

Minutes of Feb 20, 2025 Board Meeting

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Randy Krag of the LCRCDD Board of Directors, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., Jing Wang will take the Minutes.

Directors Present: Randy Krag, Harry Lyons, Kate Schmidt-Hopper (Virtually), Shula Shoup, Merry Jo Velasquez, Steve Campbell

Directors Absent: None

Others Present:

In Person: Jing Wang (Bookkeeper), Julia Sullivan (Executive Director), Megan McCluer-Lopez (Finance Manager)

Virtually: Candice Reynolds (Hana Resources), Noah Cornell (Soils/Ag Manager)

1. INTRODUCTIONS and consideration of extra items not appearing on the posted agenda.

- No extra items for consideration
- Randy led a round of introductions
- New Board Member Steve Campbell gave a self introduction:
 - Former Fire Chief of the Calistoga Fire Service, now retired.
 - Has lived in Lake County since 2016.

2. PUBLIC INPUT - Anyone may speak for three minutes on a subject not on the agenda; no action will be taken by the Board.

- No public input.

3. BOARD REVIEW AND UPDATES

3.1 INTRODUCTION of recently appointed Board Member - Steve Campbell

3.2 UPDATE on staff activities by Executive Director - Julia Sullivan

- Julia gave an update on staff activities
 - Staff report has been shared with everyone
 - Gave a summary of 5 program areas
 - The strategic planning process is now set in motion, in 2 phases, Spring/Fall 2025
 - RCD Organization Policies are now in development
 - Staff performance reviews by the Executive Director are now in progress.

- The Board members and the Executive Director discussed federal funding difficulties due to the current political landscape.
 - Current projects impacted include CARCD-Forestry TA and CoCo-AIM.
 - Upcoming projects impacted include NACD-NRCS TA, CWDG-TERA.
 - District 5 Supervisor Jessica Pyska is traveling to Washington DC to lobby on behalf of Lake County.
 - RCD Board Director Harry Lyons is making a federal impact funding report (as a private citizen) to Mike Thompson, representative of California's 4th Congressional District.

3.3 ROLL CALL on ongoing projects with Board Hosts

- Board President Randy Krag asked Jing Wang to compile a list of projects with Board hosts in future agendas.
- Merry Jo Velasquez gave an update on “Kids in the Creek”
 - Taking place on April 18th, 2025
 - Upper Lake elementary school 4th graders participate to learn with stations provided by the U.S. Forest Service.
- Kate Schmidt-Hopper gave an update on “Field Days in the Creek”
 - Taking place on April 10th, 2025
 - Event for children to observe and learn about nature and natural resources
 - This event takes place in District 1, and should be of interest to Steve Campbell, new District 1 Director (pending).
 - In the process of looking for presenters
 - Harry has had some difficulty reaching out to the owners of the property.
- Harry Lyons gave an update on the Meisenbach Scholarship and “Trout in the Classroom”
 - The Meisenbach Scholarship is on track , a \$1,500 scholarship for one person from Middletown High School, Lower Lake High School or Woodland Community College - Clearlake Campus. Kate is reaching out to school counselors.
 - For Trout in the Classroom, Trout eggs are in the process of being picked up, and Associate Director Tony Blyleven will distribute them to 4 classrooms in Lake County.

3.4 UPDATE on NRCS activities - Erica Lundquist

- Erica stated that NRCS is looking for input from the RCD’s strategic plans, and will send some info to ED Julia Sullivan.
- NRCS is working on summarizing EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program), with a March 14, 2025 deadline.
- No incoming new staff.
- Harry Lyons made a point to thank Erica for a phase of ‘working alone’ and then training new staff.
- NRCS has suffered losses of some employees due to the current political landscape.

3.5 UPDATE from President and Directors

Randy Krag: -none-

Harry Lyons: -none-

Merry Jo Velasquez: Gave an update on the Lake County Land Trust, in that the Land Trust has appointed a new Executive Director, Angela DePalma-Dow, formerly of the County of Lake Water Resources Department.

Shula Shoup: -none-

Kate Schmidt-Hopper: Gave an amended self introduction, and her history of long years in Lake County.

