

MINUTES

San Benito Resource Conservation District Board Meeting

Thursday, January 30, 2024 at 4:00 pm

USDA Service Center Conference Room

2337 Technology Parkway, Suite C, Hollister, CA 95023

1. Meeting called to order at 4:01 PM

Directors present: Cameron Wright (CW), Liz Duncan (LD), Martha Skelley (MS), Veronica Stork (VS)

Directors absent: Paul Hain (PH)

Associate Directors present: Connor Murphy (CM), Katherine Casey (KC) joined at 5:30

Staff present: Karminder Brown (KB), Executive Director, Becky Herbert (BH), Program Coordinator, Maggie Errea (ME), Accountant

Guests present: Anna Britzman (NRCS)

2. Public comment *(The public may comment on any item not on the agenda. The law does not permit Board action on, or extended discussion of, any item not on the agenda except under special circumstances. If Board action is requested, the matter may be placed on a future agenda. Speakers' comments will be limited to three (3) minutes.)*

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of minutes: December Board meeting

MOTION to approve December meeting minutes by MS, seconded by VS, passed unanimously.

4. NRCS District Conservationist Report for Hollister Service Center – James Booth/staff

- The temporary hold on federal programs has been suspended so NRCS and FSA programs are currently fully operational.
- The NRCS is currently accepting CSP applications. The deadline for CSP applications is April 1st.
- The NRCS will be screening and ranking EQIP applications starting March 14th.

5. FSA County Executive Director Report for Hollister Service Center – Jecht Souriyamath was unable to attend

6. Treasurers Report (discussion and action)

a. Approval of financial statements – December

The 2025 Globetrotter payment to SBRCD was deposited in January. The fund balances as of December 31st were \$17,877.68 (COSB Account) and \$57,950.89 (Heritage). With the projected January payables and receivables included, the total estimated current fund balance is \$101,984.50.

KB is currently billing to over 10 difference sources, which makes tracking time and expenses more complex and time consuming. The group commented on the need to have someone on staff post financial activities to Quickbooks, as ME doesn't have time to do this for SBRCD due to her job at RCDMC. This is a role that BH can help to fill.

MOTION to approve January warrants and financial statements by LD, seconded by MS, passed unanimously.

MOTION to add MS as an approved signer on the Heritage Bank account by CW, seconded by LD, passed unanimously.

b. Budget FY25

No updates. The current uncertainty in in federal grant funding is making it difficult to move forward on budgeting.

7. New business (discussion and action)

a. NRCS Space and vehicle sharing agreement

James Booth and KB have developed a draft agreement that James has sent to his supervisor for review. In addition to formalizing SBRCD's access to the USDA office, this agreement would also allow SBRCD staff to use USDA vehicles for travel, which would improve travel flexibility and save SBRCD mileage costs on personal vehicles. The USDA office space is currently working well for KB and BH.

b. Elect President – C. Wright

VS nominated CW to continue as President. CW accepted the nomination.

MOTION to elect CW as president by LD, seconded by VS, passed unanimously.

c. Elect Secretary – L. Duncan

MS nominated LD to continue as secretary. LD accepted the nomination.

MOTION to elect LD as secretary by MS, seconded by VS, passed unanimously.

- d. Strategic Planning Retreat 2025
BH has reserved the epicenter for 3/7, but there is no facilitator booked yet so the date may need to change to accommodate the facilitator's schedule. The BOD suggested 3/21 as a backup date.
- e. Form 700 Filing due April 1st
All BOD members have received their annual notifications to file Form 700 and VS has already filed.

8. Old business

- a. Hire Program Coordinator position
BH is fully onboarded and is already engaged in various fire program, planning, administration, and capacity building tasks.
- b. Personnel Policy update
LD is going to take the lead on reviewing and updating the draft personnel policy.
- c. SBALT Contract with SBRCD for CCLT Grant
This grant was going to provide partial funding for Ag Tech, but SBRCD will need to revisit the Ag Tech position as matching funds from several federal programs are no longer available.

9. Staff report on Grant & Fee-for-service contracts (as needed)

- a. CARCD/WCB Pollinator Block Grant – KB shared photos from the riparian planting in December. There are two upcoming planting days in February that KB encouraged the BOD to attend. KB is facilitating a collaboration between SBRCD, Hollister Hills, and the Amah Mutsun tribe to improve access to native plant materials. Hollister Hills has a native plant nursery and can grow out native plant material for restoration work.
- b. CDFA Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants (CAPGP) – KB will be submitting invoices for several plans in February. Most of the income will go to the contractors who prepared the plans.
- c. UCCE/CC Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program block grant – BH posted the final CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) on the SBRCD website. The next step for the project is to begin the RPP (Regional Priority Plan). BH is attending a fire safe council meeting tonight (1/30) and is working on developing newsletters to keep the community up to date on fire protection planning work. KB requested that the BOD help conduct outreach to determine community interest in fuel management activities, including prescribed fire, prescribed grazing, etc.

- d. ALBA-NRCS and CARCD-USDA-OPPE – KB has been directed not to bill to these grants as of Jan 21st. Funds from these grants have been supporting KB’s time helping Spanish speaking growers access USDA programs.
- e. Audubon Conservation Ranching Contract – no updates
- f. Globetrotter/NRI operations grant – Covered in Treasurers Report.
- g. COSB SALC planning grant – The project team has been working on putting together the stakeholder group over the past month. This work has included making selections to ensure that a diversity of agricultural sectors and expertise are represented (e.g., orchard, crop, livestock, etc.).

10. Ongoing reports

a. Directors’ Reports

- LD recently stocked cattle at Lone Madrone and is taking on a new grazing project in San Mateo County. LD will be attending the Society for Range Management annual meeting Feb 9-13 in Spokane.
- CM is applying to graduate school at CSUMB and developing a research proposal to study Steelhead genetics.
- MS recently received cattle from Gabilan Ranch. The cattle were herded on horseback to Paicines Ranch over two days. MS is looking for fire fuel mitigations projects that she could prescribe graze with her sheep.
- VS is looking for a 5-10 hour per week grant writer. VS gave an overview of WildFarmers and reported that she is considering expanding the three-person Wild Farmers board.
- CW’s son recently earned college athletic and academic scholarships.

b. Executive Director’s Report

- SBRCD now has their own Wi-Fi at the USDA office. Office clients/visitors can’t use the USDA Wi-Fi, so SBRCD’s guest Wi-Fi network has been useful for people visiting the USDA Service Center.
- KB is working with the IT provider to set up a shared drive for accessing SBRCD documents.

11. Incoming Correspondence – available for review at each board meeting

12. Upcoming meeting and workshops – see board packet

13. Adjournment at 6:27 PM.

Next meeting: February 27, 2025 at 4:00 PM, USDA Service Center