

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Richard C. Brody
President

Steven Rosentsweig
Vice President

Nancy Helsley
Treasurer

Beth Burnam
Director

Laurie Price
Director

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

EIGHT-HUNDRED FOURTIETH MEETING

Monday June 26, 2023—6:00 P.M.

Location: RCD District Office, 540 S. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga

MINUTES

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Clark Stevens

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** the meeting was called to order by Treasurer Nancy Helsley at 6:04 p.m. A quorum was established with Directors Beth Burnam and Laurie Price in attendance. Vice President Steve Rosentsweig arrived at 6:22 p.m. President R.C. Brody was absent. Also in attendance were Associate Director Dennis Washburn, Executive Officer Clark Stevens, Deputy Executive Officer Daniel Cooper and Finance & Operations Officer John Hendra.
2. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** Dana Young Kim, NACD National Poster Contest 3rd Place Winner for Digital Artwork in the 10th-12th Grade Category; Kisong and Seuangae Song, parents of Ms. Kim; Carol Steffen, Calabasas Commissioner; Brooks Engelhardt, NRCS District Conservationist; Jamie Quarfeld, NRCS Urban District Conservationist for the Compton Field Office; Glenn Bailey, past RCD Director.
3. **PRESENTATION OF NACD POSTER CONTEST AWARD:** Ms. Helsley presented Ms. Kim with the award certificate and prize from the National Association of Conservation Districts for her 3rd place finish in the Digital Artwork 10th-12th Grade Category. Ms. Helsley also presented Ms. Kim with a book titled “kNOw Soil, kNOw Life.”
4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**
 - Mr. Bailey commented that the Chatsworth Nature Preserve Earth Day celebration that happened this June was attended by about 2000 guests. They have not decided whether to return the celebration to April or keep it in June next year.
 - **USDA/NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE REPORT:** Mr. Engelhardt reported that the Oxnard NRCS staff is finalizing the 2023 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications and contracts. They are receiving EQIP applications for 2024 and have started conducting field visits. Mr. Engelhardt was recently contacted by Chris Amendt of Native Monarchs NPO who

has contacts with private landowners interested in establishing monarch habitat. He will be doing field visits with her to determine areas where NRCS can provide technical and financial assistance to establish habitat on agricultural lands. Finally, Mr. Engelhardt is preparing for a town hall event (June 28) in the Ventura River Watershed to give a short presentation on the Emergency Watershed Protection Program

Please see addendum to minutes for Ms. Quarfeld's report.

5. **MINUTES:** Approval of minutes for meeting of May 22, 2023: the Board reviewed the minutes and voted to approve them as presented. **Ms. Price/Ms. Burnam; approved 4-0.**
6. **MONTHLY CLAIMS AND FINANCIALS:** Approval of Claims for May 2023 and review of financial reports through May 31, 2023: Mr. Hendra reviewed the claims and financial reports, after which the Board voted to approve both. **Ms. Burnam/Ms. Helsley; approved 4-0.**
7. **REGULAR CALENDAR**
 - A. Report of the Finance & Administration Committee on financial position of the RCD: Ms. Burnam reported that things are back on track, invoicing is caught up and both payables and receivables are coming down. Mr. Hendra reported that all grantors/clients with invoices over 90 days have been contacted for payment.
 - B. Discussion of appropriate reserve funding level and consideration of proposal to add funds to RCD reserves: the Board reviewed the Reserves Policy and discussed the threshold of 35% of 3-years budgeted expenses. They requested that staff research reserve policies to determine what percentage is standard or best practice for special districts.
 - C. Review and approval of fiscal year 2023-24 RCD General Fund budget: Ms. Price reviewed budget highlights discussed at the Budget Committee meeting. The Board reviewed the revenue and payroll budgets and inquired about budget line items that change significantly from this year's budget. The Board voted to approve the budget as presented. **Ms. Burnam/Ms. Helsley; approved 4-0.**
 - D. Approval of pay adjustment for the RCD Executive Officer: The Board voted to ratify a 2.5% increase in Executive Officer compensation for the 2023-24 fiscal year. **Ms. Burnam/Ms. Price; approved 4-0.**
 - E. Vote for CA Special Districts Association Board of Directors Election – Term 2024 – 2026; Seat C – Southern Network: the Directors reviewed the candidates and discussed qualifications, then voted to support Al Nederhood for the position. **Ms. Price/Ms. Burnam; approved 4-0.**

8. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS:

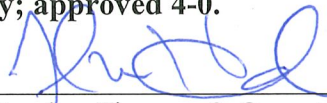
A. Staff Reports for May 2023:

- i. Clark Stevens, Executive Officer: Mr. Stevens discussed the Headwaters Corner project and answered questions about progress on design. He also mentioned the grant the RCD applied for through NRCS that will help us understand the needs of our new territory and reach out to the communities.
- ii. John Hendra, Finance & Operations Officer
- iii. Rosi Dagit, Senior Conservation Biologist
- iv. Marilyn Brody French, Education Supervisor
- v. Dan Cooper, Senior Conservation Biologist

