back.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Update and outline of duties for shared employee with IERCD**-President Corona simply noted that the employee sharing agreement had been signed and the new employee will be starting next month.
2. **Update on Participation in the San Diego Ag Planning Program**- President Corona informed the Board that the San Diego area had put together their Ag Planning Program and had asked her to attend their first meeting in order that she could discuss the CropSwap and Rootstock programs since San Diego area was considering the potential of adopting these programs in their area. The meeting went well with a lot of enthusiasm for the projects but there were also questions, specifically as to grant monies, acquiring them and procedure to implement the program that President Corona deferred to the knowledge and expertise of Rancho Water. The goal and intention, if implemented, would be to expand the program from just the Temecula area to Greater San Diego and thus, hope that with that kind of expansion more grant funds would be available. The next meeting is November 9, via Zoom, and Rancho Water will be on the call doing a presentation.

Director Biancardi noted that President Corona had mentioned a back up to the Crop/Swap program as far as having enough auditors to fill the gap if we get a lot of requests. President Corona responded that this was the reason why she has reached out to SAWA to see their potential to provide more auditors just in case Mission does not have available time or staff and indicated that she had spoken to SAWA and they don't foresee an issue with it.

3. **Discussion and potential collaboration for Pollinator Habitat Program** – President Corona introduced Paul Greive with the Farm on Washington U-Pick who had reached out to TEAM RCD to potentially be the administrator of funds for a Grant from California Dept. of Food and Ag (CDFA) called the Pollinator Habitat Program. After briefly giving his background, Mr. Greive went on to talk about his program and the desire to build a 30 acre regenerative farm in West Murrieta. He noted that they have put about 1.4 million into the property and they are looking to expand it with this grant. Their budget is around \$750,000 and he passed out further

information to the Board Directors. Mr. Grieve proceeded to note that the real vision to reconnect the younger generation to food and farming since that seems to be getting lost in today's world.

Director Bryant asked what exactly is the difference between regenerative farming and traditional farming. Mr. Grieve noted that "it's a new term to explain a very old idea. The idea is you could have degenerative agriculture and this (is) horrible for the environment, pollutes, has a lot of runoff and wastes. You could have sustainable agriculture which is like never getting any better or never getting worse. Regenerative is the idea that each year, the soil is getting healthier through the way that we're managing the land and the animals." Director Bryant also asked what it cost compared to breakeven farming? Mr. Grieve stated that it is traditionally very expensive due to the middlemen, picking, packing and distribution and they think that by having a U-Pick they can bring really affordable organic produce to the public. In essence cutting out a lot of the steps in between. He feels there is a real opportunity for a U-Pick in the Temecula Valley.

Mr. Grieve went on to say they have a grant writer already and they just need an approved organization to manage the funds for CDFA. Director Corona proceeded to remind the Board that since TEAM has no staff, it would be more than likely that they would have to hire an outside person or partner with another RCD. Mr. Grieve noted that this is their first grant and President Corona noted that she wanted to be cautious and not step on any "landmines" that may be out there pointing out the "Clawback" clause in the grant that could trigger audits and returning funds if TEAM did not meet its obligations and due diligence is key.

Mr. Grieve proceeded to add that they want to have 30 acres under management with one acre under test. After briefly discussing grant deadlines, potential scenarios on what could make the grant more difficult for TEAM to administer due to the constraints of administrative costs using outside consultants and cost overrun potential. Director Biancardi asked how we would make a risk assessment. President Corona said she would send out a pro/con sheet that was prepared by Dr. Brian Brady from SAWA, she would contact IERCD to see if there was potential of employee sharing and information sharing. Director Biancardi spoke about having a decision made during the meeting so Mr. Grieve could move forward with the option of if there were issues later we had the option to pull out. President Corona asked if there was a drop dead time for their grant writer. Mr. Grieve responded that he wasn't sure. He also indicated that if TEAM RCD was not going to go ahead that they could not go forward.

After further discussion, it was determined that more information was needed in order for the Board to make a more informed decision regarding going forward with the grant and that the calling of a Special Meeting would be necessary. President Corona explained to the Board the necessary people she would need to speak to and the procedures necessary for posting the special meeting. It was decided that the following Thursday would be the best time to hold the special meeting for further discussion. Director Bryant made the motion and Randy Feeney seconded. Motion passed-Unanimous: 5-0

OLD BUSINESS

- 1. Homeless Monitoring-Newt Parkes**-Director Parkes proceeded to speak to the three different project sites we continue to have issues with. Tualota Creek although formerly an issue seems to have receded and at the moment there are no homeless that have been

encamped there, however, the other two sites that have tended to be persistent are the Temecula Creek 159 and the Santa Gertrudis channel . There is a medium level of activity and Director Parkes continues to report to Michael Wooten in charge of the Homeless Task Force in Temecula when our crews spot encampments. He said he has gotten a response from them saying they are aware of it but are figuring out exactly how they're going to deal with it.