Steve Campbell: -none-

4. ACTION – Includes discussion.

- Tabled: get details for Steve Campbell's swearing onto the agenda for the next board meeting.

4.1 VOTE on approval of January 16, 2025 minutes

- Jing gave an update on his efforts to get the RCD agenda & minutes onto the Lake County website.

Motion to Approve: Kate Schmidt-Hopper

Seconded: Merry Jo Velasquez

Ayes: Unanimous

Nays: -none-

Absent: -none-

Abstained: -none-

Result: Passed

4.2 VOTE on acceptance of monthly financial report

- Julia and Megan confirmed the status of RCD's financial independence from the County treasury with new Board Member Steve Campbell.
- Finance Manager Megan McCluer gave a summary of the financial reports for December 2024.
 - Megan indicated to Steve that more details can be provided if needed.
 - Harry stated his appreciation for the Check Detail Report
 - Randy inquired about problems with project closing, and what happens when expenses come in after project close. Megan replied that the project profitability is impacted.
- The Board discussed the RCD's current liability insurance situation with the Executive Director and Finance Manager, for which Finance Manager Megan gave an overview.

Motion to Approve: Merry Jo Velasquez

Seconded: Harry Lyons

Ayes: Unanimous

Nays: -none-

Absent: -none-

Abstained: -none-
Result: Passed

4.3 VOTE on budget amendment

- Executive Director Julia Sullivan gave an overview of the budgetary process for the second half of Fiscal Year 24-25.
 - There was increased State Aid in the first half of FY24-25, but it is expected to drop off in the second half.
 - There is a decrease in Federal Aid, and no more federal income is anticipated.
 - An overall objective of the budget amendment is to be conservative in its projections.
 - Payroll expenses are expected to “catch up” to the original budgeted amount in the second half of FY24-25.
 - New accounts were needed, which were originally unbudgeted for.
 - Net Income, as stated in the budget amendment, will be transferred to Reserves at close of the 24-25 fiscal year, once approved by the Board.
 - Julia stated that only half of Lake County is eligible to be used as the RCD’s tax base right now, as a result of the 2016 East & West LCRCDD merger. Our long-term goal is to have this small tax uniformly applied across the County.
- Merry Jo Velasquez inquired about FDIC insurance, which the RCD finance team stated they will look into.
- Julia and Megan reaffirmed the importance of the RCD’s contracting relationship with the County. Since we are a government agency, direct contracting is allowable to help Lake County meet its needs.
- Executive Director Julia Sullivan is giving an annual report to the Lake County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday 25th, 2025.

Motion to Approve: Merry Jo Velasquez

Seconded: Harry Lyons

Ayes: Unanimous

Nays: -none-

Absent: -none-

Abstained: -none-

Result: Passed

4.4 VOTE on adoption of Director Appointment Policy

- Julia gave an overview of the Director Appointment Policy
- Julia, in a matter of transparency, communicated with Steve Campbell that his appointment by the Board of Supervisors came as a surprise, but the LCRCDD resoundingly reiterated their welcome of Mr. Campbell.

Motion to Approve: Merry Jo Velasquez

Seconded: Harry Lyons

Ayes: Unanimous

Nays: -none-

Absent: -none-

Abstained: -none-

Result: Passed

4.5 VOTE on adoption of the Lake County Fire Safe Council Strategic Plan (2025-2030)

- Julia gave a summary of the Strategic planning process
- The Board stated their general appreciation of the plan.
- Randy inquired about how the County level Fire Safe Council (which is a department of the RCD) interacts with local Fire Safe Councils. For which Julia gave an explanation, stating that this is also covered in the Strategic Plan document.
 - Megan added clarification of the difference between Firewise^(R)
 - and Fire Safe Councils but they operate the same.
- Steve reflected that it is a good document, with an understanding that goals laid out by the Strategic Plan are tied to funding.
- Megan made a point to commend Julia on organizing the PEAR workshops, which are beyond the normal responsibilities for the Executive Director.
- Kate Schmidt-Hopper commended the inclusion of the Spanish speaking community, and inquired about if there are plans to include a Spanish translation of the Strategic Plan on the RCD website.