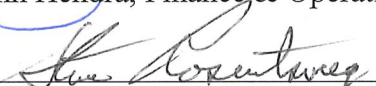
9. DIRECTORS' COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mr. Rosentsweig reported that the Board/staff outing held on Thursday June 22 at Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area was very enjoyable and educational.
- Ms. Price reported that the RCD was well represented at the Chatworth Nature Preserve Earth Day on June 24th. She attended and Mr. Cooper was an official hike leader (wearing his RCD shirt), guiding folks around the property.
- Ms. Burnam attended three of the Wild City programs and really enjoyed them. She said it really helped to understand what the Education Programs do and how well we communicate our commitment to nature. She also took the Environmental Justice Bus Tour run by Liberty Hill. It focused mostly on drilling and featured local activists.
- Mr. Washburn recommended tuning into EcoFlix as a way to get RCD materials out to the public. He also reported that all the local cities have new city council members and we should connect with them.

11. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m. **Moved/Seconded: Ms. Burnam/Ms. Helsley; approved 4-0.**

Submitted by: 
John Hendra, Finance & Operations Officer

Date: 7/24/23

Approved by: 
Steve Rosentsweig, Vice President
Board of Directors

Date: 7/24/2023

Addendum to Minutes of RCDSMM Board of Directors Meeting Monday June 26, 2023

Jamie Quarfeld, Urban District Conservationist for Compton Field Office

- Jamie Quarfeld just came out of 2 weeks of in-person and virtual trainings
- Prior weeks:
 - Participated in an Occidental College “internship” where we worked with partners such as LA Compost and urban farms (many of which are in your service area)
 - One in particular – Black Thumb Farm – has some very interesting collaborations with Fernandeno Tatavian and CSUN that you might like to learn about and potentially collaborate on. They are also working on expanding to new land which will be a remediated brownfield AND they are developing an urban farmer community collective to identify needs in the farming community within the Valley
 - Sharon Cech is the Oxy point of contact – I provided Clark with her contact information
 - Partner meetings conducted:
 - Not mentioned: Mayor of LA's new urban agriculture contact – Julie Ciardullo julie.ciardullo@lacity.org
 - Not mentioned: LA County Office of Sustainability – creating alignment on urban agriculture efforts
 - Not mentioned: American Farmland Trust is doing outreach to identify and work with women producers/aspiring producers at workshops tentatively planned for Riverside area
 - LA Food Policy Council:
 - New partnership with Community Farm Alliance (CAFF) and Farm Service Agency (FSA)
 - Next: ~in next 3-4 months: Get FSA and CAFF on the Agenda to talk to you about their programs
 - ALSO: the results for the new FSA urban county committees have been announced
 - NEXT: Invite the committee member(s) to make introduction alongside FSA??
 - NEXT: Urban Growers Alliance Meet Up on SATURDAY 22 July at LA Public Library
 - Upcoming meeting with researcher Taylor Clark taylor@goodfoodla.org of LAFPC to create alignment on urban agriculture
 - Mentioned LAST MONTH: Regional Food Business Center Node coming to Los Angeles ~ Fall 2023 – Led by Sharon at Occidental College
 - MISSED Partner Meetings to follow up with or plan on attending next year:
 - LA Conservation Corps partner luncheon
 - LA Urban Center
 - Technical Assistance to equestrian centers alongside LA watersheds
 - LA River
 - Hansen Dam

- NRCS Personnel – Annie Konjevoda – FPAC-NRCS, CA
Annie.Konjevoda@usda.gov
 - New State Urban Coordinator has officially started – based in Davis, CA and responsible for overseeing/facilitating technical needs (and possibly outreach/partnerships) to support urban conservation
- Opportunities:
 - Partner Agreement with NRCS – Capacity Building application submitted – decision SOON
 - Contract signing will be due **JULY 15**
 - [NACD Urban Conservation Grant due August 6](#)
 - Webinar is online
 - Q&A session will be held virtually on July 11
 - Potential expanded support to “urban/community” forestry over time – no current funding opportunities but they do occur annually
 - CAL-Fire resources shared 6/26
 - USFS Urban Forestry Connections : recorded webinars
 - <https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/products/multimedia/w/e>
 - Connecting Hispanic Communities to Improving Forest Health
 - [A State to Local Model for Producing Climate-Adapted Urban Trees](#)
- NRCS Soils Work
 - A portion of Los Angeles will be surveyed in fiscal year 2024. Planning efforts are underway.
 - We are working with TreePeople on this
 - TreePeople will likely also be a key collaborator on a number of technical assistance brainstorming ideas we have underway—nothing is official yet. RCD SMM will be a welcome partner on these efforts. This might include topics such as:
 - Workforce development in urban agriculture
 - Soils support – Technical assistance to farmers, demonstration projects, etc.
 - Dynamic soil properties case studies

Jamie Quarfeld | work cell (661) 860-9699
 Urban Conservationist, Compton & Greater Los Angeles
 U.S. Department of Agriculture | Natural Resources Conservation Service
 MSc. International Land & Water Mgmt, Wageningen University
 BA, Geography Urban Studies, Temple University