



CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Chair Pete Woll, called the May 24, 2021, Business meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the conference room.

Board members present: Pete Woll, Chair; John Ellis, Vice Chair; Lech Naumovich, Secretary/Treasurer; Donna Pridmore, Supervisor; Verdell Jackson, Supervisor; Scott Rumsey; being a quorum of the Board.

Also, in attendance were Hailey Graf, Ginger Kauffman, Samantha Tappenbeck, Flathead Conservation District (FCD) Staff; Fiona Handler, Big Sky Watershed AmeriCorps Member; Kody Coxen, Associate Supervisor; Gordon Ash; Associate Supervisor; Emily Harkness, Associate Supervisor.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda Item 1: Signature Authority

- Authorization for Hailey Graf to sign on behalf of Supervisors attending the meeting virtually.

Consent Agenda Item 2: Minutes

May 10, 2021 310-Meeting Minutes

Consent Agenda Item 3: Financial

The following bills were reviewed (Check Detail 5/12/2021)

1. Flathead Beacon \$528.00
2. Montana State Fund \$555.50
3. Montana State University Bozeman \$2,500.00
4. Mountain States Leasing \$7,998.65
5. University of Montana \$2,500.00

Lech Naumovich motioned “to approve the consent agenda.” Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one was present to comment on items not listed on the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

FCD Building Lease Agreement: Hailey Graf explained that the district’s current office lease with Mountain States Leasing - Kalispell will end June 13, 2021. The lease notes that Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) pays for 150 square feet, however, it was not clear what that square footage was for. Hailey drafted proposed changes to the lease removing the 150 square feet and adjusting the lease amount from \$1,599.73

to \$1,807.86. Caitlin Overland, County Attorney's office, reviewed and approved the changes. Hailey noted that the MOA/Cooperative Working Agreement with NRCS should also be updated to clarify shared spaces.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to approve the lease agree as presented." Verdell Jackson seconded. Lech Naumovich questioned square footage listed in the lease and noted that the math does not add up. Hailey will measure the district office space, and contact Mountain States Leasing, NRCS and FSA to get the correct footage the district should be paying for. This item will be placed on the June 10th meeting agenda. Donna Pridmore withdrew the motion and Verdell Jackson withdrew the second.

End of Month Budget Report (March 2021): Lech Naumovich presented the March 2021 End of Month Budget Report to the Board and noted that no issues were found.

Lech Naumovich motioned "to approve the March 2021 End of Month Budget Report as submitted." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Demonstration Garden Cost Estimate: Hailey Graf explained that landscape companies were contacted about building a path in the lawn alternatives area of the Demonstration Garden. Forestoration submitted a quote at \$3,409.30. Funding will come from the 2021/2022 fiscal year budget. Artwork for the interpretive sign has been contracted, designed, and will be printed and installed soon. The area will showcase lawn alternatives include stepables such as different mosses, creeping thyme, and micro-clover.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to approve the construction of the path for the lawn alternative demonstration area for up to \$3500.00." Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Trumbull Creek Budget Amendment: Hailey Graf explained that the cost estimate used for the grant application (done several years ago) is too low and does not reflect current pricing, creating a gap in grant funding to complete project. Hailey met with River Design Group (RDG) and Flathead County Road & Bridge to discuss the Birch Grove Road culverts which are acting as an impoundment. The original contact with RDG did not include funding for the design of Birch Grove Road, and Hailey proposed FCD fund the design from the Watersheds Other budget line. She noted that if FCD pays for design work, Flathead County Roads & Bridges will pay for material and construction. Supervisors supported the proposal and agreed that this is a valuable project which needs to be completed. Hailey provided a proposed contract amendment. Funding will come from the 2021/2022 fiscal year budget. Lech Naumovich suggested adding a line in the 2021/2022 fiscal year budget for additional work on Trumbull Creek.

Lech Naumovich "to approve the amended contract and proposal as submitted for the design of the Trumbull Creek project up to \$5,500.00." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Groundwater Investigation Support Letter: Hailey Graf provided a letter of support for a ground water investigation of high nitrates in the West Valley area. Flathead Basin Commission is applying for a grant through the Bureau of Mines and Reclamation.

Lech Naumovich motioned “to approve the letter of support.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Lech Naumovich noted that septic leachate studies can help in regional planning by identifying areas where pollutants are getting into the groundwater and the impacts, and Donna Pridmore suggested the district sponsor another event similar to the presentation Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology gave in 2016 on the Deep Aquifer and subsurface geology of the Flathead Valley at Flathead Valley Community College.