Motion to Approve: Merry Jo Velasquez

Seconded: Harry Lyons

Ayes: Unanimous

Nays: -none-

Absent: -none-

Abstained: -none-

Result: Passed

4.6 VOTE on approval of \$7M application to U.S. Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG)

- Julia gave an overview of the budget for the application, which she stated was withdrawn then reinstated.
 - The County granted the RCD \$8,000 for grant writing.
 - The CDWG 2025 budget includes 4 categories:
 - LCFSC Defensive Space Program
 - County-wide Hazardous Tree Removal

- County-wide LIDAR based Tree Health Database
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- ~~—Scotts Valley Water Protections (pulled)~~

Motion to Approve: Merry Jo Velasquez

Seconded: Harry Lyons

Ayes: Unanimous

Nays: -none-

Absent: -none-

Abstained: -none-

Result: Passed

4.7 VOTE on adoption of Durable Collaborative MOU re: State Coastal Conservancy funding

- Julia gave a description on Durable Collaborative and State Coastal Conservancy
 - The Executive Committee of the Durable Collaborative is made up of various RCD's Executive Directors.
 - The MOU captures the process of how the funding will be allocated.

Motion to Approve: Merry Jo Velasquez

Seconded: Shula Shoup

Aye: Unanimous

Nays: -none-

Absent: -none-

Abstained: -none-

Result: Passed

5. **DISCUSSION** – Does not include action.

5.1 Presentation on Schindler Creek Habitat Restoration Project and the Clear Lake Keys

Rehabilitation Project - Candace Reynolds, Hana Resources

- Candace Reynolds of Hana Resources gave a high level overview presentation on the project in the hope that the RCD will apply for the Grant:
 - a. Planning & Design
 - b. Implementation of Schindler Creek Habitat Restoration Project
 - c. Clear Lake Keys Rehabilitation Project
- Candace stated that Hana Resources will write the application, but while a detailed budget is still in the works, the LCRCD would be a great collaborative partner due to shared mission goals.
- Candace can be reached at candacer@hanaresources.com

5.2 Presentation on Ag Stakeholders Meeting - Noah Cornell

- Noah gave a presentation on the December 19th 2024 Ag Stakeholders Meeting which covered topics such as Climate change, Farm Worker Housing and suggestions for General Plan support for the Ag community.
- Noah's take aways from the meeting includes:
 - General acknowledgement that the climate is changing
 - Concerns about water security
 - Concerns about Farm Worker Safety
 - Stratification from the community, short term vs long term workers
 - Support for research, SALC funding, and continued forums of public outreach.
 - Tentative support for County-wise ground water monitoring.

5.3 Organizational Policy Handbook development: Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP), field safety protocol - Julia Sullivan

- Julia gave a summary of current progress on the Handbook development
 - Julia consulted with another RCD's ED (Lucas from Napa-RCD) on the handbook development
 - Meetings are in progress with SDRMA to work on the IIPP.

5.4 Upcoming two-part CEQA training - Julia Sullivan

- Julia gave an overview of CEQA training, and stated the need for caution in the RCD's approach to CEQA, due to it being a legal responsibility.
- Julia is currently working with LACO Associates to put together a 2-part CEQA training, which will potentially start at the next Board meeting, March 20th, 2025. RCD program manager John Vandervort will serve as CEQA guide.
 - Board Member Steve Campbell might be unavailable for the March 20th Board meeting.

5.5 Community Funded Project possibility: Middle Creek Restoration Project - Merry Jo Velasquez

- Merry Jo Velasquez stated that Congressional Representative Mike Thompson is looking for earmarks and wanted the RCD to be aware, and the RCD should reach out as soon as possible.

5.6 Invasive weed event - Merry Jo Velasquez

- Merry Jo Velasquez inquired if there is an invasive weed tour, to which Julia replied it is scheduled for May 1st & 2nd 2025, and is hosted by Angela and Paul.

5.7 General discussion

- -none-

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM REQUESTS

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn: Merry Jo Velasquez

Seconded: Shula Shoup

Aye: Unanimous

Nays: -none-

Absent: -none-

Abstained: -none-

Result: Passed

The meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m.