



Pima Natural Resource Conservation District
Pima Center for Conservation Education, Inc.
3241 N. Romero Road, Tucson, AZ 85705



Draft Combined Minutes of the Board of Supervisors
of Pima Natural Resource Conservation District
and Pima Center for Conservation Education, Inc.

Meeting Date: Oct 17, 2023

Meeting Location: Micha's Restaurant

The meeting was called to order at 1:09 pm.

Attendees:

Pima NRCD: Jim Chilton, Cindy Coping, Andrew McGibbon, Jonathan DuHamel, Pat King and Liz Tuck (Clerk). A quorum was present.

Other Attendees:

USDA NRCS: Cora Thomas, Mynesha Holliday

- I. Discuss/Approve August 21, 2023 minutes
Supervisor Coping moved to accept the minutes and Supervisor Duhamel seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**
- II. Approve invoices. No invoices were presented.
- III. Discuss/approve transferring the Pima NRCD funds from prior years to the District Fidelity core account. **No decision was made.**
- IV. Discuss/approve moving Pima NRCD accounts from Fidelity to Schwab. Supervisor Coping moved and Supervisor McGibbon seconded a motion to table discussion until more information could be obtained. **Motion approved.**
- V. Chair Chilton asked the Clerk to send financial reports prior to the meeting so Supervisors can read them ahead of time.
Supervisor Coping moved to hire the clerk to maintain financial reports for Pima NRCD and PCCE. Supervisor DuHamel seconded. **Motion approved.**

VI. Agency Reports

Cora Thomas presented Tom Reis' NRCS Team Report.

- There have been shifts in personnel. The agency desperately needs to hire more people. They can't find qualified candidates.
- Twenty conservation plans for producers are on-going.
- Team 7 received \$1,717,940 million for general EQIP.
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): 108 applications received in FY2023; 55 from Tucson.
- 17 contracts in Tucson were obligated; cost of contracts is \$1,318,707 covering 63,344 acres.
- USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) grant applications are due the first week in December, 2023.

VII. Call to the Public – none

VIII. Old Business

- Update on Center for Biological Diversity and Maricopa Audubon Society's lawsuit against the US Forest Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service, seeking to eliminate all grazing on the Coronado National Forest.

Supervisor McGibbon stated that the Southern Arizona Cattlemen's Protective Association's (SACPA) effort to obtain donations for a motion to intervene is ongoing. Donations have been received from New Mexico and Cochise County ranchers as well as ranchers in Pima, Pinal, and Santa Cruz counties. The suit is likely to stay in intervenor status until the summer of 2024. Most likely, the matter will be settled by private negotiations. Supervisor McGibbon stated "If this intervention fails, it would be the greatest loss of agricultural resources in Southern Arizona in my lifetime, if not ever."

Chairman Chilton asked Supervisor McGibbon to obtain copies of the intervenor attorney's letter to the Forest Service and the Forest Service's response to the CBD/Audubon lawsuit complaint.

- Chairman Chilton stated that he has retained attorney Jeff Eisenberg to write an amicus brief concerning the lawsuit that was filed by the Center for Biological Diversity and the Maricopa Audubon Society against the Forest Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service. The cost would be \$15,000.00 and chairman Chilton has paid \$5,000 as a retainer. He asked if the Pima NRCD could legally contribute funds toward SACPA's motion to intervene. After discussion, it was decided the question should be asked of AACD.
- Chairman Chilton asked the clerk to contact Deborah Smith at AACD: 1) Can Pima NRCD donate towards hiring the intervening attorney? 2) Can Pima NRCD become a sponsor of an amicus brief?
- The clerk reported on two prepaid cell phone providers. The cost is the same: \$50.00 for the phone and then a minimum of \$30.00 a month thereafter. Supervisors suggested researching costs from Mint and Consumer Cellular. Supervisor McGibbon moved, and Supervisor Coping seconded a motion to direct the clerk to select the least expensive option and purchase immediately. **Motion approved.**

IV. New Business

- Update on Altar Valley workshops. The PCCE Director presented flyers about three workshops being offered in the Pima NRCD district. The main topics are the safe removal of mesquite and brush in rangeland. All three events are being held in different watersheds. Pima NRCD is one of the sponsors – the \$3,000 dollars donated to Altar Valley was used for these workshops.
- Update on school program. The PCCE Director has contacted the Superintendent of Altar Valley School District about coordinating "AG in the Classroom" curricula for teachers in the district.
- Discuss/Approve FY 2024 PCCE project to convene collaborative discussions with academics and agencies by holding a seminar regarding education curricula in animal husbandry sciences and related topics. Discussion supported the idea. The PCCE

director said she would be able to work on the project during winter.

V. The proposed date for the next meeting, January 16, 2024, was approved.

VI. Supervisor McGibbon moved to adjourn the meeting; Supervisor Duhamel seconded he motion. The meeting adjourned at 2:30.

Minutes: Submitted by Liz Harris-Tuck Pima NRCD Clerk on October 19, 2023.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Jim Chilton, Chairman, Pima NRCD/PCCE