Flathead County Biosolids compost facility: Hailey Graf explained counties and municipalities will be receiving funds from the federal covid relief package for wastewater related projects. In a conversation with the City of Kalispell about what their needs are regarding wastewater Hailey learned one of their greatest needs has to do with the amount of biosolids that the treatment facility produces as the population grows. The cities of Kalispell and Columbia Falls stated that the most helpful project would be to help facilitate construction of a biosolids compost facility. Supervisors were agreeable and noted that it would be valuable to the community.

Donna Pridmore motioned “to have staff look into the idea of putting the biosolids compost facility idea into the workplan.” Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Pollinator Film Event Proposal: Hailey Graf explained that last year the district purchased rights to show the Pollinator film; however, the event was cancelled due to COVID-19. She stated that Kalispell Parks & Recreation is interested in partnering with the district to host an outdoor movie event at Woodland Park. Kalispell Parks & Recreation will cover the cost of insurance and the City would pay for permits.

Fiona Handler contacted screen companies, and a quote was received from a company that does screen set up, take down and will run the film at a cost of \$2495.00. Supervisors asked if the company could also add a microphone to the quote. Hailey proposed making this a community event, where other pollinator/conservation organizations could set up booths, host children’s activities, and food truck vendors could be invited. Supervisors voiced support and provided additional ideas for the event (partners, ticketing etc.)

Lech Naumovich motioned “to approve the Pollinator film event proposal for up to \$2700.00.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Youth Camp Sponsorship Request: Samantha Tappenbeck explained that a request for sponsorship to the Montana Youth Range Camp in the amount of \$250 was received.

Lech Naumovich motioned “to approve the Montana Youth Range Camp sponsorship for Nolan Rosenthal as proposed.” Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

FY21/22 Conservation Grant applications and funding: Supervisors were provided with copies of conservation grant applications, ranking sheets and recommendations. The Board reviewed Samantha's recommendations for funding applications and agreed that a contingency should be included. This will be added to the Fiscal Year 2021/2022 budget.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to approve the conservation grants as presented." Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Flathead CD Staff: Hailey Graf reported:

Office and Administration

310 –Ginger has processed nine new 310-Permit Applications, one Notice of Emergency, and one Complaint. She also processed minutes and is working on 310-permits and letters from the May 10th 310-meeting. Hailey attended onsite inspections and coordinated with landowners to provide the virtual meeting attendance information.

Ginger and Hailey also conducted 310 law outreach and education. They responded to landowner inquiries about 310 permits, provided information to contractors and consultants for the application process, and reviewed the 310-emergency procedure process with landowners.

Bookkeeping – Lech Naumovich & Ginger Kauffman reconciled the March banks statements on 4/23/2021, and Ginger compiled the March Financial documents. Ginger processed payroll on May 12th; the next payroll is May 26th. Federal & state tax reports and payments for May will be processed with the May 26th payroll. Ginger received the GIS Audit from County Finance and will begin to verify assessor numbers. The GIS audit is due back to County Finance by June 30th. The Audit will inform the County preliminary budget sheets, which Ginger has also received and are due back to County Finance by July 23rd. Ginger continues to process daily bookkeeping items such as invoices, credit card receipts, deposits, grant billing/vendor invoices etc.

District Office –Weekly staff meetings were held via Zoom, generally each Monday at 2 PM.

A special meeting was held on May 13th to discuss programmatic planning and budgeting. For this meeting, staff prepared proposals for the board to expand or improve programs and staffing resources for the district.

Hailey worked with Tim Birk and Spectrum to get new internet and phone service installed at the office.

Flathead River Erosion Study – In support of SJ28 Hailey testified to the Senate and the House Natural Resource Committees and coordinated with MACD and landowners for additional testimony. She also worked with Senator Blasdel and MACD to provide additional information for Legislative Council sessions on May 24th.

On-the-Ground Projects

Cow Creek Restoration Project – Hailey coordinated with project partners to finalize grant deliverables and complete monitoring. A project workday to do annual maintenance will be scheduled in early June. Final project wrap up and reporting will take place in June as the grant contract with DEQ will expire on June 30th.

Trumbull Creek – River Design Group has submitted a request for contract amendment to cover the cost of engineering services for the Birch Grove Road culvert replacement. If approved and FCD can cover the additional cost, Flathead County Roads and Bridges department can do the culvert replacement as match for the grant.

Montana Outdoor Legacy Foundation Revegetation Project – Fiona, Hailey, Samantha, and six volunteers planted as many plants as they could along the streambank. We focused on areas that were very eroded and in need of new vegetation. We plan on creating signs for the planting areas so people going along the river know that FCD planted the seedlings for restoration purposes. Since we did not get enough volunteers to plant all of the seedlings, we advertised the rest of the seedlings on Facebook and we're able to give them away to two landowners who wanted to plant native species for stream bank restoration on their properties.

