



CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

Vice-Chair John Ellis called the June 28, ~~2021~~²⁰²¹, Business meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the conference room.

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

Board members absent: Pete Woll, Chair. Absence is excused.

Also, in attendance were Hailey Graf and Ginger Kauffman, Flathead Conservation District (FCD) Staff; Fiona Handler, Big Sky Watershed Ameri Corps Member; Kody Coxen, Associate Supervisor; Gordon Ash, 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 20, 2021
- June 10, 2021
- June 14, 2021

Consent Agenda Item 3: Financial

The following bills were reviewed (Check Detail June 14-23, 2021)

1. BCBS \$1985.86
2. VISA – Hailey Graf \$1,128.31
3. VISA – Samantha Tappenbeck \$402.04
4. CenturyLink \$325.86
5. Daily Interlake \$184.93
6. MT Biological Weed Control Coord. Project \$184.93
7. WGM Group \$2,149.99
8. Concordia College \$1,500.00

Consent Agenda Item 4: Correspondence

- College Scholarship Thank-you's
- Education Grant Thank-you

John Ellis asked that Financial - Check Detail (Item 3) be removed from the consent agenda for further discussion.

Donna Pridmore 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.

310

310 Agenda Organization: John Ellis explained that onsite inspections will be scheduled at the beginning of the 310-meeting agenda.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to organize the 310-meeting so all new applications that need onsite inspections scheduled, be moved to the front of the agenda." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Fees for violations: Donna Pridmore explained that she, Hailey Graf and Lech Naumovich met with Caitlin Overland to discuss complaints. Caitlin counseled if no new information is presented and the complaint has already been dealt with, the district does not have to do another onsite inspection or readdress the issue. A letter can simply be sent to the complainant with that information. If a new complaint is submitted and found to be in violation of the 310-law, the district can use the 310-process to make the landowner remediate/mitigate the violation. An after-the-fact permit does not have to be granted for something the district would not have permitted in the first place.

Supervisors discussed if an after-the-fact application is submitted, it can be denied, and a letter sent informing the landowner what is to be done, with a specific period given to complete the mitigation. The district can pursue a civil suit or criminal suit depending on how egregious the violation or how receptive the violator is to mitigation. If there is no response, a letter could be sent from the county attorney stating they are in violation and need to respond. Hailey added that if there was a heinous violation, the district can move forward with fines or charges. Gordon Ash asked about anonymous complaints or if the district could file complaints. John Ellis responded that the district could file a complaint and accept anonymous complaints. Hailey Graf explained that recently she noticed a two-story structure, deck, hot tub, and steps into Flathead River that is not permitted. She asked if an educational letter should be sent or if staff could file a complaint. The board agreed that a complaint should be filed.

NEW BUSINESS

Personnel Policy Amendment: John Ellis explained that there is a section in the Personnel Policy that states when USDA Service Center employees are granted Administrative Leave, FCD employees will also be granted administrative leave. This item came up with the new federal holiday, and the district was given notice that USDA employees were granted administrative leave. Hailey Graf added that the Personnel

Policy states that the district goes by State of Montana holidays, and district staff did not get administrative leave. John noted that the Personnel Policy should not have language that binds the district to decisions made by the USDA. Hailey stated that the wording is under the safety section regarding working alone in building. If only one district staff person is in the building, they can leave to avoid working alone in the building for safety reasons, but it was not meant to give full days off.

Supervisors discussed reviewing and amending the Personnel Policy, agreed to table the discussion until the July business meeting, and get further background information from Pete Woll.

End of Month Budget Report (April & May 2021): Lech Naumovich reported he and Ginger Kauffman reconciled April statements on 5/25/2021, and Donna Pridmore and Ginger Kauffman reconciled May statements on 6/21/21. No irregularities were found.

Financial: John Ellis stated if this section is on the consent agenda, questions cannot be asked. He asked about the CenturyLink bill, as the district had decided to change to Spectrum. Hailey Graf explained that she contacted Spectrum, but they did not show up even after many phone calls and 4 scheduled appointments. She then contacted MontanaSky and learned that the district is in their area but was quoted a sizeable amount to put in a cable. John asked about a VISA charge to Echo Lake Cafe. Donna explained that the purchase was made by Pete for Supervisors during a 310 inspection. Hailey explained that the district has a policy that when supervisors or staff travel they are reimbursed for meals, or if they have a district card, they can use that.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to approve the Check Detail dated June 14-22, and the April and May Budget Reports." Lech Naumovich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2021 GIS Audit: Ginger Kauffman reported that she completed the 2021 GIS audit to verify all the parcels in Flathead County are within the district's jurisdiction. No issues were found.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to approve the 2021 GIS audit as presented." Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Workplan Review: Hailey Graf asked if any changes were needed to the final draft workplan which was provided in the Meeting Packet. Lech Naumovich asked if an objective for studies/research such as the Flathead River Study bill was added. Hailey responded that it was captured under the section for activities to meet the objective.

