

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Richard C. Brody
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Steven Rosentsweig
Vice President

Nancy Helsley
Treasurer

Beth Burnam
Director

Laurie Price
Director

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Clark Stevens

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

EIGHT-HUNDRED FORTY-FIFTH MEETING

Monday January 22, 2024—6:00 P.M.

DRAFT MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** the meeting was called to order by President R.C. Brody at 6:05 p.m. A quorum was established with Directors Beth Burnam, Nancy Helsley, Laurie Price and Steve Rosentsweig in attendance. Also in attendance were Associate Directors Dennis Washburn and Deborah Klein Lopez, Executive Officer Clark Stevens and Deputy Executive Officer Daniel Cooper were present, and staff joining via Zoom included Principal Conservation Biologist Rosi Dagit, Senior Conservation Biologist Jamie King, and Education and Engagement Director Marilyn Brody-French.
2. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** Glenn Bailey, past RCD Director. Brooks Engelhardt, NRCS District Conservationist, and Jamie Quarfeld, NRCS Soil Conservationist, also attended for their respective agencies. We were also joined (until 6:30 PM) by a guest of Associate Director Washburn, and (until 7:20 PM) by Cindy Solovei and Rich Wilson of Agility, a financial consulting firm.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Glenn Bailey mentioned that Chatsworth Nature Preserve has re-scheduled their open house (due to rain) for April 27, 10 AM -2 PM. He also noted that this board's agendas and minutes need updating on the RCDSMM website.
4. **USDA/NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE REPORT:** Mr. Engelhardt mentioned the availability of grants focused on Carbon sequestration, oak/riparian woodland planting and fuel modification, and invasive species management for private landowners (and leased public lands). Ms. Quarfeld greeted the board and mentioned an NRCS grant (EQIP, CIG), and a Feb. 16 deadline for NRCS climate smart grants focusing on agricultural practices. She also mentioned the coming availability of a "Healthy Soils" grant (through CA Dept. of Food and Agriculture).
5. **MINUTES:** Approval of minutes for meeting of November 27, 2023. The Board reviewed the minutes and voted to approve them as presented. **Mr. Rosentsweig/Nancy Helsley; approved 5-0.**

6. **MONTHLY CLAIMS AND FINANCIALS:** Approval of Claims through December 31, 2023; Balance Sheet through November 30, 2023; and both Profit/Loss Statement and Aging (invoice) Report through January 21, 2024. Mr. Stevens and financial consulting staff from Agility walked the Board through financial documents, and discussed their ongoing work and future involvement with the Board. Mr. Rosentsweig mentioned the importance of having “backup staff” trained to do essential functions, and Ms. Price suggested streamlining the functions of payroll and billing. Ms. Solovei (Agility) assured the Board they were working on recommendations for each of these items. **Ms. Price/Mr. Rosentsweig; approved 5-0, with the understanding that monthly financial reports would continue to improve with consultant’s help.**
7. **REGULAR CALENDAR**
(Items 7A. and 7B., status & update of financial consultant, aging report on invoices were tabled as they had been previously discussed in Item 6.)
- A. Approval of implementation contract, CARCD oak restoration project. Mr. Stevens explained how the internal budget for this contract was re-structured, increasing billing rate overall and deferring any potential loss to year three of the grant period while still accomplishing the project goals. After discussion, the Board re-iterated that it expects to see continued improvement of financial analysis, particularly with new grants/contracts. **Ms. Burnam/Ms. Price; approved 5-0,s with the understanding that this would continue to improve with consultant’s help.**
- B. Approval of MOU between RCDSMM, CA Dept. of Parks and Rec. & L.A. Co. Dept. of Beaches and Harbors on Topanga Lagoon. **Ms. Price/Ms. Helsley; approved 5-0.**
- C. Report on Reserve Fund replenishment. The need to replenish the Reserve Fund has been brought up with Agility (financial consultants) and will be addressed as part of their review of RCDSMM practices.
- D. Envirothon support (by RCDSMM). Ms. Helsley explained the need for “official” RCD endorsement and support of the program, and members (and staff) agreed to provide it as needed, such as a logo on public material. An in-person event (theme: “renewables”) is planned for April 20 (Riverside). Ms. Helsley will work with Education staff to understand the current needs of the program, and how RCDSMM could help.
8. **INFORMATIONAL REPORTS:**
- A. Staff Reports for Nov. and Dec. 2023:
- i. Clark Stevens, Executive Officer/Principal Architect
 - ii. Dan Cooper, Deputy Executive Officer/Principal Conservation Biologist
 - iii. John Hendra, Finance Officer (Nov. only)

- iv. Rosi Dagit, Principal Conservation Biologist
 - v. Marilyn Brody French, Education & Engagement Director
 - vi. Shelly Backlar, Community Resilience Coordinator
- B. New meeting dates for 2024 were circulated.
- C. Dennis Washburn introduced his guest who presented a brief video on the “angel shark” program that was part of a run up to the “X-Prize”. Note: this item occurred just after the Nov. 2023 meeting minutes were approved (Item 5, above).

9. DIRECTORS’ COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Ms. Burnam requested that a summary sheet be included with future monthly staff reports showing amounts of General Fund time vs. billed time (for all applicable staff).
- Ms. Price mentioned that a successful DEI committee meeting was held with staff this month, and would likely seek Board approval for item(s) such as the DEI Committee mission statement next month. She also mentioned that the board meeting of the CARCD (at the December 13th-15th conference) was plagued by technical difficulties, so member elections will apparently be held during a special meeting at a later date TBD.

10. **CLOSED SESSION:** The meeting was moved to a Closed Session at 8:06 p.m., when board met without staff for approximately 1.5 hrs. During this discussion, the Board discussed the exit interview of John Hendra (former Finance Officer and Operations Officer) and a letter to the Board prepared by several staff members, and discussed results of the Executive Officer staff survey with Mr. Stevens.

11. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____
Dan Cooper, Deputy Executive Officer

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
R.C. Brody, President, Board of Directors