Krause Creek Restoration Project – Funding for this project was released from the DNRC RRGL program in May. Hailey worked with DNRC contract managers to review and amend the contract. Once the signed copy is received from DRNC, Hailey will begin drafting a request for qualifications to hire a contractor to oversee project construction.

Hailey asked if any Supervisors were interested in being part of an ad-hoc committee – Pete Woll, Scott Rumsey, Donna Pridmore.

Demonstration Garden – Hailey coordinated with Flathead County Weed department to identify and spray weeds in the garden. She also met with Forestration to discuss construction of a lawn alternatives demonstration area. Hailey, Samantha, and Fiona worked did maintenance.

Programs

Conservation Grant Program – The application period for FY21/22 funding requests closed on April 30th. Thirteen applications were received and two were withdrawn. Samantha conducted site visits and consultations with applicants and compiled and reviewed application materials with recommendations to the board. Samantha also assisted with organizing a volunteer planting day and installation of seedlings for a FY20/21 project.

Education Grant Program – This program has a rolling deadline but closes during the month of June to close out the fiscal year. Samantha sent reminder information to open contract holder about final reporting. She also provided program information to a community/homeschool educator interested in applying.

College Scholarship Program – Seven scholarships were awarded in 2021. Samantha prepared award packets and coordinated with supervisors and high school guidance counselors on plans for award ceremonies at each school.

Watershed Support Program – One project has been funded to repair a leaking irrigation system and install riparian fencing along 1,200 feet of Ashley Creek. Samantha set up the contract and landowner agreement and coordinated with the landowner to get the contract package finalized. Fiona's application to the Montana Watershed Coordination Council Watershed Fund for match funding to cover the cost of riparian livestock fencing for this project was approved; She will oversee administration of this grant.

Pollinator Initiative – 25 people have signed up to participate in 2021. Samantha and Fiona conducted site visits with participants and created seed packets to distribute for seeding this spring (0.7 acres-worth distributed/allocated so far). Samantha and Fiona assisted with site preparation for a pollinator plot at the Flathead Electric solar facility. Fiona created seed packets using leftover 2020 seed.

Rain Garden Initiative – Fiona and Emilie drafted door hangers that were finalized and printed by Flathead Beacon Productions. Over the coming weeks, these will be distributed to target areas within the city limits of Kalispell to encourage homeowners to build a rain garden. Additionally, one funding request was received from a landowner in Columbia Falls.

Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program – This program is administered and managed by a BSWC Member with MACD but advertised at the local level through Flathead CD and Lake County CD. Samantha updated program information on the FCD website and FCD received several calls about the program.

Education and Outreach

Workshops and Events

- **Whitefish Legacy Partners 3rd grade virtual field trip:** Fiona and Samantha created and edited a video about water filtration in natural vs. urban systems and sent to partners for inclusion in a video about our watershed.
- **Rolling Rivers Trailer Presentation:** Samantha and Hailey presented to a 7th grade earth science class at Heritage Learning Center on 4/27.
- **Family Forestry Expo:** The Family Forestry Expo is now finished. Samantha and Hailey assisted in site preparation. Fiona created a scavenger hunt/walking tour map that any child who showed up was able to complete and receive a free kids scoop of ice cream from Sweet Peaks.
- **Flathead Lake Bio Station Watershed Field Trips:** Samantha and Fiona led stations at this event on 5/17 and 5/18. Flathead Lakers and the Bio station host this event for any 3rd graders in Lake County and Flathead County who want to participate.

Advertisements – FCD ran advertisements for 310 Permits in the Flathead Beacon (May 13, May 27). Samantha also worked with the Forestry Expo planning committee to advertise the event in all local print publications.

Website – Over the past 30 days, the website was viewed 2,811 times, with 80% new (vs. returning) visitors. Viewers of the website were most frequently referred from Facebook, a partner program advertisement in The Daily Interlake, Kalispell.com, and the Center for Native Plants. The most viewed beyond the FCD homepage were the Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program page and blog posts about the life history of larch trees and free family fishing ponds.

Social Media – Over the past 30 days, the FCD Facebook page gained 11 new followers, posts reached 4,478 people, and there were 890 post engagements. We boosted three posts advertising Family Forestry Expo, FCD Youth Camp Sponsorship, and the Rain Garden Initiative. The FCD Instagram page gained 20 new followers over the past 30 days.

eNewsletter – The Local Dirt was distributed on 5/7/2021 to 327 people directly and posted on Facebook. The May issue included information about upcoming events, available programs, a blog post, and 310 permit information. It was opened 312 times by 147 people and clicked 33 times. The most-clicked links were to the blog post about biocontrol, 310 Permits, and the Pollinator Initiative.

