

**Teleconference Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Republican River Water Conservation District
RRWCD Special Board Zoom Meeting**

January 10, 2022 Teleconference/Zoom

The Board of Directors of the Republican River Water Conservation District convened a special meeting, pursuant to notice required by statute and the District's By-Laws, utilizing teleconference/Zoom technology.

Present were:

Board Members:

Rod Lenz, President

Greg Larson, Vice-President

Gil Anderson, Secretary

Wil Bledsoe

Kevin Penny

Kristen Schneider

Jim Hadachek

Kenny Helling

Steve Kramer

Don Brown

Rod Mason

Steven Meakins

Tim Pautler

Roger Seedorf

Josh Lechman

Deb Daniel, RRWCD General Manager

Suzanna Baker RRWCD Office Manager

Payton Liming, RRWCD Administrative Assistant

David Robbins, RRWCD General Counsel, Hill & Robbins, P.C.

A telephone was provided at the District office for interested members of the public to participate but no public attended.

STATEMENT OF QUORUM

President Rod Lenz called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. Board Secretary Gil Anderson conducted a roll call of the Board members and declared that a quorum of the Board was present. Aaron Sprague and Brooke Campbell were absent but excused.

2022 EQIP Rates

- Discuss 2022 EQIP rates – Steve Kramer, Conservation Committee Chairman and Deb Daniel, General Manager
 - Currently, the RRWCD pays a Base EQIP contract rate of \$1,140.00 for wells inside the SFFZ and \$240 for EQIP retirement of acres in the rest of the Basin. NRCS currently is paying \$689.25 per irrigated acre retired throughout the Basin through the EQIP program. Total paid by NRCS and RRWCD for 2021 EQIP program: Inside the SFFZ \$1,829.25/ac ~~ Outside the Zone \$929.25/ac. For wells inside the SFFZ that have operated 2016-today, the RRWCD pays an additional \$1,670.75/ac. to bring the total per acre to \$3,500/ac. retired.
 - If a SFFZ well that was inactive in 2016 is reactivated, is irrigated for 2 years and pays the RRWCD Water Use Fee for 2 years, then the well owner is eligible to apply for an EQIP program contract at a current rate of \$1,829.25/ac. Mr. Kramer asked that the Board consider setting the rate for wells inside the SFFZ that were inactive in 2016, to be paid at the same rate as the wells in the rest of the Basin: \$240/ac. Perhaps the District should consider paying considerably less for any well that was not irrigating in 2016. The Board has discussed how to discourage reactivating an inactive well. Reducing the rate paid through the EQIP program could be one method.

- The concern is that inactive wells will be brought back online to qualify for the EQIP payments within two years, and these wells coming online are the exact opposite of what the district needs to have happen (in order to meet compliance)
- **RRWCD** Board members and the State have concerns about this happening more in the future because wells that have not been operated for some time have been brought back online. Members of the District have also brought inactive wells online to replace water they have lost, for example, feedlots brought inactive wells online to produce feed for the animals in the lot.
 - The issue is inactive wells have not been paying the fee and therefore have not contributed to meeting compact compliance, but the district doesn't have any policy in place to disincentivize people from bringing inactive wells back online.
 - Suggestions to disincentivize include paying inactive well owners the rate for outside the SFFZ
 - Structure Fee for the Fee Assessment
 - No pumping of the well in 2016 means they do not qualify
- More discussion was held on the inactive wells and whether or not they qualify in the count against the retirement of 25,000 irrigated acres per the 2016 RRCA resolution
 - Discussion on satellite imagery for the acres
 - David declared the Conservation Committee needs to discuss some of the questions brought up in the meeting with Mike to set the standard. For example, if the District gets credit for the retirement of those inactive wells, use it. If the district does not get credit, do not pay the extra amount for the retirement of those wells.
 - The Conservation Committee needs to discuss with Mike and Kevin and come back to the board.

2022 CREP Rates

- Discuss 2022 EQIP rates – Steve Kramer, Conservation Committee Chairman and Deb Daniel, General Manager
 - The rates have not been determined yet. Their fiscal year is already half over and people trying to get into contracts will lose that half years payment. Deb is trying to get people prepped and ready to sign contracts when they become available, but this is an issue because NRCS has a very strict revegetation guideline and Deb wants to prevent the owners from: a, losing money by improperly following the guide line; b, make sure they get what is the required cover crop planted, and c, save the owner's time
 - Deb will reach out to **NRCS** with her concerns
 - Discussion on a formally written letter from the District to the delegations
 - The 2018 Farm Bill made it possible for the CREP rate to change every year, so it is likely waiting on the rate will happen every year.
 - However, the 2018 Farm Bill lists three other possible ways to declare the rates
 - Wil and Don will coordinate on this effort
 - Inform Mike Sullivan of the situation
 - Discussion on Virgil Ireland's departure

RRWCD Social Media

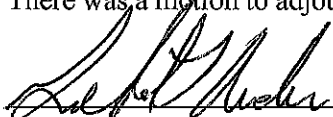
- Receive report on expanding the RRWCD Social Media opportunities-Deb Daniel, General Manager, Suzanna Baker, Office Manager, Payton Liming, Administrative Assistant
- The office team would like to implement a plan to publish articles in the local papers more often utilizing members of the board for writing articles about things specific to the District for example, conservation, the CCP and others
- Discussion of additional charges likely for the publishing of articles in larger local area papers
 - Payton's interview specifically was tailored to questions about social media and expanding the district's public presence
- Discussion on utilizing Facebook for more public exposure
 - Board members want the information without the "white noise" so questions about how to communicate with the public through this platform
- **Facebook got the go-ahead**
 - The page must be shareable for comments and shares—this prevents the page from just being board members
 - Board members need policy per Josh Lechman – he stated that Board members for his school district make the most issues
 - Lechman suggested a single spokesperson to handle questions and prevent the spread of misinformation

- David Robbins strongly suggested a policy be put in place prior to publishing anything on Facebook

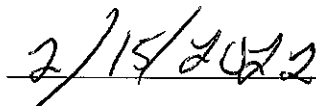
Executive Session – Board entered Executive Session to discuss and determine positions, develop strategies, and instruct negotiators concerning water rights

- There was a motion to go into Executive Session, seconded and passed unanimously. The board entered executive Session at 1:55 p.m.
- At 2:53 p.m. there was a motion to exit Executive Session. Seconded and approved unanimously. No adoption, rule or motion was made during executive session.
 - There was a motion to authorize David Robbins to draft a contract based on the 8 points of negotiation that Greg Larson and Roger Seedorf presented. The motion was seconded and approved. Wil Bledsoe and Don Brown abstained from the vote. All other votes were in favor of the motion.
 - Said contract is subject to final approval by the full Board.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:57pm, passed and seconded unanimously.



Secretary



Date

