



**Petroleum County Conservation District**

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*Local Common Sense Conservation*

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**Jay King** – *Chairman*, **Brenda Brady**, *Vice-Chairman & MSCA*,  
**Laura Kiehl** – *Treasurer & MRCDC*, **Ralph Corbett** – *Urban Supervisor*, **Rodney Rowton** – *Rural Supervisor*, **Butch Arthur** – *Urban Supervisor*, **Nathan Descheemaeker** – *Supervisor*

**March 27, 2024**

**Call to order:** Chair Jay King called the regular meeting of the Petroleum County Conservation District to order at 5:02pm. Those present were Jay King, Rodney Rowton, Brenda Brady, Laura Kiehl and Nate Descheemaeker (virtual). Others present in person were Reba Ahlgren, NRCS; Brent Smith, CEMIST; Katie Lund, PCCD Fiscal Manager, and Trish Smith, PCCD Administrator. Others in attendance virtually were Therese Hartman, MSGOT; and Veronica Grigaltchik, DNRC CD Specialist. Ralph Corbett and Butch Arthur were absent.

**Approval of Absences:** Trish will find the Board Supervisor Folder. It will need to be updated with "Approval of Absences" verbiage.

**Approval of Minutes:** Laura Kiehl moved to approve the February 28, 2024 regular board meeting minutes; Rodney Rowton seconded. Motion passed.

**Guest/Public Comment:** None.

**Partner Reports:**

**MRCDC:** Trish gave brief overview of the last MRCDC meeting and Laura Kiehl discussed updates on the CMR Community Working Group, and her thoughts on a future "Devil's Kitchen" project.

**MWC:** Rodney stated that the next MWC meeting is April 9<sup>th</sup> and he plans to go if the weather is good.

**MSGOT:** No report.

**MSU Extension:** No report.

**DNRC:** Veronica stated that the education grants are on a rolling deadline but will be closing soon for fiscal year 2024, and fiscal year 2025 will be opening for summer/fall Workshops. Fiscal year 2025 CDAs open May 1<sup>st</sup>; closing June 30. Looking at having a multiyear CDA that will just need to be amended every year. CDA Fiscal year 2024 2<sup>nd</sup> round cycle is currently being routed; PCCD is getting \$20K. The CD trust account is accumulating, but not very fast, so limited what the 2<sup>nd</sup> round CDAs could offer districts. The \$20K will also go towards the MACD dues that are due the end of June. The DNRC will be looking at all project grants April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Received three education grants. There was discussion on meeting Quorum and what all will affect Quorum; abstaining doesn't count towards quorum so need to keep that in mind for meetings.

**NRCS:** Reba stated that they are working on the current fiscal year 2024 preapproval and contracts. Three projects will be funded; two Forestry and one Sage Grouse. Getting field work done when the weather is nice. Scott Anderson is leaving the NRCS; last day is April 5. Hoping to fly a new Range Management Specialist position as soon as possible.

**Pheasants Forever:** No report.



**Winnett ACES:** Brenda stated that they are having their next quarterly meeting April 3<sup>rd</sup>. MTPFW will be attending and touring the Winnett area; showing western staff what is going on in the east. Desi Seal is now the fulltime ACES Conservation Program Manager. Doing strategic planning with the Conservation Committee. Jennifer Solf is the new Education & Outreach Coordinator. Kendall Wojcik is continuing as the Land Health Specialist.

**CEMIST:** Brent stated they had their Executive Council meeting this morning. Megan Hoyer, Yellowstone County Weed District, is excited to be stepping into the vacant position on the CEMIST executive council. Laura Nowlin is stepping down and Allison is replacing her position. April 11th will be testifying for the AIS grant. April 18th will be testifying for the CDB project grant. Discussed our budget, will project funding needs for the next two years, and might pull back on their ask for the CDB grant. Trish wrapped up the CEMIST website (CEMIST.org) and it has been published.

**BLM:** No report.

**Supervisor Reports:**

**Brenda Brady:** *Reimagining Rural* Project is coming up soon with Winnett ACES and the town of Winnett; water quality was discussed, and there is the idea of setting up a RO system water filling station in town. They have been receiving donations.

**Laura Kiehl:** There has been "beautification" discussion and the possibility of getting trees for the town of Winnett. This might be something the CD would like to be involved with.

