



Providing resource conservation for a quality environment demonstrated through active leadership, cooperation, and partnership.

VSWCD Board of Supervisors Regular Monthly Meeting

August 17, 2023

Conducted in person and remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Board of Supervisors attending: Vice Chair Teresa Smith de Cherif, Treasurer Duana Draszkievicz, Richard Bonine, Gail Goodman, Priscilla Abeita, and Pam Cordova. Chair Abel Camarena was excused.

Others attending: District Staff—District Director Andrew Hautzinger, Conservation Program Manager Johnny Chavez, Environmental Education Program Manager Laura McCann, and Business Manager Megan McCready. Soil Conservationist April Luna and new Soil Conservationist Savannah Johnson of the Los Lunas office of the Natural Research Conservation Service (NRCS); New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) Technical Specialist Katie Mechenbier; and President of the Friends of Whitfield Rob Raucci.

Special guests: Program Manager Debbie Lee and Science Coordinator Catherine Murphy of the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative (MRGESC); and Restoration Ecologist Todd Caplan of the Isleta Reach Stewardship Association (IRSA).

CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chair Smith de Cherif called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

- 1) **VERIFY QUORUM, CONDUCT PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND REVIEW AGENDA:** Vice Chair Smith de Cherif verified that a quorum was present. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Supervisor Goodman. The meeting agenda was reviewed. Supervisor Cordova moved to approve the agenda; Treasurer Draszkievicz seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkievicz—yes; Goodman—yes; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried unanimously.
- 2) **APPROVAL OF JULY 20, 2023 MINUTES:** Treasurer Draszkievicz moved to approve the July 20, 2023 meeting minutes; Supervisor Cordova seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkievicz—yes; Goodman—yes; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried unanimously.
- 3) **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None received.

Supervisor Bonine joined the meeting at 4:15 p.m. via Microsoft teams.

- 4) **DISTRICT STAFF MONTHLY REPORT:** Director Hautzinger and District staff presented highlights of the monthly Staff reports. The full reports are available on the District’s website and will be attached to these monthly meeting minutes.
- 5) **PRESENTATION BY MRGESC:** Debbie Lee and Catherine Murphy proposed that Whitfield be the subject of MRGESC’s 2023 Climate Futures Workshop to be convened on October 24-25 at Santa Ana Pueblo. This would be an opportunity to have 16 member organizations provide a detailed plan for collaborative adaptive management at Whitfield. They requested that the Collaborative visit Whitfield in late September, and explained the process of joining the Collaborative. Supervisor Bonine moved to authorize the District Director to pursue the process of applying to join the MRGESC; Supervisor Cordova seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkievicz—yes; Bonine—yes; Goodman—yes; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried unanimously. Supervisor Abeita moved to approve Whitfield as the subject of the Climate Futures Workshop and to approve a site visit to Whitfield by MRGESC members in September; Supervisor Cordova seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkievicz—yes; Bonine—yes; Goodman—yes; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried unanimously.
- 6) **PRESENTATION BY IRSA:** Todd Caplan reported that IRSA has received 2 Water Smart grants from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. IRSA has honed on 3 priority stewardship sites within the Middle Rio Grande, including the District’s Rio Abajo Conservation Area (RACA). Supervisor Bonine moved to approve RACA as an IRSA stewardship sites; Supervisor Draszkievicz seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkievicz—yes; Bonine—yes; Goodman—abstain; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting paused for 5 minutes, from 5:28 to 5:33.

