

MINUTES

Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta Resource Conservation District

Special Board Meeting

Friday, October 28, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

Truax Building

41923 Second Street, Fourth Floor

Temecula, CA 92590

I. PRELIMINARY FUNCTIONS

Call to Order: 1:00 p.m. meeting recorded by Rose Corona

Flag Salute

Roll Call/Establish a Quorum

Directors Present: Rose Corona (President), Randy Feeney (Director), Teri Biancardi (Director), Pablo Bryant-(Director)

Directors Absent-Newt Parkes

Associate Directors Present: Sebastian Valente

Associate Directors Absent: Rick Neugebauer

Office Manager: Darlene Gilbert-Present

Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCS)

District Counsel: Melissa Cushman-Absent

Guest Speakers: Brian Brady-Executive Director-SAWA and Mandy Parkes-Executive Director Inland Empire RCD

Guest: Paul Greive-Farm on Washington

Approval of Agenda

President Corona made a motion to approve the agenda of one item which is to have a discussion and potential approval of the Pollinator Grant program Director Feeney seconded. With no further discussion, President Corona calls for a vote. Unanimous vote-4-0.

President Corona notes that at the last meeting the Board needed more information in order to make an informed decision. A handout is provided to the Board. She introduces Brian Brady of SAWA who will be giving the presentation and Mandy Parkes is available for specific questions or cost verifications in

regards to the handout and the Power Point. Mr. Brandy notes that at the last meeting there were some questions and cost issues that will hopefully be addressed today. Some of the goals were to clarify the requirements or potential needs while recognizing that TEAM RCD is all volunteer and has no staff.

First Mr. Brady addressed front loaded costs. He reminded the Board that there are specific accounting requirements and not just a bookkeeper should be hired to watch and administrate the monies from CDFA. He said that for SAWA they have a CPA that does all their accounting and they pay a couple hundred bucks an hour for that kind of professionalism necessary to do these kinds of grants correctly. There are probably 65 hours through the first year because TEAM may have to get specific accounting software etc. And these costs are without the costs of potential auditing and that would be additional. The estimated costs would be around \$29,000.

The project manager may go up to about 250 hours that would include reviewing the grant, set up work plans, working with the attorney on CDFA and farming agreements, initiation of on farm project consistent with grant requirements, document collection, quarterly project reporting, development of fuel tools, methods for metrics, ongoing project management and administration. That would ultimately end up to be around \$35,000 or approximately \$140.00 per hour. The equivalent at SAWA Mr. Brady noted was \$148.00 per hour. Legal was estimated at around \$10,000 for having an attorney look at all of this, review and execute agreements with the farming operation, deal with any other area and making sure that if volunteer matching is involved that it is all squared away in advance. He also included \$6500.00 for equipment that TEAM might have to purchase and a contingency of around 10% with significant unknowns and costs. So, the total was over \$88,000 in general. This also didn't include mileage. Mr. Brady noted that Ms. Parkes and he agreed that this was a conservative estimate but not concrete. He also mentioned that there may be other alternative and asked Ms. Parkes to speak to that.

Ms. Parkes spoke about the Urban Ag grant which is promoted by NACD to build RCD capacity. There is a \$50,000 cap on it and also mentioned the NRCS grants that have no cap. She spoke to the fact that NRCS is always looking for projects and might be a better fit for future projects. Ultimately TEAM could develop an employee that would not cost \$140.00 an hour and continue to build up staff over time.

Director Bryant spoke to the point that the Board needed to be able to capacity build in order to help people so that each time things that come up like what the Board was currently discussing it can be an earlier decision so he felt it was important that the Board build capacity as soon as they can. Ms. Parkes reiterated that although the grant itself would not be announced in November and she believed that it wasn't going to have a due date until February or March. Director Biancardi was concerned that the numbers appeared to be extremely high however Ms. Parkes noted that she had talked to her accounting partner, their attorney and also checked on the consultant position that would be necessary to accurately and effectively meet the requirements for a grant with the CDFA. Ms. Parkes also noted that she was worried about the time restrictions to get this grant done. Although there may be other partners available, she did not feel there was enough time to get all the necessary parts together before submission and her secondary concern was that being such a small district with no tax base, it might prove difficult to absorb unforeseen costs.

After some continued conversation regarding the NRCS and conservation plan for the Farm on Washington, Director Biancardi noted that Bob Dunkle from NRCS had already been out to the farm was putting together a conservation plan.

After discussion about costs that might be off, there was a back and forth regarding expanding the amount of the grant to \$600,000 rather than the \$400,000 that Mr. Parkes had originally used as a base. Ms. Parkes said that she had gone through the entire grant and listed everything that TEAM or their consultant would have to do in order to meet the requirements.

Director Bryant spoke saying that if the \$600,000 instead of the \$400,000 then he would like to see the Board go forward based on the fact that there was a contingency. Director Feeney noted that compared to where the Board had come from, the Board had made tremendous strides and maybe in a year or two we could be doing even better. Director Bryant felt the comment was irrelevant and insisted that the past was not important but that it was important to build capacity and do it as soon as possible. Director Feeney disagreed and noted that the Board could not just say they were going to do things without asking the question "Are we capable of doing this?" President Corona ask AD Valente if he had anything he wished to add.

AD Valente noted that he heard what everyone was saying and he was onboard with having the infrastructure that allowed the Board to be more proactive and the program that Ms. Parkes was suggesting to hep build capacity. However, he felt that having to deal with things at the last minute puts a lot of pressure on the Board to make a quick decision without the full costs and facts. He reminded everyone that they all have a fiscal responsibility to look after the District and it was important how we deal with it. He said he didn't feel the District should go forward without a solid foundation. He said fundamentally he liked the program but he did not want the Board to be in a situation where they might be underwater.

Paul Grieve, representing the Farm on Washington, wanted to re-submit numbers to the Board at \$600,000 and projected that this would leave around \$34,000 for contingency. Director Biancardi offered that she had a higher appetite for risk and thought the Board could make this work but she was not hearing that there was consensus. But she suggested that the Board vote to move forward on setting up the pollinator habitat grant. President Corona asked if that was a motion. Director Biancardi wanted to make it two motions, one for the NACD Grant and one for the Pollinator Grant. President Corona asked two separate motions. Director Biancardi moved to go forward on the NACD grant which would build capacity for TEAM RCD and was due to be announced in November. Seconded by Director Bryant. With no further discussion, the President asked for a roll call vote. Director Biancardi-Aye, Director Bryant-Aye, Director Corona-Aye, Director Feeney-Aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Director Biancardi then made a motion to move forward on the Pollinator Habitat Grant. Director Bryant seconded. President Corona asked for a roll call vote. Director Biancardi-Aye, Director Bryant-Aye, Director Corona- No, Director Feeney-No. Motion did not pass, due to a lack of a majority.

Representative Greive wished to discuss further however the President reminded him that the vote had been taken and there was no further discussion. With the special meeting business completed, President Corona asked for a motion to adjourn. Director Bryant made the motion. Seconded by Randy Feeney. Motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Meeting ended-1:38 p.m.

