

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY
WATER QUALITY PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
Hybrid - Zoom
January 24, 2023

Members Present

Diana Hammer
Patrick Johnson, Chair
Lisa Kaufman
Edward Kerins
Ryan Leland (5:55pm-6:40pm)
Comm. Tom Rolfe (arrived 5:45pm)
Jeff Ryan (left 6:05pm)

Staff

Jennifer McBroom
Joel Ebert
Madeline McKeefry
Kathy Moore
Dawn Sullivan
Drenda Niemann
Angelique Frier, BSWC

Members Absent

Judy Leland
David Nimick

Guests Present

Patrick Johnson, Chair, called the 265th meeting of the Lewis and Clark County Water Quality Protection District (WQPD) Board of Directors (Board) to order at 5:31 p.m. A quorum was established. Introductions of Board members and WQPD staff were made.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

There were no changes made to the agenda.

MINUTES

No changes were made to the December 6, 2022 minutes. Mr. Ryan moved to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0.

VULK CONSERVATION CENTER

Mr. Ryan presented to the Board about the Vulk property. The family is willing to give the Conservation District an easement to turn the 20-acre property into an educational center for the public, including perhaps an exhibit center and experimental agricultural practice. They are hoping this will be done by June. The Conservation District would like it to be a partnership.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT FUNDING

Mr. Ryan presented on legislative activities regarding funding for conservation districts. These have largely been funded through the mil, but recently smaller, rural districts have been getting funding through an administrative grant from the coal severance tax and that is running low. Conservation districts are hoping to supplement funding with SB28 using marijuana tax money. Additionally, there is LC1433 where they are hoping to get a separate section in the coal trust fund for conservation districts.

FINANCIALS QTR 2 FY23

Ms. McBroom presented the financials from the end of the second quarter of FY23. Fifty percent through our fiscal year, the WQPD has used 36.2% of projected personnel costs and 30% of projected expenditures. The WQPD has received 60% of projected total revenue for the year. The cash available at the end of the second quarter was \$385,450.

REVIEW OF BY-LAWS

The Board continued their review of the by-laws. The suggested changes that had been discussed at the December meeting were presented in written format and were further reviewed. All of the amendments were accepted. A question was raised regarding adding terms of office to the by-laws. It was decided to add this language. Recommended language will be added and sent to the Board via email within a week for review. The Board will then have an additional 20 days to review the amended by-laws and will vote on the final document at the February 28th board meeting.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMELINE

Ms. McBroom presented the Strategic Plan Facilitation scope of work and timeline to the Board. The contract is signed by the facilitator and will be signed by the Commission next week. The timeline includes a regular board meeting in February, March, and April. There will also be an additional strategic planning meeting in both March and April. The strategic plan will be finalized in May, aligning with the FY24 budget. The cost of \$5,600 will come out of the contracted services budget.

WATER CONSERVATION PLAN

Ms. Hammer discussed the opportunity to build upon the work of the City of Helena, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the WQPD regarding water usage and water resources to look into funding to create a comprehensive water master plan for the greater Helena area with regard to flooding, drought, and irrigation issues. Ms. Hammer suggested perhaps hiring a consultant via a Request for Proposal (RFP) to pull all of the information together and that maybe the WQPD could contribute to the cost (total of approximately \$80,000, WQPD contribution \$30,000-40,000). Ms. Moore asked if Ms. Hammer was envisioning a program that was primarily educational for the community. Ms. Moore suggested getting a group together to gather what the WQPD has and what is needed to run concurrently with the budget process. Mr. Johnson proposed that the Board make the project a part of the planning process.

WATERSHED UPDATE

From January through November, Angelique Frier will be working with the WQPD as a Big Sky Watershed Corps member. Angelique comes to us from Iowa. She has done two previous AmeriCorps service terms.

Mr. Ebert gave an update on the arsenic and uranium project. There were 300 kits distributed originally and there are 75 additional kits available. Results for 210-220 kits have been received. Nine kits were above the standard for arsenic, 8 above standard for uranium, and one above standard for both. There is money to grant \$300 toward treatment systems for those who are above the MCL. Two residents have received the reimbursements so far, which cover about half the cost of the system. The highest risk areas are in the Ten Mile and Missouri River/Causeway areas.

Ms. McBroom updated the Board on the vacant Hydrogeologist position. After two rounds of interviews, there were two strong candidates. A candidate had been hired and was set to begin on

February 1st. However, he backed out citing a website he visited that gave Helena very low safety ratings. The second candidate had already accepted another position. The position has been posted again.

BOARD MEMBER DISCUSSION

There was no additional Board member discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

Next meeting will be February 28, 2023, at 5:30pm

There being no public comment, the meeting adjourned at 7:26pm.