- 7) **UPDATES/PARTNER REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE/OTHER:** NMDA Technical Specialist Mechenbier reminded the Board that August 29, 2023 is the only day that individuals who want to serve on Soil and Water Conservation District Boards may file a declaration of candidacy with the Clerk of the county in which they reside. She made special mention of one youth from the *Rancho de Niños* who participated in the District’s summer Conservation Camp. Prior to camp, he had been disinterested in school, but since then has become passionate about learning about soil! NRCS Conservationist Luna introduced a new Soil Conservationist for the Los Lunas office, Savannah Johnson. She also inquired whether September 19th would work for another Local Work Group (LWG) meeting. Supervisor Bonine indicated that perhaps the LWG could be held at the Pueblo of Laguna, if September 19th is not a Feast day. Rob Raucci, the new president of the Friends of Whitfield, reported that the Friends will purchase an automated external defibrillator (AED) and organize a cardiopulmonary resuscitation class (CPR) in 2024. He will concentrate on “getting Whitfield and the District on the map.” The Friends are also retrofitting the water fountain at Whitfield into a water-bottle filling station.

8) DISTRICT INVENTORY & ASSET DEPRECIATION: Business Manager McCready and Conservation Manager Chavez presented the District's new tool on the cloud for inventory and asset depreciation. Board members asked that they report at the September regular meeting on providing access for Board Supervisors to this tool.

9) INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN: District staff will propose a VSWCD Infrastructure and Capital improvement plan for the next 4 years for Board approval.

10) TREASURER'S REPORT (BUDGET AND ACCOUNTING):

- a) Reconciliation Detail: Supervisor Bonine moved to accept the Reconciliation Report ending on July 31, 2023; Supervisor Cordova seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkiwicz—yes; Bonine—yes; Goodman—yes; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried unanimously.
- b) WHITFIELD HVAC: The failing HVAC system now needs replacement. Three quotes were provided by Business Manager McCready. Supervisor Bonine moved to approve the Staff's recommendation of contracting Duke City Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling to replace the Whitfield HVAC system at a cost of \$17,220.00; Supervisor Abeita seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkiwicz —yes; Bonine—yes; Goodman—yes; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried unanimously.
- c) Maintenance Storage Shed: Business Manager McCready provided three quotes. Supervisor Bonine moved to approve the purchase of a storage shed not to exceed \$2,200 in price; Supervisor Abeita seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkiwicz —yes; Bonine—yes; Goodman—yes; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried unanimously.
- d) Grant Updates: The District will need to recruit the 2 approved AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers; phase 2 of the plant matrix grant application at the US Geological Services South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center (CASC-SW) is due on September 6, 2023; and the Peregrine Accelerator proposal is due on September 7, 2023. Still under review is the Valencia County-administered ARPA funding and the application window for fire disaster funding available through the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Agency is nearing.
- e) SALAZAR INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM: Director Hautzinger can attend this symposium from October 10-12 in Denver at no cost to the District. *[Note: There was no motion on this matter.]*

11) EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 6:37 p.m., Supervisor Cordova moved to close the public meeting and enter executive session per the Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1(H)(7) for discussion subject to the attorney client privilege pertaining to threatened or pending litigation at 6:37; Supervisor Bonine seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkievicz —yes; Bonine—yes; Goodman—yes; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried unanimously.

12) RESUMPTION OF THE REGULAR MEETING: Supervisor Abeita moved to return to open meeting at 6:42 p.m.; Treasurer Draszkievicz seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkievicz —yes; Bonine—yes; Goodman—yes; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Smith de Cherif declared a recess at 6:44 p.m. At 6:51 p.m., the regular meeting resumed.

13) CONTRACT FOR LEGAL SERVICES: Supervisor Bonine moved to retain Brian Harris, Esquire as Board counsel and to authorize the Board officers to engage in privileged consultation with him; Treasurer Draszkievicz seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkievicz —yes; Bonine—yes; Goodman—no; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried by quorum majority.

ADJOURNMENT: Supervisor Bonine moved to adjourn; Treasurer Draszkievicz seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Draszkievicz —yes; Bonine—yes; Goodman—yes; Abeita—yes; Cordova—yes; Smith de Cherif—yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Signatures:

Teresa Smith de Cherif, Vice Chair _____ Date: _____

Andrew Hautzinger, District Director _____ Date _____