Verdell Jackson motioned "to approve the 2021/2022 Workplan as presented." Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

FCD Apparel: Hailey Graf explained that the quote for purchase and embroidery of requested apparel was sizeable, so instead proposed to purchase and screen print just 40 gray t-shirts of varying sizes in both men's and women's for a total cost of \$786.

Supervisors requested several colors and discussed that district apparel should only be for staff and supervisors as the district works in a regulatory/official capacity, and that district apparel should not be worn during off hours. Supervisors discussed having a different design created to separate official gear from what might offered to the public.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to approve the purchase of t-shirts as presented." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Sponsorship of River Cleanup Event: Hailey Graf explained that this event is to collect trash from local waters and educate participants about the importance of mitigating stormwater pollution. Volunteers will sign up to collect trash from rivers, lakes, and park ponds through the county, and can pick up supplies (trash bags and gloves) from the FCD office the morning of Saturday, August 14th. City of Kalispell will provide a large refuse dumpster and collect all the trash for transportation to the landfill. The costs associated with trash disposal and reserving the space at Lawrence Park will be covered by an EPA Grant through the Flathead Basin Commission. Hailey contacted the district insurance company regarding liability. They explained that FCD is fully covered for an event like this, but recommended participants sign a liability waiver during registration as an added precaution. Caitlin Overland agreed to review the liability waiver prior to the event. The City of Kalispell has asked FCD for help in sponsoring the event. They have prepared a registration website, safety guidelines for participants (including numbers to call for hazardous materials), and outreach and marketing materials. If approved by the board, FCD would sponsor the event and open it up to participants county-wide, other agencies will be formally invited, and additional media such as live radio, and news will be contacted.

Scott Rumsey motioned "that FCD sponsor the river clean up county wide in conjunction with the City of Kalispell on August 14." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Funding Request: Hailey Graf explained that Whitefish Lake Institute has submitted a request to FCD for \$10,000 to help fund the AIS decontamination stations at Whitefish Lake.

Lech Naumovich motioned "to table the request for AIS funding until the 2021/2022 budget is approved." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel Hiring: Hailey Graf stated that 16 applications have been received for the Administrative Assistant position, that references have been checked, and a summary and recommendations were provided in the Board packets. After discussion, three people were selected for interviews. The board agreed that a committee of Supervisors and Staff should comprise the interview committee. Hailey will schedule interviews.

Conservation Grant reimbursements: Samantha Tappenbeck provided a summary and recommendations to the board for the following:
Conservation Grant 2019-02, Loring Cox, \$3527.42
Conservation Grant 2020-01, Dwight Bergerson \$3503.15
Conservation Grant 2020-02, Chrysta Bourne, \$2,588.75 (adjusted amount)

Conservation Grant 2020-07, Katherine Holley \$202.49
Conservation Grant 2020-10, Elysian McIntyre, \$936.22 (adjusted amount)

Verdell Jackson motioned "to approve the Conservation Grant reimbursements as provided." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Education Grant reimbursement: Samantha Tappenbeck provided a summary and recommendation to the board for Education Grant #2021-01, Melanie Jutzi, Kid Kare, \$1121.70

Donna Pridmore motioned "to approve the Kid Kare education grant funding as submitted." Scott Rumsey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Flathead CD Staff: Hailey Graf, Samantha Tappenbeck, Ginger Kauffman, and Fiona Handler reported:

Office and Administration

310 –Ginger has processed four new 310-Permit Applications, and one Notice of Emergency as of 6/21/21. She processed 6/14/21 310-meeting minutes and is currently working on 310-permits and letters. Hailey attended onsite inspections and coordinated with landowners to provide the virtual meeting attendance information. Hailey also coordinated a meeting between Supervisors and Caitlin Overland regarding legal advice on repeat complaints.

Hailey began planning for a 310 Law training day, as requested by the board. She coordinated with the board, Caitlin Overland, FWP, and DNRC to select a date and outline a tentative schedule. The training day is scheduled for September 2nd and will include a half day of concept review and discussion followed by an afternoon of site tours. The training day will be open to all staff and board members from the Flathead CD and surrounding CD's.

