

Beaverhead Conservation District

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 15, 2024

Call to order

Carl Malesich called to order the regular meeting of the Beaverhead Conservation District at 6:00 pm on February 15, 2024 in the NRCS office.

Roll Call

The following persons were present: Carl Malesich, Rich Nordquist, Tom Miller, Kelly Rowe, JS Turner, Matt Jeager, Sean Lewis, Zach Owen, Jess Fields, Emma Fullerton, Jim Lovell, Erin Riddle, Paul Hansen, Jon Hansen, Todd K., Peter Schneide, Rob Van Deren.

Conference Line: Jessica Murray and Billiette Brooks

Absent: Byron Martinell, Jerry Meine, Harris Wheat, and Meg Smith

Motion to excuse absences by Rich 2nd by Billiette, motion carried.

Approval of minutes from last meeting

Motion to approve the January minutes by Tom 2nd by Rich, motion carried.

Summary of Finances.

- *Motion to approve summary of finances for February by Tom 2nd by Billiette, motion carried.*

NRCS – Sean gave updates on statewide hiring and Tom asked about possible funding for a pipeline for the Beaverhead Water Company to combat ditch loss. Sean will look into funding but does not know of any off the top of his head.

Beaverhead Water Company –

- Erin Riddle, BWC administrator, and the BWC board came to the meeting to discuss applying for a Planning Grant through DNRC. They are working with Pioneer Technical on the grant application. The application will be for roughly \$40,000 and will pay for the engineering to bring 3 dams up to code as they were marked high-risk. Procurement was discussed and the engineering falls below the procurement amount, Erin will send out a final grant application to the board before applying.

Motion to sponsor the grant by Tom 2nd Rich, Motion Carried

Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership –

- Emma is working on a grant application for \$500,000 spread across 5 years through the BLM, the money will go to hiring cheatgrass spray crews, mapping crews, and buying spray. The district will also get an admin fee from this grant. Procurement was discussed and Emma will make sure to follow procurement laws as she begins contracting. Emma will send out a final grant application to the board before applying.

Motion to sponsor the grant by Tom 2nd Rich, Motion Carried

Range Committee – Jessica called in and discussed a mid-April range seminar from 11-3 with lunch included. There will be 3 30-minute presentations with 10-minute question breaks between them a panel at the end. Topics include estate planning, value added ag, carbon credits, hunting, and breaking into buying out the ranch.

310 Business

Beaverhead – Matt Jaeger

- BCD 2327 Complaint, Willow Removal, Blacktail Creek
Jess went and talked to Joanne about the willow removal, it is a neighbor dispute about property and an old alley way that was abandoned. Joanne was cleaning up debris left by the previous land owner and the willows have mostly grown back now that there is room for them to expand. Joanne was educated on the need for 310 permit for future work and the complaint was dismissed because the willows have grown back and the bank was left alone.
- BCD 2401 Tyler Barrus, Stream Restoration, Beaverhead River
A member of the public submitted a well written thought-out comment with maps discussing concerns about the project. The board agreed with the concerns and decided to permit the project one section at a time and Diamond O will have to come back when they finish the first part to get another permit.

Motion to approve with modifications by Tom 2nd Rich, motion carried.

Big Hole - Jim Olsen

- BCD 2209 Paul Cleary, unnamed tributary Big Hole River, After Photos

Beaverhead Watershed Grants

- Zach gave updates on the Stone Creek contract, coordinating the Grasshopper project permitting and final design, research and planning meetings for the Red Rock WRP, and contracting crews and getting permitting completed for the Moose Creek project. He also wrote a grant proposal to help fund the WSA group. The WSA group is in need of a new conference speaker and discussed the district donating funds for a speaker instead of making the yearly donation.
- *Motion to buy a conference system up to \$500 by Tom 2nd Rich, Motion Carried.*
- *Motion to approve Watershed finances for January by Rich 2nd by Tom, motion carried.*

Administrator Report

- The boat inspection station is starting up again, Zachary Peterson is the new hire that the hiring committee picked after several good interviews. Training March 5-6, Station Opens March 9th.
- Jess is working on a planning grant to fund a strategic planning process and finishing up the application for the second round of Conservation District Admin Grants.

Old Business

- Resolution to allow districts to have their own 310 permit application or a 310 permit by DNRC that is not a joint application. The district is interested and Jess will start the resolution process. Hailey Graf is working on a new application now and Tom will send Jess the application.

New Business

Upcoming Events

- Next meeting date- March 21st, 6 pm
- Youth Conservation Day – April 30

Public Comment

No public in attendance by the end of the meeting.

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 10:00 pm

Minutes submitted by: Jessica Fields

Approved:

Byron Martinell

Byron Martinell, Chairman