Also, the Lake Elsinore Task Force has a new leader named Shannon Buckley. It appears she will have an assistant and their next meeting will be October 27th at which time they will hopefully find out how Nicole's absence will be filled. In Chino, they are starting a task force as a result of the tour and experience at the Anchor of Lake Elsinore. No motion necessary, just a report on the homeless monitoring.

2. **SAWA Report**-Director Neugebauer is absent so no report this meeting

3. **Update on AEIP and Crop SWAP**- Director Feeney reported that 28 AEIP applicants that showed interest in the program. Of those 28, eleven did not even follow through with doing a pre-audit. Of the remaining 17 we had 11 that did the pre audit and completed it. There are six still open. Out of those 11, at this point 2 have completed the post-audit and are waiting for reimbursement. In the CropSWAP program we got 14 that showed interest, 8 of which have had the pre-audit done and of those, 6 have had the post audit that are waiting for reimbursement. That leaves only 2 more people to do the post audit and there are a couple who have recently signed up. So that program is moving along really well.

4. **Update, Discussion and potential approval on current progress on Cal-Recycle grants and potential submission of applications and report on Anza/Aguanga area**-Director Biancardi had nothing to report

5. **Update on Flood Control Santa Margarita Outreach Program**-Director Bryant reported that the clean up in the watershed was very successful. The fill one 40 yard box to the top and they had a handful of turnout from the public. They also had the SAWA crew for six days. Director Pablo was very pleased and felt it went really well.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Brian Ambrose, Director of Community Services, City of Murrieta and Lindsey Sisti Management Analyst – Homeless Services, City of Murrieta-Mr. Ambrose started out the conversation of discussing the topic today of homelessness in Murrieta and he was going to also discuss what they are doing in Southwest Riverside County in regards to the same. He also introduced Ms. Sisti who will also be giving a brief presentation on her role in the role she plays with the Homeless situation in Murrieta. He noted that although she has only been with the dept about 6 months she has 20 years of experience at Riverside County and were fortunate to get her to come over to Murrieta to be a part of their success.

As he started his presentation, Mr. Ambrose gave several examples as to why California has a disproportionate or lion's share of the national homeless population. He noted that 25% of all the homeless in America, live in California. One reason is the weather. One is the incredible lax laws compared to the rest of the US. We've always had drugs through the 60's and 70s and up through today

although the drugs are getting much stronger in potency than they used to be. But another reason is also the breakdown of support structure within the family and society of the drug addicted. Mr. Ambrose mentioned that if anyone at the table or in the conference room had lost their job, for example, it is pretty certain that most would have a family member or friend that would take them in until they got back on their feet. However, many of the drug addicted, especially the young, have no support structure to fall back on and therefore have nowhere to go. According to Mr. Ambrose, "many have already burned a bridge with their parents or their parents aren't even together, if they even know who or where their parents are. They don't have the schooling because that's not important anymore because you are just trying to survive. When you lose that support structure, you have nowhere else to go so it becomes obvious that you live in a tent in Murrieta Creek. Also, economic factors such as the cost of living have an impact. In Murrieta right now, the median cost of a home is about \$660,000...what we are seeing, what that really impacts is the elderly population and seniors."

Mr. Ambrose estimate that what we may be seeing in the future for seniors will be cooperative home purchases since their social security check of \$1900.00 simply won't cover the expenses and they will be forced to "bulk up together" since living alone economically if you are on a fixed income might become impossible.

Although California will always have a disproportionate share of the homeless population, some cities homeless populations have already surpassed the entire population of just one city. For example, it is estimated that LA has 50-100,000 homeless people. That is the population of Murrieta. And as Mr. Ambrose says, you cannot case manage 100,000 people. You can't even find them to get them the proper help and resources. And when things get really dangerous, homeless move out further from the cities and urban areas into the suburbs. According to Ambrose, many also make a good living sitting on street corners and the overpass exits asking for money or panhandling.

He went on to say that in Murrieta, they respond quickly as soon as they hear about an encampment and usually, they can get into and speaking with the person who is having issues within 30 minutes. Their approach is not necessarily to arrest but to try and get them help. When about the third time of trying the homeless person denies services, that is when the police have to enforce the laws.

Murrieta offers a myriad of service which include services(drug, alcohol) housing, drug counseling transportation to different facilities or homes of those who are willing to take them in. They often see people living out of their cars and especially with children. He mentioned that people even set up in storm drains which can be dangerous if we get flash floods. This puts public works and first responders at risk since often they will basically block off, using plywood, bedrooms and other living areas that'll stop the water.