Bookkeeping – Lech Naumovich & Ginger Kauffman reconciled April bank/revenue/VISA statements on 5/25/2021. Donna Pridmore and Ginger reconciled May bank/revenue/VISA statements on 6/21/21. Ginger compiled the April & May Financial documents. Ginger processed payroll and associated reports and payment on June 9th; the next payroll is June 23rd. Federal & state tax reports and payments for June will be processed with the June 23rd with payroll. Ginger completed the GIS Audit from County Finance, which the Board must approve and sign. 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. She processed a Work Comp Earning Audit, and continues to process daily bookkeeping items such as payroll, invoices, credit card receipts, deposits, grant billing/vendor invoices etc.

District Office –Weekly staff meetings were held each Monday at 2 PM.

A special meeting was held on June 10th to discuss revisions to the annual workplan and planning for the FY2021-2022 budget. For this meeting, staff prepared proposals for the board on new items to be included with the workplan and general updates to the workplan. Ginger and Hailey processed the 6/10/2021 meeting minutes.

Following approval from the board, Hailey began the process for hiring an Administrative Assistant. She drafted a job announcement and reviewed it with Pete and John then posted it to the FCD website, Facebook, the Conservation Job Board, and the Montana Job Service. She also worked with the Daily Interlake to advertise the opening. As applications were submitted, Hailey reviewed and ranked the applicants, contacted references, and provided her recommendations for interviews and hiring to the board.

Following the board's direction Hailey worked with Tim Birk and NRCS to make updates to the office building lease. She also drafted a temporary lease which was approved by Tim and the board to be used until the updated lease is finalized with NRCS.

On June 17th, Ginger, Samantha, and Hailey met to discuss updates to the FY2021-2022 budget, based on feedback from the board during previous budget and strategic planning meetings. They also reviewed funds remaining and made purchases to update office equipment that had not been completed for the FY yet.

Hailey continued working with Spectrum to try and get internet and phone services installed and contacted Montana Sky Networks for a quote on services.

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 was held on June 22nd. During this workday, weed matting for repaired or replaced, fencing was repaired, and weeds were sprayed. Final grant wrap up and reporting will be completed by June 30th.

Trumbull Creek – Hailey arranged a meeting on June 21st with River Design Group and two of the landowners to discuss options for replacing or fixing perched culverts that are acting as impoundments.

Krause Creek Restoration Project – Hailey completed contracting with DNRC for the Renewable Resources Grant through DNRC. She also drafted a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for design and construction oversight services. After review by the Krause Creek committee, Hailey contacted seven local consultants and sent them the RFQ. Hailey created a new webpage for the Krause Creek project on the FCD website and included the announcement for the RFQ. She also worked with the Daily Interlake to run an advertisement for the RFQ open period. The RFQ response deadline is July 16th at 4:00 PM.

Demonstration Garden – Hailey, Samantha, and Fiona continued to do maintenance in the demonstration garden including hand pulling weeds, weed whacking, weed spraying, mulching, and mowing. Hailey added irrigation to the lilacs that were planted in spring and coordinated with Forestration for construction of the lawn alternatives

demonstration area. Additional plans for the demonstration garden this year include using a brassica mix in the cover crop demonstration area and installing solarization to reduce the bulbous bluegrass.

Programs

Conservation Grant Program – Samantha worked with landowners and supervisors to conduct final inspection site visits for FY20/21 projects. Samantha compiled final inspection paperwork for review by the board and prepared summary of payment information. Samantha also drafted and distributed contracts for FY21/22 Conservation Grant projects.

Education Grant Program – Samantha compiled final report paperwork for review by the board and prepared summary of payment information. This program is closed during the month of June to close out FY20/21.

College Scholarship Program – Seven scholarships were awarded in 2021. Staff and Supervisors attended 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 worked with the landowner to modify the contract to meet changing project needs. A grant from the Montana Watershed Coordination Council Watershed Fund will provide match funding to cover the cost of riparian livestock fencing for this project. Fiona is managing the MWCC grant and finalized MOU.

Pollinator Initiative – 100% of the 2021 pollinator seed has been allocated or delivered to 27 participants for sowing in spring and fall of 2021. Samantha and Fiona coordinated with Lincoln CD to acquire additional seed leftover from 2020 to distribute in Flathead County.

Rain Garden Initiative – Fiona, Samantha, and Hailey met with program partners from the City of Kalispell to discuss grant management, purchasing, and additional marketing. The group determined that FCD would purchase gardening tools and gutter downspout extension kits as landowner incentives and the Flathead Basin Commission grant funding would be used for program support and additional advertisements and marketing.

Fiona and Emilie hung 500 door hangers to advertise the program and have gotten interest from a few homeowners to participate. They discussed contacting various Homeowner Associations of new developments in the Valley to advertise the program.

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. FCD received and directed several calls about the program.