**Ralph Corbett:** No report.

**Jay King:** No report.

**Rodney Rowton:** No report.

**Nate Descheemaeker:** No report.

**Butch Arthur:** No report.

**Old Business:**

**A. MSGOT Lease Contracts:** Therese discussed the current updated contracts and the next steps in the process. She still needs to route the contracts for signatures and still needs to go through the NEPA process, do another scoping, and there is a two-week comment period; minimum of 4-5 weeks. Trish does not need to do range monitoring/site visits until 2025. Therese will look at the photo points and make sure they are all still the same. There was discussion on the percent of invasives, and Therese will look to see if that verbiage has been updated on the site visit forms. Jay discussed the landowner/CD lease contracts that we are working on. Brenda Brady moved to sign the Gran Prairie MSGOT Grant contract once they are put out for signature; Rodney Rowton seconded. Motion passed. Laura Kiehl moved to sign the Shultz Ranch MSGOT Grant contract once they are put out for signature; Brenda Brady seconded. Motion passed. Rodney Rowton moved to sign the Haywire MSGOT Grant contract once they are put out for signature, Laura Kiehl seconded. Motion passed. Therese stated that they will need to get our completed landowner/CD lease contracts before moving forward if there will be any changes; but the board stated there will not be any changes. Trish asked about the "credits" box in the lease contracts, and Therese stated that she can get Trish that information. Therese will send the updated



grant contracts to the CD. We will hold a special meeting April 10<sup>th</sup> at 1pm to approve CD/landowner leases.

B. **McDonald Irrigation:** No updates, so Trish will send WWC an email asking for an update.

C. **Fuels Mitigation Program:** Trish stated that she applied for the BLM grant, and had help from FCD and LMCD during the process; will be a few months before we know anything more.

D. **CDA Grant** – Katie stated that we will need to figure out where the \$20K is going; discussion had been about increasing wages, health insurance stipend, and going towards an audit; the primary purpose was for an employee wage increase. The audit is now taken care of with the audit grant. If doing a health stipend, it has to be for all employees, so CEMIST and MRCDC will have to adjust their budgets to plan for that in the future. Discussed the percentage added on top of grants so we can start accruing a fund for future *contracting services* that could include an audit. Katie stated that we can put this in a savings (knowing what it is for) but we do not have to specify what it is for so if it can be used for other expenses in the future. Jay stated that wage and hour increases would be good use of the funds, since we only received half of what we asked for, but need to still discuss health insurance stipend in the future and get the ball rolling on conversations with other employees (MRCDC & CEMIST) adjusting their future budgets to reflect a health stipend.

E. **Template Regarding Resolution** - No update.

#### **New Business:**

A. **310 Updates** – The board reviewed the Twin Creeks Farm & Ranch 310 application. Brenda Brady moved to approve the Twin Creeks Farm & Ranch 310 permit; Rod Rowton seconded. Motion passed.

B. **MACD Dues Invoice** – Discussed where funds should come out of and possibly allocating more to the dues in the future. Rodney Rowton moved to table approving the MACD Dues Invoice until next month and move this new business item to old business; Brenda Brady seconded. Motion passed.

C. **BLM Sage Grouse Conservation Plans**– Brenda stated that we might want to send a comment letter before the deadline. Nate discussed the BLM Sage Grouse Conservation Plan document and gave an overview of what is included. Will move to old business.

D. **Grant Training** – Brenda discussed that we need to think about budgeting for Trish to attend continuing grant training, if the opportunity arises, so she is able to attend future grant training workshops. Trish stated that there will future grant training opportunities through MCDEO and MACD.

E. **Annual/Sick Leave Accrual**– Katie went over the annual/sick leave accrual sheet, and stated that the calculation was wrong and it has been computing annual and sick leave incorrectly. She has adjusted the calculation. Rodney Rowton moved to make the adjustment for annual and sick leave calculations as of March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024; Brenda Brady seconded. Motion passed.

F. **Audit Expenses Grant** – Veronica discussed the audit grant that the CD just received. Brenda Brady moved to accept the RD-PCCD-723 grant for audit expenses; Rodney Rowton seconded. Motion passed.

#### **Administrative:**

**A. Grant & District Updates** – The board looked over the March Admin monthly report and Trish highlighted a few items and discussed the upcoming spring workshops and Ladies Day on the Range event.

**Financial:**

**1. Petroleum CD:** Rodney Rowton moved to pay the PCCD unpaid bills; Brenda Brady seconded. Motion passed.

**2. Missouri River CD Council:** Brenda Brady moved to pay the MRCDC unpaid bills; Rodney Rowton seconded. Motion passed.

**Correspondence:** Looked over the Bridger Plant Donation form; will add to the April agenda to be approved.

**Announcements:**

A. Next Special Board Meeting: Wednesday, April 10, 2024. Next Regular Board meeting: Wednesday, April 24, 5pm, PCCD Office.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 7:29pm

  
Jay King, Chair

  
Trish J. Smith, District Administrator