Partnerships

- Hailey coordinated with legislators, MACD, DNRC, DEQ, Flathead Lakers, Flathead Basin Commission, and landowner for testimony on SJ28.
- Hailey hosted and facilitated the Haskill Basin Watershed Council Meeting on May 12th.
- Hailey, Samantha, and Fiona attended three Forestry Expo planning meetings and worked with committee members on specific tasks for hosting a modified event in 2021.
- Samantha met with the Flathead Basin Wastewater Partnership on May 4th. Fiona provided outreach assistance for the Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program.
- Hailey met with the Columbia Falls floodplain administrator to review information on 310 permits.
- Samantha coordinated with landowners and the Montana Biological Control Project to determine needs and receive shipments of biocontrol systems in Flathead County.

Natural Resources & Conservation Service (NRCS): Sean Johnson reported:

➤ **Programs**

- Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
 - Continuing to obligate contracts for selected applicants
 - FY22 TIP Results
 - Little Bitterroot Lake – Approved for funding with minor edits
 - Wedge Canyon – Approved for funding with minor edits
 - Lower Valley Irrigation – Approved with more substantial edits required

- All revised TIPs were submitted on 5/21
 - Joint Chief's – FY22 Funding
 - Joint proposal between primarily NRCS and FS for additional funding. Proposal last year was not approved but we have revised it over the last couple of months and resubmitted for the first level of review on 5/21.
 - Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
 - All CSP applicants have been selected for funding. Beginning to work through those applications for contracting.
- **Review Items**
 - Joint Chief's meeting – 5/5 and 5/17
 - Proposal submitted for Regional review on Friday 5/21
- **Upcoming Items**
 - Firesafe Flathead meeting – 5/27
- **Miscellaneous**
 - Kalispell working on hiring a new Soil Conservationist
 - Start date would probably be mid-summer
 - Pathways Intern, Kira Jacobson, started today
 - Snow Survey – May 1st Snow Survey Report
 - Flathead basin up to 92% of normal, up from 90% from last month
 - Sub Basins range from 89% (Flathead Lake) up to 128% (Little Bitterroot Lake)

Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD): No report.

Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB): Verdell Jackson reported the FCPB has been reviewing numerous subdivisions.

Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB): John Ellis reported two accessory apartments and a beer and wine license were approved.

Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC): Hailey Graf reported HBWC discussed the undersized culvert which could endanger emergency access to properties in a flood event and noted that the landowner at the outfall of the culvert will allow work. A cost estimate for design and construction was provided by RGD, and HBWC will research grant funding. Hailey wondered if HBWC could submit a request for funding from FCD depending on cost. Scott Rumsey encouraged Hailey to contact FWP regarding surplus bridge stringers.

Flathead Basin Commission (FBC): Lech Naumovich reported the steering committee for Education & Outreach will meet this Thursday to discuss septic leachate and the ground water study application. The next FBC will be held in September.

MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF

Service to the FCD Vehicle: Pete Woll reported the internal oil leak that was noted during the last service appointment is not an issue. He suggested that the district keep the car

and purchase a pickup. Supervisors agreed to wait until this next fiscal year. Gordon Ash will check into military excess vehicles. This will be added to the Fiscal Year 2021/2022 budget.

Retirement celebration for Ron: The Board discussed holding a lunch for Ronald Buentemeier in the Demonstration Garden sometime between July 19-21, noon-1:00 P.M. Pete Woll will contact Ronald.

Legislative Thank You's: Hailey Graf provided legislative thank-you cards for Supervisors to sign and noted that the Flathead River erosion study bill was assigned to the Water Policy Interim Committee today.

Business cards & contact information: Hailey Graf explained that business cards and name tags will be printed and asked for updated contact information from the Supervisors.

Workplan revision meeting: A meeting was scheduled for Thursday, June 10, 2021, 10:00 A.M. Hailey Graf asked Supervisors to review and submit suggested updates if they cannot attend the meeting.

310: Lech Naumovich stated he received a phone call today regarding a complaint on Bales Creek which was satisfied, and that another complaint may be coming in. Caitlin Overland will be contacted before responding.

The next 310- meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 14, 2021, 7:00 P.M. via ZOOM.

Adjournment: Lech Naumovich motioned "to adjourn. Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 P.M.

Submitted By:

Ginger Kauffman
Administrator

Hailey Graf
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

<u>6/14/2021</u>	<u>Pete Woll</u>	<u>Chair</u>
(Date)	(Signature)	(Title – Chair etc.)