

Inyo-Mono Resource Conservation District

Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2024

Board Members: Jarret Phillips, Chance Rossi, Katie Doonan, Graham Meese, and Kay Ogden- quorum present.

Public Attendance: Mikhala Bornstein, Aaron Wilcher, Dustin Blakey, Kristen Pfeiler, Ziani Paiz.

Meeting called to order at 5:31 by Jarret Phillips.

Agenda Items:

RCD Budget for next year

Kay reported that a preliminary budget needs to be approved for the next fiscal year 2024/2025 and submitted. Kay described that this budget may be the former \$4,000 budget rolled over from previous years and amended, or a resolution may be passed to adopt a budget now. Board members discussed that an increase of \$2,000 to a \$6,000 budget for 2024/2025 was a sufficient amount to submit as a preliminary budget.

A resolution was entertained to approve the preliminary 2024/2025 budget at \$6,000. Graham moved to approve the preliminary budget. Chance seconded, motion carried and resolution was approved.

RCD Budget amendment

Kay reported that we have \$505.86 left in the operating budget for the 2023/2024 fiscal year. If the board is interested in amending that budget a resolution will need to be filed to amend the budget for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Board discussed that expenses to be included in the 2023/2024 operating budget will include \$2,000 for high school scholarships and \$500 to fund a range camp scholarship. The proposed budget amendment should be \$2,500.

A resolution was entertained to approve an amendment to the 2023/2024 budget at \$2,500. Katie moved to approve the budget amendment. Chance seconded, motion carried and resolution was approved.

Treasurer's Report

The current account balance for IMRCD is \$18,645.85.

Kay reported that it was expected the account would generate \$60 of income in accumulated interest, but the reported interest income for the 2023/2024 fiscal year was \$304.40.

Scholarships, vote on whether or not to fund

Board determined that in previous years, two scholarships were funded at \$1,000 each. Jarret mentioned that this opportunity should be opened to all schools in the Inyo-Mono Districts beyond Bishop. Jarret will contact Joni Riggs at Bishop High School to initiate the process there.

Chance moved to fund 2 scholarships for high-school students at \$1,000 each. Kay seconded, motion carried, and item was approved.

Update on forestry/fire/outdoor recreation regional workforce development initiatives

Kristen spoke about an upcoming partnership opportunity between the IMRCD and Cerro Coso for workforce development in the forestry, fire, and outdoor recreation spaces as a collaboration across agencies in the region. Curriculum was passed for Cerro Coso as a two-year program in the natural resources space and may end up being a 4-year degree program in the future. Through this, students will need to get work experience and there would be an opportunity for the IMRCD to house internships.

Kristen reported there may be potential for strong funding source for internship opportunities in this realm. Peter Fulks may be willing to partner on a grant to initiate funding.

Board discussed opportunity to engage with this at some point, potentially with partnership capacity in housing more of the internship experience. There was discussion that the ability to hire people is still in the works, so may be contingent on that.

Kristen also reported there may be 20-50 positions across the region. The Board brought up that there may be partnership opportunities with Kern County for resources. The internships may start in spring of 2025. No action is to be taken at this time.

Review and approve Notice of Election and Election Calendar

Graham reported that the Board received Notice of Election and the Election Calendar. Graham described that because the Board was appointed without an election, board members will appear on the ballot.

A resolution was proposed to request appointment In Lieu of Election by standing Resolution, per PRC 9314(b)(1). Chance moved to approve the resolution. Katie seconded, the motion carried, and the resolution was approved.

Review policies

Katie and Kristen reported back on progress in developing a set of personnel policies and employee handbook. It was recommended to use the California Association of Conservation Districts' handbook as a foundational guide. Katie and Kristen will provide an updated draft for review and potential approval at the next meeting. Kristen offered to follow up with Nancy from CARCD to find a checklist for obtaining a state EIN number, and Katie with follow up with Dale Pierce of CARCD/El Dorado RCD.

Possible second scholarship for range camp, range camp update

Ziani provided an update that one student was selected from the Inyo-Mono region to attend the Nevada range camp. The Board discussed a potential second scholarship but decided to continue with the single scholarship paid to the student as was approved at the 5/6 meeting.

Update on potential funding of part-time staff position

Item tabled for future discussion.

Approve 5/6/24 & 4/17/24 meeting minutes

Chance moved to approve the meeting minutes from 5/6 and 4/17 and Graham seconded. Kay abstained from approval of 4/17. The motion carried and minutes were approved.

RCD strategy facilitation #2, Prioritization Exercise- Aaron (1 hour)

Aaron facilitated discussion of the list of future project priorities. Board established that the top two immediate priorities are 1) gaining the capacity to hire and 2) prioritize funding opportunities. Following project prioritization includes work in soil health, weed mitigation, Eastern Sierra wildfire alliance, local ag projects, and a tool library.

Public Comment

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy will hold their annual field tour on June 5th from 1:00pm-5:30pm. The RCD is invited to attend or speak if anyone on the Board is interested.

Kodama Consulting may be interested in presenting at the next Board meeting on the carbon credit projects happening in Nevada. Jarret will follow up to gauge interest.