IN 2016 the Regional Homeless Alliance was started in cooperation with City of Temecula. At the time an issue with all cities were having a shared problem of moving the homeless from city to city. They would be moved out of one city and the homeless would migrate to the next city. They called it "squeezing the balloon". Nothing got accomplished except moving these people back and forth from city to city. So nothing was achieved. So City of Murrieta and Temecula decided to take another approach. They made a top 10 list of the top 10 homeless in each city and they came to find out that they were the same people so they started taking a more active roll in defining their issues and how they can get off drugs or get off the street. They were then joined by the City of Menifee, Lake Elsinore and Wildomar

and began working on homelessness as a regional issue. They meet on a quarterly basis with all of the police departments and communication between all police has been streamlined.

In addition, Congressman Ken Calvert managed to obtain \$500,000.00 for a directed spending program that was awarded to the regional homeless alliance. The monies are starting to be spent and a luncheon is scheduled to ask other cities if they wish to join. And in this meeting, they are hoping to get all cities interested to put some money in so everyone has skin in the game and have an action plan. Since 2017 to 2022 the homeless population in the five city region has gone down by 40% point in time count.

Ambrose continue to inform the board that they have two different police department teams, Community Policing TEAM that cover the quality of life issues like probation, parole, compliance checks and homeless. When a homeless encampment needs to be entered, this group goes with them to clear scenes, make sure no one has weapons etc. and they are specially trained. They have sympathy and empathy for homeless individuals and they're not going to arrest everybody that they come in contact with. The second team is the CBAT which stands for Community Behavioral Health Assessment Team which help with a clinical social worker who's specially trained in mental health or disorders. The clinician rides with the officers and then when upon the command scene the clinician takes control of the scene. Law enforcement stays close in case any issues arise but it allows the clinician to have the opportunity to speak to the homeless person to try to identify their mental or health issues. Mr. Ambrose summarized his presentation noting that they have had much success but they still have a long way to go. At this point Mr. Ambrose turned over the presentation to Ms. Lindsey Sisti.

Ms. Sisti presented that she has new homeless people coming into the city and stated that "If you don't go out and engage them and offer services right away, they are going to stick around for a long time and stay on the streets." She reviewed with the Board what an average day is for her. In particular she works really closely with the two man full time street outreach known as City Net.

She gave an example of what a normal morning is like and gave an example of a homeless person she's been working with for two months. That day started out working toward getting help for a 29 year old schizophrenic and the goal to get him back on his medication. She explained that she would walk over to the library where he is every single day and says hello. He tells her basically to go away. He then started coming into city hall asking for her so in the last two or three weeks she has gotten him into the mental health clinician and he's back on his meds. He even showed up for his appointment for them to take him to. They got him to Temecula Mental Health. After his appointment he wanted to talk about housing. She stated that they are finally making progress but this was a long engagement.

Her day continued with a call from the PD about somebody sleeping in a ravine in a neighborhood off of Clinton Keith, helping a 65 year old female senior that had been sleeping behind a local business for about three months, and a couple that had come out from Kansas City who was coming out to stay with family but that didn't work out. They had a friend up north that would help but no money to pay for a way to get there. So they are trying to find a place for them. She mentioned that they have a shelter that they work with Project Touch where they have between 21 or 22 people there a night and with assistance, they hope to see each person ideally exit within 30 days.

Although they say they have 12 Homeless people they know they definitely have more. She reviewed data that included number of homeless, drug detox and treatment and countywide services that they

have and what they estimate but it is difficult to pin down the exact number of homeless because they are always on the move. They don't only use their own shelters but there also shelters in Hemet, Coachella Valley and Riverside. She mentioned the that they have drug issues specifically meth in the area and fentanyl is really sinking in and they have a robust system for detox and treatment.

There are many who have animals and they have created a partnership with Animal Friends of the Valley to try to alleviate the concerns of dog owners who cannot take their animals into rehab with them.

The citizenry also reports regularly on everything and alerts the task force immediately and therefore things don't sit very long in Murrieta. There is an area known as the Murrieta Mingle that seems to be where a lot of homeless want to go. They did get 32 cleanups since May and so that has been a success. After summary, Ms. Sisti asked for questions. Director Parkes commended the work they were doing and President Corona asked if there was specific housing for people with children. Ms. Sisti responded that they get a lot of families but they do provide a family with children their own room and they partner with DPSS and the school districts to identify those that may need assistance. Director Corona also asked about how they address Veterans and what resources were available for them. Ms. Sisti noted that there were several outlets and services for Veterans so that is a little easier and a ton of support for them.

Ms. Sisti wrapped up the presentation and President Corona offered help wherever TEAM RCD can be of assistance. At that point the President asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Parkes moved to adjourn, Pablo Bryan seconded. Motion approved 5-0.

Meeting ended at 5:31pm.

Director Parkes

11/10/22