Education and Outreach Workshops and Events

- Pollinators in the Park - FCD and Kalispell Parks & Rec are co-sponsoring a free community event in Woodland Park on July 30th to show "The Pollinators" film. Fiona and Samantha worked on planning, logistics, and advertisement for the event.

Advertisements – FCD ran advertisements for 310 Permits (June 10) and the Flathead Rain Garden Initiative (June 24) in the Flathead Beacon. Samantha and Fiona also worked with Flathead Beacon Productions to design an event poster and advertisement for the Pollinators in the Park event.

Website – Over the past 30 days, the website was viewed 3,275 times, with 74% new (vs. returning) visitors. Viewers of the website were most frequently referred from Facebook, the eNewsletter, the Daily Interlake website, the NRCS website, and SWCDM website. The most viewed posts/pages beyond the FCD homepage were the Administrative Assistant job announcement, blog posts about the life history of larch trees and free family fishing ponds, and the Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program.

Social Media – Over the past 30 days, we posted information about Noxious Weeds Awareness Week, AIS, National Pollinator Week, upcoming local events, FCD blog posts, and FCD ongoing projects. The FCD Facebook page gained 2 new followers, posts reached 233 people, and there were 48 post engagements. The FCD Instagram page gained 25 new followers over the past 30 days.

eNewsletter – The Local Dirt was distributed on 6/7/2021 to 331 people directly and posted on Facebook. The June issue included information about upcoming events, the FCD job announcement, available programs, a blog post, and 310 permit information. It was opened 290 times by 154 people and clicked 44 times. The most-clicked links were to the job announcement, the blog post about biocontrol, and the Pollinator and Rain Garden Initiatives.

Partnerships

- Hailey attended a virtual training on the ARPA funding available for water and wastewater projects and how to apply for the grant.
- Hailey and Samantha attended the River to Lake Initiative meeting on June 16th and provided project and program updates to the group.
- Hailey attended the Fire Safe Flathead meeting on June 24th.
- Hailey, Fiona, and Samantha met with Casey Lewis and Emilie Henry from the City of Kalispell to discuss options for sponsoring a river cleanup day.
- Samantha met with the Flathead Basin Wastewater Partnership on June 3rd. Fiona provided outreach assistance for the Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program.
- Samantha met with the MACDEO State Employee Training planning committee on July 15th
- Samantha met with a local educator/farmer on June 17th to provide materials to support youth camps/field trips for K-5th graders
- Samantha met with the Flathead Basin Commission Education & Outreach Committee on June 22nd

- Hailey met with the Columbia Falls floodplain administrator to review information on 310 permits.

Natural Resources & Conservation Service (NRCS): No report.

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

Flathead County Planning Board (FCPB): No report.

Whitefish City Planning Board (WCPB): John Ellis reported several subdivisions were reviewed and the WCPB approved down-zoning (from WR4 to WR2) in the City of Whitefish. This will go to the city council.

Haskill Basin Watershed Council (HBWC): No report

Flathead Basin Commission (FBC): Lech Naumovich reported FBC is moving forward on the design of the outreach program to inform the public about water quality impacts and what can be done to keep water quality high.

MATTERS OF THE BOARD/STAFF

Krause Creek Project Site Tour: Hailey Graf explained that DNRC staff will be here Thursday, July 8, 9:00 A.M. to tour the Trumbull and Krause Creek projects and asked if Supervisors were interested in attending.

Highway Signs: Hailey Graf explained that she had researched signs on FCD jurisdictional boundaries. The highway department permit was denied as Montana Department of Transportation is only approving signs for emergencies. She noted that another option would be to work with a private landowner and place a sign out of the highway right of way.

Office Equipment Purchases: Hailey Graf explained FCD budgeted funds for 2020/2021 for furniture and equipment and requested to purchase additional desks and computers.

Donna Pridmore motioned "to approve Hailey Graf purchasing furniture and equipment in the amount of \$3341.02." Verdell Jackson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget meeting, Monday, July 19th, 9:30 A.M.

Demonstration Garden workday: Tuesday, July 13, 9:00 A.M. -1:00 P.M.

MACD, Resolution & Study: Hailey Graf explained that the Water Policy meeting is scheduled for July 14-15 in Helena and requested travel approval, if needed. The board agreed.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 12, 2021, 7:00 P.M. via ZOOM.

Adjournment: Verdell Jackson motioned "to adjourn." Donna Pridmore seconded. Motion carried unanimously. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

Submitted By:

Ginger Kauffman
Administrator

Hailey Graf
Resource Conservationist

Minutes approved by FCD Board motion made on:

7/12/2021
(Date)

Pete Woll
(Signature)

Chair
(Title – Chair etc.)